



Roadless Area Protection Makes Sense for Taxpayers

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- **The Forest Service backlog of maintenance needs for roads and bridges has surpassed \$10 billion.** A 2004 review by the Office of Management and Budget found that the Forest Service “has been unable to demonstrate that it can maintain its current infrastructure needs.”ⁱ
- **The President’s Fiscal Year 2005 Forest Service budget would cut the Deferred Maintenance and Infrastructure Improvement (DMII) line by 68 percent.** This would be an 84 percent cut since FY2002. Such a dramatic cut in DMII funding sends a clear message that maintaining current national forest roads is not a priority.
- **The National Forest Road System includes 400,000 road miles and 7,700 bridges.**ⁱⁱ All national forest lands could fit into an area the size of Texas, yet the system of roads criss-crossing them is more than twice as long as the national highway system. We have enough forest roads already, and do not need to be adding more.
- **Limiting areas of national forests where road building can occur will help to limit future road maintenance costs.** The states with the largest forest road maintenance backlog also contain the greatest number of roadless acres. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule protects nearly 60 million acres of national forest land from unrestrained road building efforts, and saves taxpayers from additional road building and maintenance costs, but still allows for exceptions for significant threats such as wildfire.
- **The timber industry received \$140 million in subsidies for road building from the federal government from 1998-2002.** The main beneficiary of Forest Service roads has been the timber industry; yet, taxpayers still foot the bill for subsidized road construction and long-term maintenance.
- **Roadless areas remain undeveloped because of their steep, high-elevation terrain and because of the low value of the timber resources in the areas.** Due to the low value of timber and high-cost of road building and maintenance, roadless sales would almost certainly lose money.
- **Removing the remaining roadless areas from the timber base would affect less than 0.0025 – one quarter of one percent - of the nation’s timber supply.** According to the Forest Service, national forests provide less than 4 percent of the nation’s timber supply, and timber from roadless areas represents just 6 percent of the total national forest cut.

ⁱ White House Office of Management and Budget, *Performance Assessment and Rating Tool 2004*, p 21. http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2005/pdf/ap_cd_rom/part.pdf. p. 21.

ⁱⁱ Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. *Fiscal Year 2002 Road Accomplishment Report*. 2003.