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4.6 Ideas for the Forest Service



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President Joe Biden is in the midst of his first 100-day policy sprint.

In honor of the 46th President, we have come up with a “Four Point Six” memo. This is our set of 4.6 recommendations the Biden Administration should follow in governance to promote policies to restore fiscal balance, increase transparency and accountability, and reduce the deficit. These recommendations span government agencies from Defense to Agriculture, Interior to the Office of Management and Budget. You can read the full memo [here](#).

Why 4.6? We could have done 46 but we decided to begin with our top priorities, and we consider the “Point Six” recommendation to be the simplest place to start.

Read on.

Forest Service

- 1. Reform the Timber Sale Process:** End upside-down, subsidized sales that cost more to hold than they generate in revenue. Our federal forests shouldn't be used to implement corporate welfare. The current Gate System requires the Forest Service to conduct a financial analysis to make sure sales are profitable for loggers. The result is a program that has cost taxpayers billions of dollars. As a first step, make sure forest managers have to estimate a sale's total cost to taxpayers.
- 2. Initiate a Transparency Overhaul:** Throw open the books, centralize document access, create user-friendly databases. Most public information on Forest Service activities is managed in forest-specific silos. That means understanding the agency overall is endlessly time-consuming. Collect data at the regional and forest-level in one place. Budget and contracting data are particularly opaque. What's being spent where, on what projects, and what results do we have to show for it?

3. Be Smarter about Wildfires: It is time to step back and implement smarter more holistic wildfire strategies. Start with where and how we harden and protect our communities. Mitigation, prevention and planning are key to limiting spread and damage caused by destructive wildfires and post-fire logging can cause more problems down the road. Use post-disaster assistance to “*pre-pond*” to future wildfire.

4. Cap New Capital Projects: Limit new starts on any roads, trails, or facilities until the current capital stock is brought up to code. The Forest Service has a \$5 billion deferred maintenance backlog, though where and for what assets is unknown (see item #2). Having a Deferred Maintenance Management Strategy is a good start, but making it public would help, and it’s due for an update in 2022.

4.6. Rescind the Tongass Roadless Exemption:

Immediately begin a rulemaking process to rescind the 2020 rule that completely exempts the Tongass National Forest in Alaska from the 2001 **National Roadless Rule**. The chosen option to remove protections from 9.4 million acres was indefensible, and once the cost-benefit analysis for the policy was corrected, its net cost was negative. More roads mean more roadbuilding costs and more timber sale subsidies. The **Tongass timber** program has lost roughly \$1.7 billion over the last 40 years, and it’s time to stem the losses.



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This is an excerpt. Read the full Four Point Six memo at
<https://www.taxpayer.net/budget-appropriations-tax/four-point-six/>



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