



# Audubon Armchair Activist

Audubon's Letter of the Month Club

August, 2004

## ADMINISTRATION LOOKS TO ELIMINATE PROTECTIONS FOR ROADLESS AREAS IN OUR NATIONAL FORESTS

### Public Has Until September 14th to Weigh-In

In a move widely condemned by conservationists, sportsmen's associations, and outdoor recreation groups, on July 12th, the Bush Administration announced plans to eliminate the Clinton-era Roadless Area Conservation Rule that limits logging and development in 58.5 million acres of unspoiled national forest lands. The Roadless Rule was adopted in 2001 after two years of public participation including hearings throughout the country and comment periods. The American public overwhelmingly supported the Rule, with over 2 million comments submitted in support of the Rule, making it the largest number of comments for any regulation in history. Ignoring the public's clearly expressed desire to protect the last untouched areas of our national forests, the Bush Administration is doing the bidding of timber companies and is proposing to eliminate the rule.

With more than half of America's national forest lands already subjected to road building, logging, mining and other development, the Roadless Rule offered balance, conserving critical habitat for endangered and threatened birds and other wildlife, and safeguarding the land for future generations. The Bush Administration's new plan provides no guaranteed protection for pristine roadless forests. Instead, it opens the door to widespread logging and development. Under the Bush Administration's proposal, Governors could petition the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to retain roadless protections on national forests in their states, or they could petition the USFS to open areas, which could result in millions of acres being opened to road building, logging, energy development, and other activities.

The Administration's move comes one year after they stripped roadless area protections from the Tongass and Chugach National Forests in Alaska and allowed states to apply for exemptions from the roadless rule. "The clear intent of this destructive proposal is increased timber cutting and increased road building," said Bob Perciasepe, Audubon Chief Operating Officer. "This is not a policy based on what is good for birds and other wildlife. This is not a policy that is in the public interest. It's a policy based on what's good for special interests."

The Roadless Rule sought to protect America's pristine, roadless forests from road building, commercial logging and mining while continuing to allow public access and opportunities for recreational activity including birdwatching, fishing, hiking, hunting and camping. Audubon WatchList species, and birds of great concern, such as the Cerulean Warbler, Brown Creeper, Northern Goshawk, the endangered Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, along with other threatened or endangered species need intact tracts of roadless forests for survival, will be at even greater risk if the Roadless Rule is eliminated. That's why Audubon and our partners in conservation are determined to fight this destructive proposal, and keep the Roadless Rule in place. But we can't do this alone. We need your help.

Prior to moving forward with their plan, the Administration must allow the general public to weigh-in with the USFS on the proposal, and they are giving the public only 60 days to do so. "I urge Audubon members and our friends to fight this 'shoot-all-the-

# sample letter:

buffalo' mentality," Perciasepe concluded. "We must not allow this opportunistic weakening of our nation's environmental laws, but should work together to protect our wild places for birds, wildlife, and all Americans."

Please send your comment to the U.S. Forest Service in opposition to their new plan, and urge them to maintain protections for America's roadless forest areas! A sample comment follows, or go to [www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/](http://www.capitolconnect.com/audubon/) to instantly send your comment before the September 14th deadline!

---

## SAMPLE COMMENT

Content Analysis Team,  
Attn: Roadless State Petitions  
USDA Forest Service  
P.O. Box 221090  
Salt Lake City, UT 84122  
FAX: (801) 517-1014  
E-mail at [statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us](mailto:statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us)

Dear Forest Service Chief Bosworth,

Please accept this letter as official public comment for the roadless area management state petition proposal [Docket Number: 04-16191].

I stand with the National Audubon Society in strongly opposing this proposed state petition proposal to replace the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The 2001 Roadless Rule is a balanced policy that was finalized after years of scientific study, 600 public hearings and a record number of public comments, the majority of which overwhelmingly support protecting roadless areas through the rule.

The Roadless Rule is a vital tool for protecting our national forests from harmful and costly road-building and commercial logging, while continuing to allow public access and opportunities for recreational activity including birdwatching, fishing, hiking, hunting and camping. Audubon WatchList species and birds of great concern, such as the Cerulean Warbler, Brown Creeper, Northern Goshawk, the endangered Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, along with other threatened or endangered species need intact tracts of roadless forests for survival, will be at even greater risk if the Roadless Rule is eliminated.

I urge you to abandon this misguided proposal and keep the Roadless Area Conservation Rule intact in the Lower 48 states and Alaska's Chugach National Forest and reinstate the rule in the Tongass National Forest.

Thank you for consideration of my comments on this crucial national forest conservation issue.

Sincerely,  
Your Name Here