



# WILD VIRGINIA

Protecting your favorite wild places

P.O. Box 1065 Charlottesville, Virginia 22902 434.971.1553 [www.wildvirginia.org](http://www.wildvirginia.org)

March 28, 2008

Ms. Gail Kimbell  
Chief, USDA Forest Service  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

Re: Proposed Changes to the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

Dear Chief Kimbell:

Wild Virginia believes the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule has been extremely effective in protecting and conserving some of our country's most precious and important natural resources. In Virginia, approximately 394,000 acres of inventoried roadless areas provide clean air and water, tremendous hunting and fishing spots, remote recreational opportunities that are very rare in eastern North America, and habitat for a tremendous diversity of wildlife, including many rare species. Many of these same resources and characteristics are found in the 58.5 million acres of roadless areas nation-wide.

Because the rule is so important and has been so effective to date, we do not want to see it altered. The rule, as it was established in 2001, should remain intact. State-by-state rulemaking should not be allowed. The unfortunate result will be road construction, logging, mining, and other commercial activities in these areas. This human disturbance will alter and in some cases destroy many of the ecological services and natural resources occurring there. For this reason, we strongly oppose the proposed change to the Roadless Area Conservation Rule that will allow roadless areas in the state of Idaho to be developed.

The tremendous amount of research, preparation, and review involved in developing the rule is one reason why it is so critical and has been so effective. As you know, the rule was the result of almost three years of deliberation that included 600 public hearings and generated more than 1.5 million written comments. The overwhelming majority of comments were in support of complete protection for all remaining roadless areas. In Virginia, 98.3% of the written comments supported complete protection of these special places. In seven southeastern states combined, 97% of the citizens that commented on the rule were in favor of protection.

The American public has continued to support this policy, and has repeatedly opposed proposals to reverse or weaken it. Again, we ask that you let this policy remain in place, in Idaho and throughout the nation. Please, keep the Roadless Rule and our nation's roadless areas intact.



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Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

David Hannah  
Conservation Director

Cc: Sen. John Warner, U.S. Senate  
Sen. James Webb, U.S. Senate  
Rep. Virgil Goode, U.S. House of Representatives  
Rep. Robert Goodlatte, U.S. House of Representatives  
Rep. Richard Boucher, U.S. House of Representatives  
Maureen Hyzer, Forest Supervisor, George Washington-Jefferson National Forests