

Angeles , Cleveland , Los Padres and San Bernardino National Forest Land Management Plans and southern California’s roadless areas

Like a city or county’s general plan, Forest Service land management plans zone areas of national forest, including roadless areas, for different kinds of development and management. The agency can thus place roadless areas in zones that are protected, or place them in zones that are more likely to be developed.

The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule would have prevented temporary and permanent road construction, commercial logging, and most other new development within the remaining un-roaded portions of all agency-inventoried roadless areas. With the repeal of the rule, the southern California forest plans now allow road construction in over 90% of the region’s remaining roadless area acreage.

The land management plans for the southern California national forests place roadless areas into the following zones.

ZONE	TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT & OTHER ACTIVITIES ALLOWED IN THE ZONE THAT WOULD VIOLATE THE ROADLESS AREA CONSERVATION RULE	ACREAGE OF ROADLESS AREAS IN THE ZONE	% OF ROADLESS ACREAGE IN THE ZONE
Recommended wilderness (RW)	None	79,041	7.1
Critical biological (CB)	Communication site construction, commercial logging.	2,990	0.3
Backcountry non-motorized (BCNM)	Communication site construction, commercial logging, “temporary” road construction,* energy development.	397,675	39
Backcountry motorized use restricted (BCMUR)	Communication site construction, commercial logging, “temporary” road construction,* energy development, permanent road construction, new utility corridor construction, construction of buildings.	245,209	24
Experimental forest (EF)	Same as backcountry motorized use restricted	7,149	0.7
Backcountry (B)	Communication site construction, public woodcutting, commercial logging, “temporary” road construction,* energy development, permanent road construction, new utility corridor construction, construction of buildings, off-road vehicle use.**	253,584	25
Developed area interface (DAI)	Same as backcountry	38,511	3.8

** According to the land management plans, “temporary” roads must be removed “when work is completed.” Conservationists are opposed to the construction of any new roads in roadless areas (temporary or otherwise). We are also deeply concerned about the open-ended definition of “temporary” given the Forest Service’s poor record of closing supposedly temporary roads. Even when closed, the closures are often ineffective. There has been a perennial lack of funding to close roads. At the time of the 2001 Roadless Rule, there was an 8.4 billion dollar backlog for maintenance and closure on the existing network of over 360,000 miles of Forest Service roads.*

*** The original roadless rule allowed motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle use, but prohibited the use of vehicles requiring roads (defined as vehicles exceeding 50” in width).*

The following table illustrates how some of the most important southern California roadless areas are threatened by their zoning in the land management plans.

ROADLESS AREA	FOREST	KEY VALUES	ZONING ACCORDING TO THE PLANS
Fish Canyon	Angeles	Habitat for threatened plants and for 7 sensitive animal species, healthy streamside habitat in an arid region, one of the largest groves of black oak in S. CA.	B: 1% BCMUR: 2% BCNM: 96% DAI: 1%
Pleasant View	Angeles	Rare old-growth forest, High Desert National Recreation Trail, Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, habitat for 8 rare plants and animals, fascinating geology along San Andreas Fault.	B: 2% BCNM: 93% CB: 3% DAI: 2%
Magic Mountain	Angeles	Habitat for 10 rare plant and animal species, unusual geology.	BCMUR: 15% BCNM: 81% DAI: 4%
Eagle Peak	Cleveland	Many scenic waterfalls, known for outstanding wildflower displays, habitat for 7 rare animal species, “some of the best remaining occurrences of low-elevation ecosystems” in S. CA according to the Forest Service.	BC: 12% BCMUR: 19% BCNM: 69%
Trabuco	Cleveland	Largest unprotected roadless area in the Cleveland NF and its second largest wild place, habitat for 7 rare wildlife and plant species, important archeological sites, “some of the best trails in Orange County” according to the Forest Service.	BC: 3% BCMUR: 1% BCNM: 91% DAI: 5%

Caliente	Cleveland	Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, adjoins Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, 5 rare plant and animal species.	BC: 2% BCNM: 96% DAI: 2%
Antimony	Los Padres	Condor nest sites and habitat for 6 other rare species, borders San Andreas Fault, serves as a habitat connection between the national forest and the Wind Wolves Preserve (one of the state's key condor reintroduction sites).	BC: 7% BCNM: 91% DAI: 2%
Black Butte	Los Padres	Adjacent to Ventana Wilderness, Arroyo Seco River hosts a rare steelhead trout population, major archeological sites, prairie falcon nest sites, condor habitat.	BC: 33% BCMUR: 7% BCNM: 60%
Cuyama	Los Padres	Condor habitat and home to 6 other rare species, serves as a habitat connection between the national forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument.	BC: 11% BCMUR: 88% BCNM: 1%
Deep Creek	San Bernardino	Important archeological sites, Deep Creek is a designated "blue ribbon wild trout stream," hot springs, home to 12 rare species of plants and animals.	BC: 12% BCMUR: 1% BCNM: 85% CB: 2%
Rouse Hill	San Bernardino	Habitat for 9 rare plants and animals, important archeological sites.	BC: 72% BCMUR: 1% BCNM: 27%
Cahuilla	San Bernardino	Important Native American cultural sites, the setting for Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel <i>Ramona</i> that depicted the suffering of the Cahuilla Tribe, habitat for 3 rare plant and animal species, gemstones.	BCNM: 82% DAI: 18%

For more information, please contact Ryan Henson of the California Wilderness Coalition at 530-246-3087, or at rhenson@calwild.org