



## Idaho's Roadless Backcountry

### Comparison between U.S. Forest Service's Proposed Rule for the State of Idaho and the Existing Regulations of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule

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U.S. Forest Service documents: can be found at <http://roadless.fs.fed.us/idaho.shtml>

#### **According to the Forest Service's proposed rule for the state of Idaho:**

(Source: USFS Comparison of Alternatives; Roadless Area Conservation; National Forest System Lands in Idaho DEIS, Chapter 2; section 2.5, pages 62-72.)

- Over 6 million acres or two-thirds of the inventoried roadless areas would lose some degree of their “natural processes and roadless characteristics.”
- Annual logging is projected to increase 8 times over that allowed under the existing regulations.
  - Eight times more roadless acres are projected to be logged per year;
  - Four times more roads are projected to be built per year.
- 545 million tons of phosphate would be made available from mining on nearly 8,000 roadless acres.
- Over half a million additional roadless acres would be made available for mining.
  - 235,200 acres of roadless areas with highly sensitive soil will be opened to road construction for mining.
  - This road construction is likely to have negative impacts on these sensitive soils.
- The roadless areas that could be opened to increased road construction and mining contain a quarter of a million acres of watersheds that provide clean drinking water to Idahoans.
  - An increase in mining activities could lead to selenium poisoning of drinking water.
- Roadless areas within Idaho with little to no protections from logging, mining and road-building are known to contain at least 611 sensitive plant populations.
  - Proposed changes in roadless area management poses potential risk to terrestrial and aquatic species.
- With the removal of protections from over 6 million roadless acres, it is expected that these national forests will have a lowered scenic quality.

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### Sources and Tables

- **Over 6 million acres or two-thirds of the inventoried roadless areas would lose some degree of their “natural processes and roadless characteristics.”**  
(Source: DEIS, p. 71.)

|   | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Non-Commodity Values - Acres retaining natural processes and roadless characteristics (in millions) | 9.3                       | 3.2                        |

- **Annual logging is projected to increase 8 times over that allowed under the existing regulations.**  
(Source: DEIS, p. 62.)

|                                      | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Timber harvest yearly average (MMBF) | 0.5                       | 4                          |

- Eight times more roadless acres are projected to be logged per year;  
(Source: DEIS, p. 62.)

|                                       | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Timber harvest yearly average (acres) | 100                       | 800                        |

- Four times more roads are projected be built per year.  
(Source: DEIS, p. 62.)

|   | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Projected miles of road construction/reconstruction activities; yearly average-Grand Total</b> | 1                         | 4                          |

- **545 million tons of phosphate would be available from mining on nearly 8,000 roadless acres.**

(Source: DEIS, p. 65.)

|  | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b>   | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| Phosphate (Long term – leasing of unleased phosphate deposits) | Opportunities to recover phosphate from Idaho Roadless Areas are negligible | Estimated 545 million tons of phosphate deposits from 12,100 unleased acres available for development |

- **Over half a million additional roadless acres would be made available for mining.**

(Source: DEIS, p. 66.)

|   | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Acres associated with potential development of new mineral material sites within Idaho Roadless Areas | 0                         | 609,500                    |

- **235,200 acres of areas with highly sensitive soil will be opened to road construction for mining.**

(Source: DEIS, p. 66.)

|  | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Acres of high sensitivity soils where road construction/reconstruction is permitted without restrictions | 0                         | 235,200                    |

- **This road construction is likely to have negative impacts on these sensitive soils.**

(Source: DEIS, p.66.)

|   | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Effect of road building on high hazard soils for mining | Limited risk              | Likely effect              |

- **The roadless areas that could be opened to increased road construction and mining contain a quarter of a million acres of watersheds that provide clean drinking water to Idahoans.**

(Source: DEIS, p. 67.)

|   | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Acres of watersheds with surface drinking water |                           |                            |
| Backcountry                                     |                           | 230,900                    |
| General Forest                                  |                           | 24,600                     |
| Total   |                           | 255,500                    |

- **An increase in mining could lead to selenium poisoning of drinking water.**

(Source: DEIS, p. 67.)

|   | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b>   | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b>   |
|---|---|--|
| Effect of mining on listed streams and drinking water | Possible effect to 303(d) streams from selenium – mitigation required at time of analysis | Possible effect to 303(d) streams from selenium – mitigation required* |

\*note: effects of mining are the same for both, but 545 million tons more would be mined under proposal than current rule allows.

- **Roadless areas within Idaho with little to no protections from logging, mining and road-building are known to contain at least 611 sensitive plant populations.**

Source: DEIS p. 67

|  | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Number of occurrences of known sensitive plant populations |                           |                            |
| Backcountry  |                           | 601                        |
| GFRG (General Forest Rangeland or Grassland)               |                           | 10                         |

- **Proposed changes in roadless area management poses potential risk to terrestrial and aquatic species.**

(Source: DEIS, pp. 67-8.)

|  | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b>  |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| Effects to aquatic species or Habitat            | Beneficial                | Limited potential risk of adverse effects in Backcountry; some potential risk in GFRG |
| Effects to terrestrial animal species or habitat | Beneficial                | Limited potential risk of adverse effects in Backcountry; some potential risk in GFRG |

- **With the removal of protections from almost 6 million roadless acres, it is expected that these national forests will have a lowered scenic quality.**

(Source: DEIS, p. 79.)

| <b>Scenic integrity</b>                                |                           |                            |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Acres maintained in High to Very High Scenic Integrity | <b>2001 Roadless Rule</b> | <b>Idaho Roadless Rule</b> |
| Wild Land Recreation                                   | <b>0</b>                  | 1,378,600                  |
| Primitive  | <b>0</b>                  | 1,656,300                  |
| SAHTS  | <b>0</b>                  | 68,600                     |
| Backcountry  | 9,295,100                 | <b>0</b>                   |
| <b>General Forest</b>                                  | -                         | -                          |
| <b>Special Areas</b>                                   | -                         | 345,100                    |
| Total  | 9,295,100                 | 3,448,600                  |
| Difference   |                           | -5,846,500                 |