



What They're Saying: Community Leaders, Ranchers, Advocates Praising New Legislation to Keep Our Forests Roadless

Alaska Native and Indigenous Leaders

"We support the current Roadless Rule and its protections for Alaska's Tongass National Forest, Tlingit territory. Prohibiting logging in these areas of the forest protects them for generations to come. The Roadless Rule was a two-decade battle against industrial clear cutting in the Tongass. The 2001 national interest response against clear cutting was the largest on record, thus the Tongass land management plan developed at that time and its strength must not be weakened for corporate interests." —**Wanda "Kashudoha" Loescher Culp, Tlingit activist, artist and WECAN Tongass Coordinator**

"We have lived off these lands in a sacred and caring way for generations, and we want to continue to live in our traditional ways for our children and our children's children. Corporate logging cannot come before we the people. We also know the Tongass is important to help stop climate change for everyone around the world." —**Adrien Nichol Lee, Tlingit, President of the Alaska Native Sisterhood Camp 12 and keeper of cultural Tlingit education**

"We are here in support of the current Roadless Rule to protect the largest national forest in the country, the Alaska Tongass National Forest, which is in Tlingit territory. Our people have been here over 10,000 years, and we are here to protect and preserve the land so we can be here 10,000 years more. Our culture is alive and we want our traditional ways of life that have protected the forest to continue for future generations." — **Kari Ames, Tlingit, Alaska Native Voices Cultural Heritage Guide and keeper of traditional life-ways**

"It is important that this land stays wild and free. I am here not only on behalf of my daughter, I am fighting for all the other 70,000 brothers, sisters, grandfathers and grandmothers who live in the Tongass. It is the largest national forest, and I'm going to keep it that way." — **Rebekah Sawers, Alaskan Native Yupik and a mother, a daughter and an aunt**

Outdoor Recreation and Business Leaders

"In addition to key conservation values, the Roadless Rule protects some of the most important recreation resources in the country, including more than 5,500 climbing routes, nearly 10,000 miles of hiking trails, and almost 8,000 miles of mountain biking trails. It's instrumental in protecting clean water and natural river flow regimes. The Roadless Rule is one of the most effective conservation measures ever implemented, and ensuring the rule's durability will have lasting benefits for outdoor recreation and conservation. We are grateful for the work of Sen. Cantwell and Rep. Gallego to ensure the rule's protection." — **Louis Geltman, Policy Director, Outdoor Alliance**

"Protecting the backcountry areas of our National Forests — places like the Liberty Bell Roadless Area near Washington Pass, where the Pacific Crest Trail passes through — is so important to the outdoor experience in Washington and beyond. The Roadless Rule is integral to protecting landscapes of our National Forests and we appreciate Senator Cantwell and Congressman Gallego's work on this bill." — **Katherine Hollis, Conservation and Advocacy Director, The Mountaineers**

"For whitewater paddlers, roadless areas like those surrounding the South Fork Salmon in Idaho represent the regionally-significant landscapes for backcountry exploration. Where the road ends, is where adventure begins; keeping a few places you can only access by boat, preserves quality experiences that are important to our community." - **Thomas O'Keefe, American Whitewater.**

“My family has been in this area since 1736 so I have deep roots and a vested interest in protecting our forest lands for hiking, backpacking, and other outdoor activities. We hiked a lot through the mountains of West Virginia and I want to make sure that this experience remains intact for my two sons and for future generations. Only 3 percent of West Virginia is designated roadless and if we don’t protect these areas now, there will be no roadless areas for the next generations to enjoy. As a nurse anesthetist, I know how important being outdoors in nature is for mind and body health. These lands are a big draw for people living in major population centers like Washington D.C. who want an escape from the noise and crowds. If these last roadless forests are logged and paved, it’s not healthy for the land or for the people of West Virginia or the nation.”

Sarah Hinnant, Morgantown, WV – Nurse Anesthetist, Board Member and Secretary, Friends of the Cheat

“I live within a mile of the Gila National Forest and have hiked, fished and hunted Coues deer in the roadless areas within the forest boundaries. I know how important it is for elk, deer and other wildlife to have these sanctuaries free of roads and road noise. There is nothing more American than our public lands. You go to other countries and are told ‘no you can’t go there, or there’ because it’s all private lands. We are so fortunate that our country’s leaders, like Teddy Roosevelt, had the foresight to look out for the interests of all Americans and put aside these lands. This is especially true of roadless areas in New Mexico that often serve as gateways to our spectacular wilderness areas and other public lands. I have children ages 4 and 10 and I am more conscious than ever about taking them to these roadless areas so that they can experience and appreciate these special places.” ***Jason Amaro, Silver City, NM — Hunter/Angler, Conservationist; Healthcare Industry Applications Specialist***

“As a fisherman I believe we need watershed scale protections for salmon habitat in the Tongass. In an era of environmental uncertainty and changes in our oceans all of the small salmon streams in the Tongass National Forest are important for maintaining diverse stocks of wild salmon. We can’t afford to see any more productive forest opened up for logging. The roadless rule is working for commercial fisherman, and investing in our salmon businesses would feel a lot easier if we knew that roadless areas in the Tongass will be permanently protected from clearcut logging.” – ***Elsa Sebastian, commercial fisherman***

Climate and Environmental Advocates

“This legislation stands tall against President Trump’s attack on some of the best tools we have in the fight against climate change: our forests. At a time when the administration is rushing to greenlight industry-sponsored politicians’ demands for Roadless Rule carve-outs to enable more logging and more environmental destruction, it’s more important than ever that Congress exercise its traditional role in the separation of powers and step in to protect our environment. We thank Senator Cantwell, Representative Gallego and their colleagues for their tireless advocacy for our forests.” - ***Martin Hayden, Vice President of Policy and Legislation, Earthjustice***

“The world’s largest remaining temperate rainforest containing vital old-growth trees is under attack because of efforts to undo the Roadless Rule. The Tongass Rainforest of Alaska—the traditional homelands of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Peoples— is the largest national forest in the U.S. For decades, industrial scale logging has been destroying this precious ecosystem, and disrupting the traditional life-ways of the region’s Indigenous communities.” – ***Osprey Orielle Lake, Founder/Executive Director, Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) International***

“Southeast Alaska’s economy is transitioning toward sustainability because a healthy, vibrant Tongass National Forest can provide for people today and in the future if we don’t trade it for short term gains. We support the Roadless Rule Conservation Act because the Roadless Rule protects Tongass old-growth while also providing for community access, hydropower projects, utility connectors and other economic development projects when they serve a legitimate public interest. The request by the State of Alaska to create a state-specific rule in the name of ‘meaningfully addressing local economic and development concerns’ is just pretext for continuing to prop up an old-growth timber industry that can’t survive on its own. If we’re really willing to think long term, keeping the roadless rule in place will continue to help strengthen Southeast Alaska’s economy while maintaining the health of our forests and the communities and wildlife that depend on them.

Thank you to Senator Maria Cantwell and Representative Ruben Gallego for leading the charge to keep roadless protections in place.” - **Andy Moderow, Alaska Director at Alaska Wilderness League.**

“Our country’s forested public lands provide people with clean drinking water, a place to recreate and are home to abundant wildlife. The nation’s Roadless Rule is what protects these lands, and with them these values that the public holds near and dear. The threats to the Roadless Rule are real. In Alaska and Utah, wild, forested public lands are in jeopardy. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.) understand that we need to not erode protections that are working, we need to strengthen them. We thank Sen. Cantwell and Rep. Gallego for introducing the Roadless Rule Conservation Act and for their leadership in helping preserve and protect our wild public lands.” - **Melyssa Watson, Executive Director, The Wilderness Society**

"We applaud the leadership of Senator Cantwell and Representative Gallego as they introduce the Roadless Area Conservation Act today. The federal Roadless Rule does for forests what forests do for salmon - protects and nurtures the wild natural resources Alaskans need to thrive. This is real federal leadership on our public lands, and we hope the Alaska Delegation is taking notes as they instead work to exempt the Tongass National Forest from the federal Roadless Rule." – **Meredith Trainor, Executive Director of the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council**

“In a clear attack on our public lands, the Trump administration is looking at ways to undercut decades of protection for some of our country’s most pristine and intact forests in Utah and Alaska and who knows where next. We thank Sen. Cantwell and Rep. Gallego for taking a stand with their leadership on the Roadless Area Conservation Act. We urge all members to support this bill which will safeguard our wildest forests and protect the countless imperiled animals that depend on them to survive.” – **Jamie Rappaport Clark, president and CEO, Defenders of Wildlife**

“We welcome action to permanently protect our country’s roadless forests and grasslands. Roadless forests are not just remote places on a map. They provide clean drinking water and nearby outdoor recreation opportunities for millions of people across the country. Our most sensitive wildlands deserve to be protected into the future.” – **Kirin Kennedy, Sierra Club associate legislative director for lands and wildlife.**

"The Roadless Rule provides crucial protection from the government's continued push to carve new roads into beautiful landscapes essential for so many fish and wildlife species. At a time when the Forest Service is proposing enormous road-building projects, the leadership of Sen. Cantwell and Rep. Gallego and the Roadless Area Conservation Act is absolutely necessary." - **Judi Brawer, Wild Places Program Director for WildEarth Guardians.**

“Opening up pristine public forestlands to subsidized timber sales and logging roads is a national disgrace and a shocking waste of taxpayer dollars. This visionary bill would put an end to it once and for all.” – **Niel Lawrence, Natural Resources Defense Council**