



Boulder County Audubon Society

PO Box 2081 • BOULDER, COLORADO 80306

Keystone Center
ATTN: Roadless Area Review
1628 Sts. John Rd.
Keystone CO 80435

March 7, 2006

Dear Task Force members:

The Boulder County Audubon Society, composed of about 1200 members, represents a voice for migratory bird and wildlife conservation in our part of the Front Range. We also attempt to keep abreast of important issues statewide, and the Roadless Area potential change of plan certainly qualifies as an important issue. This has led us to write to ask for your support in protecting Colorado's last wild forests.

Obvious reasons for our plea for your action in petitioning the U.S.F.S. to keep roadless protections in place are:

- economical (opportunities for outdoor recreation, tourism, and agriculture. We note that in 2004, almost \$2.3 billion was spent in Colorado by hunters, anglers, and wildlife watchers alone, and spending on outdoor equipment and gear totaled \$1.3 billion in that same year. At the same time, logging and wood products industries contribute less than one percent to the state's pool of jobs)
- recreational (opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, skiing, snowshoeing, rafting, kayaking;
- safety (areas where wildfires can play out without jeopardizing human lives and property);
- ecological (a full range of ecological communities and elevation ranges should be protected; currently, about 70% of Colorado's well-protected lands lie at above 10,000 feet. Many of the roadless areas in the Pike-San Isabel National Forest consist of these under-represented lower elevations)
- conservational (wildlife habitat, diversity, protection of increasingly rare species; and wildlife viewing. We note that many of the state's native wildlife species, including elk, deer, black bear, lynx, and cutthroat trout rely on these havens for habitat, migration, and survival. Many at-risk species depend on large tracts of unbroken habitat, and exhibit road avoidance or rely on remoteness from human activity as a key habitat characteristic);
- water conservational (roadless areas provide clean watersheds, growing more precious with every passing warm day);

Certainly the last three categories concern our organization most particularly.

Despite the fact that Coloradans have overwhelmingly spoken in favor of protection—and *please note that many of us wrote many times about this issue!*—a recent federal decision repealed the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. Now over 4.4 million acres of roadless areas in Colorado's National Forests are at risk from road building, logging, drilling and mining unless the Governor petitions the U.S. Forest Service to keep roadless area protections in place.

Please listen to your citizens as we speak up for our patrimony. Petition the USFS to keep protections in place—and even to strengthen them. Our children and grandchildren will be grateful.

Sincerely,

Linda Andes-Georges
President, Boulder County Audubon Society