

TO: Governor's Roadless Areas Review Task Force
FROM: Colorado Outfitters United for Roadless Area Protection

June 14, 2006

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Roadless Areas Review Task Force:

We, the undersigned licensed Colorado outfitters, wish to remind you that roadless public lands are *vital* to our ability to continue earning a living by providing a traditional, low-impact, quiet-use, muscle-powered service to Colorado residents and thousands of nonresident hunters and fishermen who visit our state annually specifically to hunt, fish, ride horseback, and camp in pristine backcountry settings. In order to provide quality hunting and fishing and a realistic wilderness adventure, we need abundant game and fish thriving in large areas of unspoiled public lands free of roads, the roar and stench of vehicles and the growing parade of people they carry.

As businessmen and women who buy permits to operate on public lands, we have a vested financial interest in those lands and feel strongly that we deserve the same considerations granted to timber, mineral, grazing, and other public lands operators. We strongly urge you to keep Colorado's inventoried roadless areas free of new or reconstructed system (permanent) roads, and to hold the line on OHV access expansion. With growing tourism and a steady increase in the number of folks who keep horses and like to ride them, designated wilderness is increasingly crowded and simply not big enough to serve the needs of all. Roadless backcountry provides an essential extension and buffer to wilderness. These middle-altitude lands also provide prime big game habitat and the majority of functional watersheds.

Under the banner of multiple-use, our public lands continue to be scarred, aesthetically and ecologically, by logging, mining, oil/gas development, and OHV recreation and misbehavior. In this boisterous scramble, it's all too easy to forget that multiple-use also includes such traditional *quiet-uses* as grazing, hunting, fishing, camping, horseback riding, and hiking, all of which are negatively impacted and at threat of being utterly displaced by motorized traffic and industry. Already, some outfitters are being driven out of business by this shortsighted and undemocratic brand of "progress."

Tourism is Colorado's economic mainstay. Hunting and fishing alone contribute more than \$1.5 billion annually to state coffers, and are especially important sources of income to rural communities lacking diversified economies. Tourists *do not* come to Colorado to visit and photograph an industrial mess of gas wells, clear-cuts, roads and trails buzzing with motorized traffic. They come to see what they've lost at home.

In conclusion, we ask you, ladies and gentlemen of the Roadless Task Force, to encourage Gov. Owens to hold the line against new roads, more industrial invasion, and increased OHV traffic in inventoried roadless areas. Just as roadless lands are vulnerable, so is the profession of backcountry outfitting. Along with stockmen, we were here first. Please keep us in mind.

Sincerely,



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