



NEWS RELEASE



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Roadless Rulemaking Begins for National Forests in Colorado

DENVER, Colo., Sept. 5, 2007 – The State of Colorado and the US Forest Service have begun work on a state-specific rule that will guide management of over four million acres of roadless National Forest lands in Colorado.

The rulemaking process began with Under Secretary of Agriculture Mark Rey's acceptance Governor Bill Ritter's petition to pursue state-specific rules. Rulemaking will continue with publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register, joint development and release of a draft rule and environmental impact statement (EIS), then finalization and release of the final rule, EIS, and Record of Decision.

The public will have opportunities to comment after the Notice of Intent is published and when the Draft Rule is released.

"The State has invested a lot of time and effort toward this effort already," said Rick Cables, Rocky Mountain Regional Forester. "Their intensive public involvement activity over the past two years will be invaluable as we move ahead together in development of the rule."

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In May 2005, the Colorado Legislature passed a bill calling for the formation of a 13-person bipartisan task force to make recommendations to the Governor about roadless management in the state. After conducting nine public meetings and receiving over 40,000 written comments, the task force presented its recommendations to Governor Owens in the fall of 2006. In April of this year, Governor Ritter asked the Department of Agriculture to move forward with the rulemaking to protect the acres recommended by the task force.

"The extensive public comment and review process has been extremely effective to date," Governor Bill Ritter said. "We now look forward to working with the public and the Forest Service to develop rules that will guide the management of roadless areas in Colorado and fit the state's unique needs."

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