USDA FOREST SERVICE
ALASKA ROADLESS RULEMAKING

Talking Points
UPDATED Sept. 17, 2018

Throughout our work on the Alaska Roadless Rule, the USDA Forest Service will uphold our mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

The State of Alaska, as a cooperating agency, will bring an important local perspective in the cooperative development of an Alaska rulemaking proposal.

- Secretary Perdue is committed to meeting the economic, social, and natural resource needs for Alaskans, and an Alaska Roadless Rule is an important part of how we do that.
- A state-specific rulemaking approach will aim to build and maintain a broad coalition of support that will be reflected in the Alaska roadless rule.
- The Alaska rulemaking process is similar to the approach used successfully in Idaho and Colorado.
- USDA, working with the State, will address the longstanding needs of Alaskans and the American public to decide the roadless issue in order to ensure opportunities for rural economic development.
- An Alaska Roadless Rule will determine will examine possible adjustments to inventoried roadless areas to further Alaska's economic development or other needs, while still conserving other roadless areas for generations to come.
- Under the current national Roadless Rule timber harvest and road construction/reconstruction are prohibited with certain exceptions. Other activities can occur consistent with Forest Plans

The Forest Service will work with the State and Tribes to find an enduring, locally informed solution that fits the needs of the local communities, economies and people of Alaska.

- The Tongass National Forest received special treatment during the original 2001 Roadless Rulemaking.
- USDA examined several different approaches for whether or how to include the Tongass during the original 2001 rulemaking and elected to exempt the Tongass in 2003,which was later judicially set aside.
- The 2001 Rule was not operational on the Tongass National Forest for 10 of the last 17 years and litigation over the application of the Rule continues to this day.
- USDA has modified operation of the 2001 Roadless Rule in two states– Idaho and Colorado, both of which were upheld by various courts within the D.C., Ninth and Tenth Circuits.

By working together, we can support the rural communities of Alaska while conserving lands that are important to all Americans.

- In Alaska, over 60 percent of the land is federally managed.
- Approximately 80 percent of the land in Southeast Alaska is managed by the Forest Service.
- An Alaska-specific roadless rule can enhance rural economies and support sustainable communities in Alaska.

Meeting USDA's vision for shared stewardship, we are going to work hand-in-hand with the people of Alaska to make sure we get this right.

- Shared stewardship simply means we share decision space with states, partners and tribes. Together we choose the right tools, the right places and the appropriate scale to invest our resources.
- We cooperatively set priorities that incorporate each other's knowledge, skills and personnel.
- As a cooperating agency, the State will convene an advisory group to inform their input to the Forest Service. USDA will assist in the funding for this cooperative effort.
- . Secretary Perdue's announcement of a new strategy for "true shared stewardship" calls for stronger collaborative decision-making with states and partners.

Working *with* the people of Alaska means being accountable *to* the people of Alaska – we're going to keep you posted every step of the way as we develop this rule.

- USDA is committed to a transparent analysis and rule-making process with input from all interested parties.
- The State of Alaska is a cooperating agency and will convene an advisory group to inform the State's input during the USDA Forest Service rulemaking on a state-specific roadless rule.
- The USDA Forest Service will consult with Tribes and Alaska native corporations. Additionally, Tribes have been invited to be cooperating agencies.
- The environmental review process will allow input from all stakeholders including citizens, municipal governments, tribal governments and Alaska Native Corporations.

We are committing the resources, funding and support of the administration to make this happen as expeditiously as possible.

- USDA plans to complete the rule-making process within 2 years.
- A dedicated Alaska Roadless Team has been formed to ensure we meet this deadline. The team is currently working on a detailed plan for the development of an Alaska Roadless Rule.
- We are committed to ensuring appropriate multiple use management on the Tongass National Forests. Our intent is to use a cooperative environmental analysis process to develop a balance of lands available to be managed for recreation, timber, and other multiple use resources.