

What are the definitions of inventoried roadless areas, potential wilderness areas, recommended wilderness areas and designated Wilderness?

Inventoried Roadless Areas refer to those areas identified and mapped in accordance with the Roadless Area Conservation Final Rule (the '2001 Roadless Rule'). Reference 36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 294 and 66 Federal Register 3244-3272 (Jan. 12, 2001). The 2001 Roadless Rule defines inventoried roadless areas as "Areas identified in a set of inventoried roadless area maps, contained in Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 2, dated November 2000, which are held at the National headquarters office of the Forest Service, or any subsequent update or revision of those maps." The definition of a roadless area for the 2001 Roadless Rule included: undeveloped areas typically exceeding 5,000 acres that met the minimum criteria for wilderness consideration under the Wilderness Act and that were inventoried during the Forest Service's Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) process, subsequent assessments, or forest planning.

The 1982 planning regulations and the Forest Service Handbook used the term "roadless areas" when referring to areas to consider for wilderness recommendation. The 2005 Planning Rule (now the 2008 Planning Rule) and the current Forest Service Handbook now use the term "potential wilderness areas" when referring to areas to consider for wilderness recommendation.

Potential Wilderness Areas refer to those areas identified and evaluated during the development or revision of Forest Plans for administrative recommendation to Congress for wilderness designation. Reference 72 Federal Register 4478-4481 (Jan. 31, 2007) and Forest Service Handbook 1909.12-2007-1, Chapter 70 Wilderness Evaluation. The intent is to identify and evaluate all NFS lands that meet the definition of wilderness in section 2(c) of the 1964 Wilderness Act. There are two steps to this process: 1) conducting the inventory (based on the definition of wilderness); and 2) evaluating the areas in the inventory (based on capability, availability and need).

Recommended Wilderness Areas are those areas (generally identified during the preparation or revision of Forest Plans) that the Forest Service recommends to Congress as candidates for designation as Wilderness. Only Congress can designate wilderness.

Designated Wilderness is any area of land designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System that was established in the Wilderness Act of 1964. Wilderness is "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." An area of wilderness is further defined in the Wilderness Act to mean "an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its

preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.”

Can we add areas to the inventoried roadless area list developed for the 2001 Roadless Rule?

We will not be adding any areas to the list of Inventoried Roadless Areas. Under the 2008 Planning Rule we will inventory additional areas to determine if they meet the definition of wilderness in section 2(c) of the 1964 Wilderness Act. However, we will now call them Potential Wilderness Areas rather than Roadless Areas. This will keep them separate from the areas whose management was dictated by the 2001 Roadless Rule.

What are the limitations on management contained in the 2001 Roadless Rule?

1) Prohibits new road construction and reconstruction in inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands, except:

- To protect health and safety in cases of an imminent threat of flood, fire, or other catastrophic event that, without intervention, would cause the loss of life or property.
- To conduct environmental clean up required by federal law.
- To allow for reserved or outstanding rights provided for by statute or treaty.
- To prevent irreparable resource damage by an existing road.
- To rectify existing hazardous road conditions.
- Where a road is part of a Federal Aid Highway project.
- Where a road is needed in conjunction with the continuation, extension, or renewal of a mineral lease on lands that are under lease, or for new leases issued immediately upon expiration of an existing lease.

2) Prohibits cutting, sale, and removal of timber in inventoried roadless areas, except:

- For the cutting, sale, or removal of generally small diameter trees which maintains or improves roadless characteristics and:
 - To improve habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species, or
 - To maintain or restore ecosystem composition and structure, such as reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects.
- When incidental to the accomplishment of a management activity not otherwise prohibited by this rule.
- For personal or administrative use.
- Where roadless characteristics have been substantially altered in a portion of an inventoried roadless area due to the construction of a classified road and subsequent timber harvest occurring after the area was designated an inventoried roadless area and prior to the publication date of this rule.

What is the current status of the 2001 Roadless Rule?

On August 12, 2008 a federal judge in Wyoming ruled that the 2001 Roadless Rule was prepared in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act and the

Wilderness Act. He set aside the 2001 Roadless Rule and prohibited the Forest Service from implementing it.

How will Inventoried Roadless Areas be managed if the 2001 Roadless Rule is not in effect?

If these areas are no longer under a national rule, their management is determined by the provisions of the current Forest Plan. As such, their future management will be determined by the revision process.

Since Potential Wilderness Areas only include areas that meet the definition of wilderness, how will large unroaded areas that do not qualify for consideration as wilderness be managed?

We would determine management for these areas through the forest planning process as we identify desired conditions, general suitability for uses and guidelines.

What is the roadless and wilderness history that has occurred on the George Washington National Forest?

In 1964 Congress passed the Wilderness Act which defined wilderness and designated some wilderness areas. In 1975 Congress passed the Eastern Wilderness Act that designated the James River Face Wilderness on the Jefferson National Forest and identified the Mill Creek, Mountain Lake and Peters Mountain Wilderness Study Areas on the Jefferson NF and the Ramsey's Draft Wilderness Study Area on the GW. The Forest Service initiated a Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE) in 1972 to identify areas that could be considered for possible inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. A second process known as RARE II was completed in 1979. During RARE II, the George Washington NF identified 14 roadless areas totaling about 168,000 acres. In 1984 and 1988, four of the roadless areas (Ramseys Draft, Saint Mary's, Rich Hole, and Rough Mountain - 32,103 acres) were designated as Wilderness. The roadless inventory was updated as part of the GW Forest Plan Revision in 1993, with a total of 27 roadless areas for a total of about 261,000 acres. In 1994 Congress designated 7,695 acres of the Mount Pleasant roadless area as a National Scenic Area. In 2000 Congress designated two more areas (The Priest and The Three Ridges - 10,000 acres) as Wilderness. The 2001 Roadless Rule used the 1993 roadless inventory to identify the list of inventoried roadless areas covered by the Rule. The list of Inventoried Roadless Areas (not including wilderness or national scenic areas) now includes 24 areas for a total of about 242,000 acres.

In our current inventory of Potential Wilderness Areas we have identified 37 areas (totaling about 370,000 acres). This is in addition to those former roadless areas already designated as Wilderness (42,000 acres) or National Scenic Area (7,695 acres). Two areas (The Friar and Southern Massanutten) that are Inventoried Roadless Areas are not on the Potential Wilderness Area Inventory.