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USDA TO MOVE FORWARD WITH RESPONSIBLE PROCESS THAT ADDRESSES ROADLESS CONCERNS

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 10, 2001 – Today the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho preliminarily enjoined USDA from implementing the Roadless Area Conservation Rule on May 12, 2001. The decision does not preclude USDA from moving forward with efforts announced last week for a responsible process that addresses reasonable concerns raised about the rule.

“This administration is committed to providing roadless protection for our national forests,” said USDA Secretary Ann M. Veneman. “USDA will move forward with a responsible and balanced approach that fairly addresses concerns raised by local communities, tribes, and states impacted by the rule.”

USDA will move forward in addressing these important issues based on the following five principles, which were outlined:

- **Informed decision-making** – USDA will examine more reliable information and accurate mapping, including drawing on local expertise and experience through the local forest planning process;
- **Working together** – USDA will work with states, tribes, local communities and the public through a process that is fair, open, and responsive to local input and information;
- **Protecting forests** – USDA will protect roadless areas from the negative effects of severe wildfire, insect and disease activity;
- **Protecting communities, homes, and property** – USDA will work to protect communities, homes, and property from the risk of severe wildfire and other risks that might exist on adjacent federal lands; and
- **Protecting access to property** – USDA will ensure that states, tribes, and private citizens who own property within roadless areas have access to their property as required by existing law.

“Even with today’s ruling, USDA will move forward with an open and fair process that addresses the concerns raised by this rule,” said Veneman. “It is important that we address these issues to ensure the protection of our forests while addressing reasonable issues raised by the rule.”

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