



Talking Points for an Alaska-Specific Roadless Rule

Statement:

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and Alaska Governor Walker reached agreement to pursue a state-specific roadless rule to address access concerns on the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. The USDA Forest Service has convened the resources and personnel to move forward in support of this agreement. “The state-specific roadless rule approach is an inclusive, enduring, and legally proven solution to address the roadless issues in Alaska” said Interim Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen.

We will work closely with the State of Alaska to develop a collaborative process that allows all stakeholders an opportunity to inform the development of this local rule. This agreement follows previous state-specific rulemaking in Colorado and Idaho.

- **Secretary Perdue is committed to ensuring prosperity for Alaskans, and a state-specific roadless rule is an important part of how we do that.**
 - The State of Alaska will have a central role in the collaborative development of an Alaska state specific rulemaking proposal.
 - An Alaska state specific rulemaking approach will keep both the issues and process more local to Alaska, maintain the broadest coalition of support for an Alaska specific roadless rule and has the best chance of being upheld in court.
 - The Alaska-specific rule making is similar to the approach used successfully in Idaho and Colorado.
 - USDA, working with the state, will address the longstanding needs of Alaskans to decide the roadless issue and facilitate economic development.
 - This process will locally inform which roadless acres are essential for infrastructure, timber, energy, mining, access, transportation, and further rural prosperity in communities on and near the national forests in Alaska

- **We’re going to put Alaskans back to work in the Tongass. By working together we can bolster the rural communities of SE Alaska while conserving the lands we all love.**
 - In Alaska, over 60% of the land is federally owned and managed.
 - Approximately 96% of the land in Southeast Alaska is administered by the Forest Service.
 - An Alaska-specific roadless rule can facilitate rural prosperity and support sustainable communities in Alaska

- **This Alaska-specific roadless rule is our top priority. We are going to work hand-in-hand with the people of Alaska to make sure we get this right.**
 - As a cooperating agency, the State will be asked to convene a task force to provide a roadless proposal to USDA. USDA will assist in the funding for this collaborative effort.
 - USDA will analyze and decide which roadless areas should be reclassified to enable economic development, and which lands should continue to be afforded roadless area management.





- **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 will be a cooperating agency, and will be asked to convene a task force to provide input and develop a state specific roadless area proposal.
- **The state-specific roadless rulemaking in Alaska reduces the likelihood of litigation**
 - Legal Precedent supports a state specific approach.
 - USDA has litigated both approaches to modifying the application of the 2001 Roadless Rule – a state-specific rule and a Tongass exemption.
 - USDA was not successful in legally defending a Tongass exemption.
 - USDA successfully defended the state-specific roadless rules in Colorado and Idaho in the Ninth and D.C. Circuits.
- **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 by June 2020.
 - A dedicated Alaska Roadless Team has been formed to ensure we meet this deadline. The team is currently working on a detailed timeline of milestones.
 - An Alaska state specific rule may reduce roadless area acreage on the Tongass, but we are committed to ensuring appropriate multiple use management on the Forest .Our intent is to use a collaborative environmental analysis process to develop a balance of lands available to be managed for recreation, timber, and other multiple use resources.
- **What is happening next?**
 - The State of Alaska and the Forest Service are developing the process and public engagement to inform the rule making.
 - As this is finalized, details will be released over the next weeks.

