



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 rule making.
 - An Alaska state specific rulemaking approach will keep both the issues and process more local to Alaska, maintain the broadest coalition of support for modifying the 2001 Roadless Rule as applied to Alaska, 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.
 - This approach maintains the broadest coalition of support.
 - USDA, working with the state, will address the longstanding needs of Alaskans to resolve the roadless issue and facilitate economic development.
 - This process will locally determine 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 owned by the Forest Service.
 - An Alaska-specific roadless rule is essential for rural prosperity and creating sustainable communities in Alaska
 - We anticipate an Alaska state specific rule will reduce roadless area acreage on the Tongass, but still appropriately protect those areas that are unique for generations to come.

Commented [RN-F1]: Do we know it is state specific? Later in this document we are hearing Tongass....are we going to look at the Chugach?





- **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 USDA will fund the State to convene a task force to provide a roadless proposal to USDA
 - USDA will decide which roadless areas should be reclassified to enable economic development, and which 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 rule-making process with input from all interested parties.
 - The State of Alaska will be a cooperating agency.
- **The state-specific roadless rule making in Alaska reduces the likelihood of litigation**
 - Precedent in the 9th Circuit supports this approach.
 - The Forest Service has litigated both approaches to modifying the application of the 2001 Roadless Rule – a state-specific rule and a Tongass exemption.
 - The agency was not successful in legally defending a Tongass exemption.
 - The Forest Service successfully defended the state-specific 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 2019.
 - A dedicated Alaska Roadless Tiger Team has been formed to ensure we meet this deadline. The team is currently working on a more detailed timeline.
 - An Alaska state specific rule will reduce roadless area acreage on the Tongass, but still appropriately protect those areas that are unique for generations to come. Our intent is to us a collaborative environmental analysis process to develop a balance of roadless acreage and areas that are unique for generations to come.

Commented [CLF-2]: Any major milestones I should add here as far as our timeline?

Commented [RN-F3R2]: Should be June 2020

Commented [RN-F4]: Tiger team? How about just a Team?

