

# Roadless

AREA CONSERVATION



# Topics

- Why conserving roadless areas is important
- Key issues raised by the public
- The Forest Service proposal and other alternatives
- Key features and effects
- Opportunities for public participation



Roadless areas  
have very few or  
no roads.

The 18,320-acre Red Shirt  
area, Buffalo Gap National  
Grassland, South Dakota.



These areas are unroaded for many reasons such as:

- Rugged terrain
- Cost of road building
- Natural resource values
- Public controversy
- Low timber or mineral values

McAfee Roadless area, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Nevada



These areas are important for many reasons:

- Habitat for wildlife
- Public drinking water
- Reference areas for research
- Largely undisturbed landscapes
- Recreational opportunities
- Commodities
- Personal renewal

Cunningham Brake roadless area, Kisatchie National Forest, North-Central Louisiana.

## Roadless areas are diverse in geography and landscape



Roadless area, Chugach National Forest, Alaska

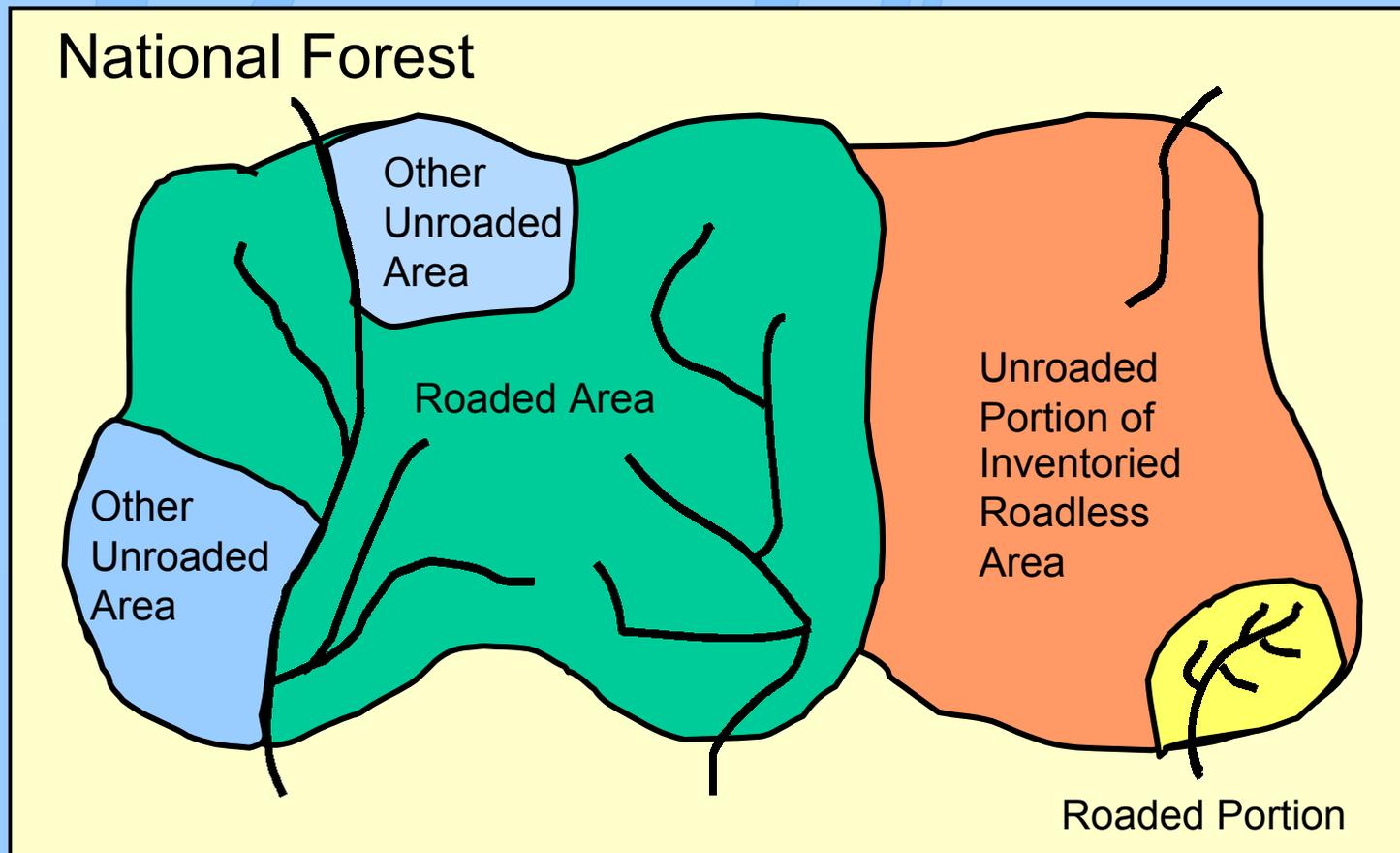


Long Swamp Inventoried Roadless Area, Okanogan National Forest, Washington



Pemigewasset Roadless Area, White Mountain National Forest, New Hampshire

# Two Types of Roadless Areas



# Need for Protection of Roadless Areas

- Road construction and other activities fragment roadless areas
- In the past 5 years, 16 million acres of cropland, forest and other open spaces were converted to urban and other uses
- Estimated \$8.4 billion backlog of road maintenance and reconstruction
- Costly, lengthy appeals and litigation

# Roadless Area Conservation Timeline

Notice of Intent

Scoping

Draft Environmental  
Impact Statement  
& Proposed Rule

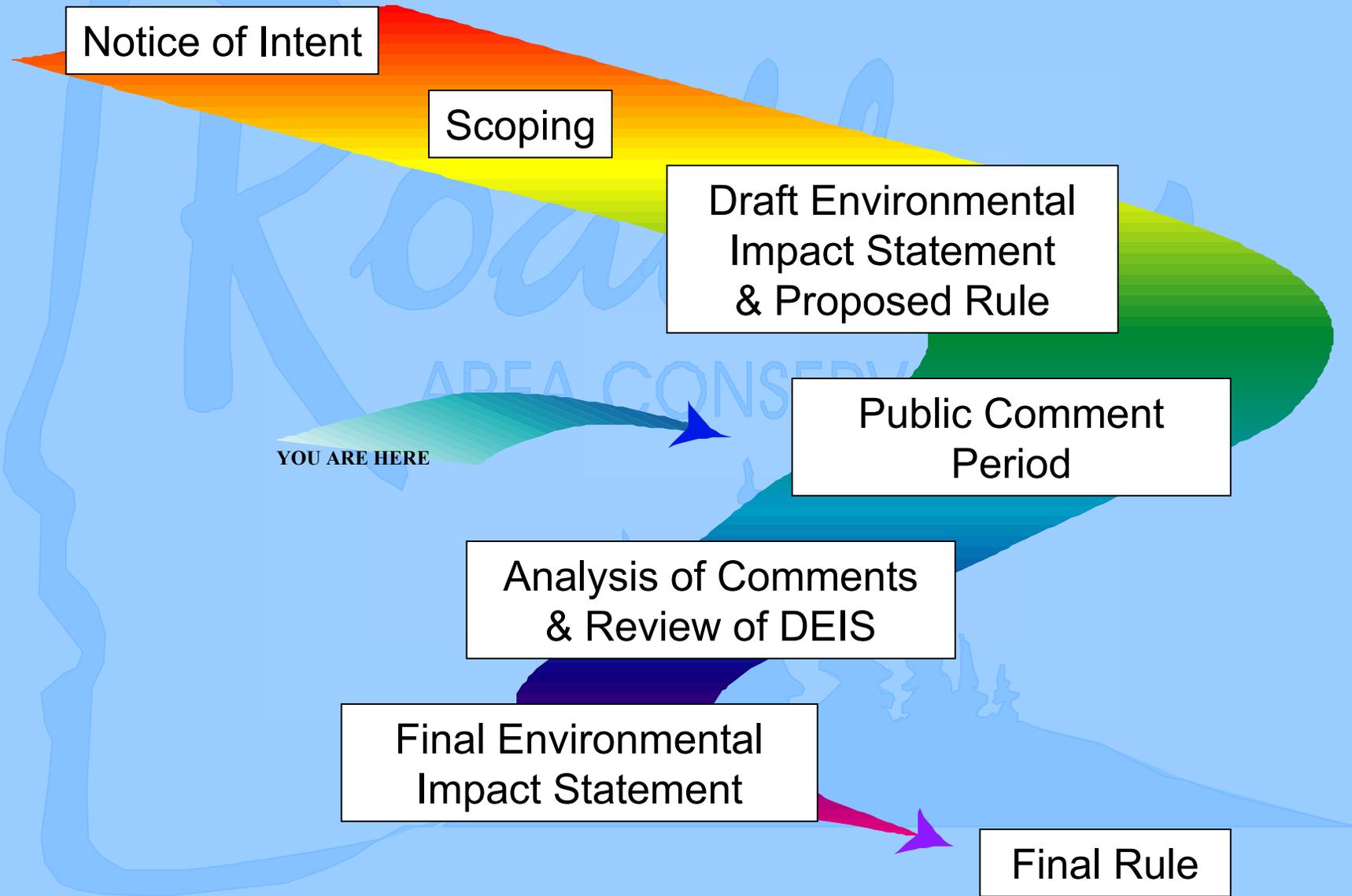
Public Comment  
Period

Analysis of Comments  
& Review of DEIS

Final Environmental  
Impact Statement

Final Rule

YOU ARE HERE



# Public Comments

1. Public access
2. Identification of other unroaded areas
3. Exemptions for specific areas or activities
4. Environmental effects
5. Local involvement during decision-making
6. Effects on communities with strong affiliations to natural resources

# Proposal

1. No new roads in inventoried roadless areas
2. During forest plan revision, the local manager would, in both the inventoried roadless and other unroaded areas:
  - Evaluate the quality and importance of roadless characteristics, and
  - Determine whether and how to protect those characteristics in the context of multiple-use management
3. Postpone review of roadless areas until April 2004 on the Tongass National Forest

**Activities determined through local decision-making**

- Go hiking on the most spectacular trails in the nation
- Snowmobile, ski, and snowshoe the whole winter long
- Enjoy fantastic views from atop your horse
- Graze your cattle
- Hunt some of the largest elk in North America
- Go “Four Wheeling” in some of the most challenging terrain in America
- Cut timber for wood fiber production

**Activities NOT allowed under the national prohibitions**

Build a road.

# Prohibition Alternatives

Alternative	Immediately stop in inventoried roadless areas ...
1	No action; no prohibitions applied.
2 Preferred Alternative	Road construction and reconstruction
3	Road construction, reconstruction, and timber harvest except for stewardship purposes
4	Road construction, reconstruction and all timber harvest

# Procedural Alternatives

<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Require evaluation of whether and how to protect roadless characteristics in inventoried roadless and other unroaded areas....</b>
A	No action; no procedures applied.
B Preferred Alternative	During forest plan revision
C	Project-by-project
D	Project-by-project with transition to forest plan revision

# Tongass Alternatives

Alternative	On the Tongass...
T1	No prohibitions or procedures.
T2	Postpone a decision on applying the prohibitions to the Tongass until April 2004. Project-by-project procedures with transition to forest planning procedures.
T3 Preferred Alternative	Postpone a decision on applying the prohibitions to the Tongass until April 2004. Forest planning procedures.
T4	Prohibit road construction and reconstruction in specific management areas.

# Exceptions

## Roads May Be Built For...

- Public health and safety
- When needed under the Clean Water Act, the Oil Pollution Act, or CERCLA
- Reserved or outstanding rights or as provided by statute or treaty
- Road realignment to prevent irreparable resource damage where roads are essential to public and private access and management

# Scope of Alternatives

- Would not modify any existing permit, contract, or other legal instrument
- Would not require amendment or revision of any current management plans
- Would not suspend or modify any project-level decision made prior to the effective date
- Would not affect Congressionally designated areas

# Environmental Effects

- Protect habitat for threatened, special and endangered species
- Protect watersheds and aquatic habitat
- Reduce risk of invasive species
- Maintain habitat for wildlife species



# Effects on Fire Suppression & Fire Hazard Reduction

- Roads may be built to suppress fire if there is an imminent threat to public health and safety
- Roadless areas are a lower priority for fire hazard reduction, since they are generally farther from human development

# Effects on Public Access

- Decisions on off highway vehicles made at local level
- No effect on valid existing rights
- Focuses resources on the existing roads system
- Decisions to upgrade, close, or build new roads made at the local level through use of roads analysis

# Effects on Timber Harvest

- Majority of national forests do not plan to offer timber in inventoried roadless areas
- Action alternatives would reduce timber offered for harvest 5% to 6.5% nationally
- The preferred alternative would reduce timber offered for harvest by 2% nationally
- A small number of forests expect significant declines

# Effects on Communities with Strong Natural Resource Affiliations

- Nationally, impacts are expected to be minor
- Impacts are not evenly distributed
- Communities relying on timber from inventoried roadless areas would be most affected

# Proposed Planning Rule



**Provides the overall framework  
for planning and management  
of the National Forest System**

It emphasizes:

- Ensuring sustainability
- Collaborating with people
- Integrating science more effectively into planning
- Solving problems

# Proposed Rule for Managing Roads

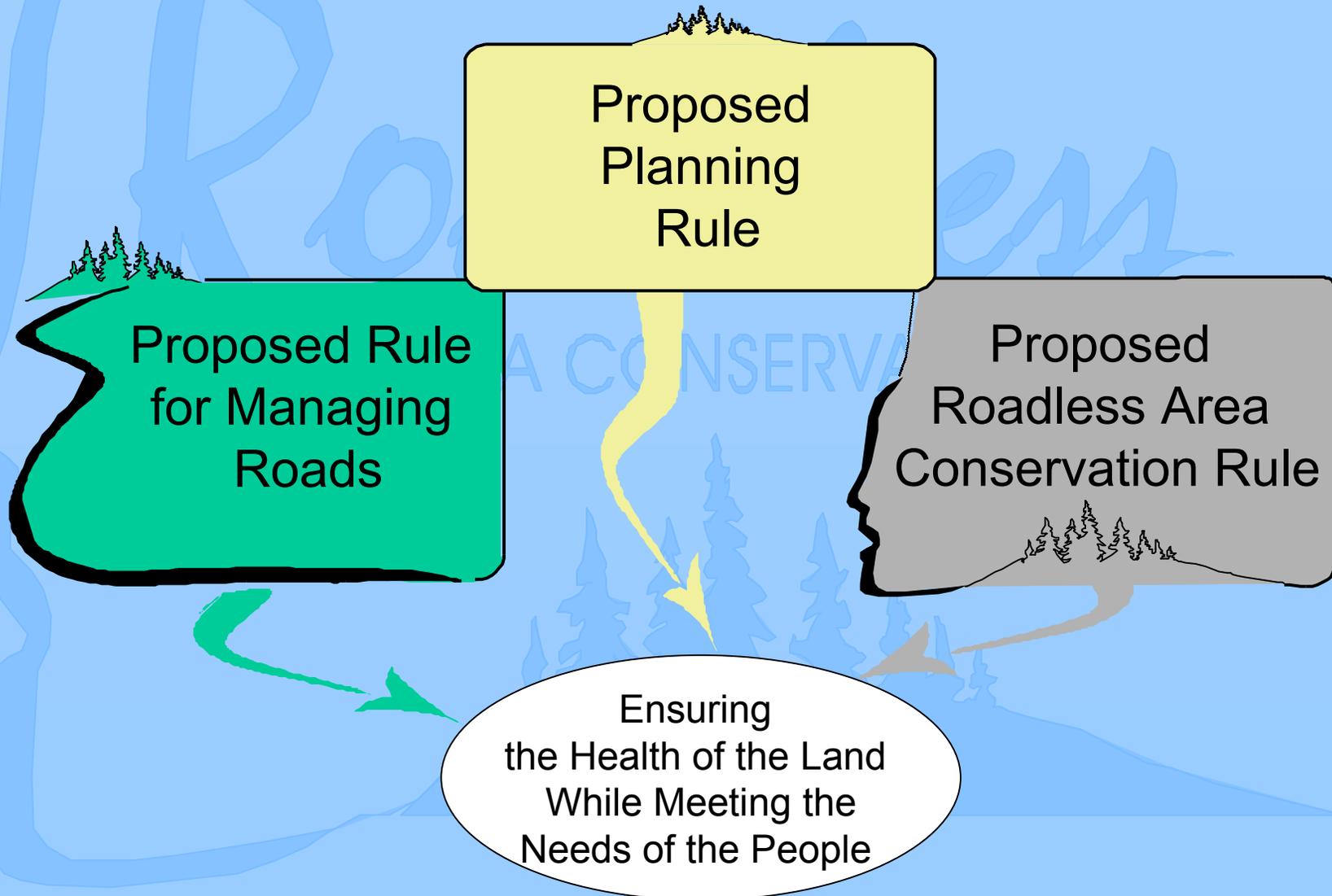


**Makes existing forest road system safe, responsive to public needs, environmentally sound, and affordable to manage**

It emphasizes the use of science and public involvement at the local level to identify:

- Needed roads that will be maintained
- Unneeded roads that will be decommissioned

# Integrating Conservation Policies



# More Information Is Available

- Draft environmental impact statement (DEIS)
  - Versions
    - 50 page summary of DEIS
    - Over 700 page full length DEIS
  - Available on the internet, hard copy, or on compact disc (CD)
- Other documents and maps on the web ([roadless.fs.fed.us](http://roadless.fs.fed.us))
- Review a copy at your county or municipal library
- Contact your local Forest Service office

# If You Want to Comment...

- You may provide written comment today and attend the next round of meetings to provide verbal comments
- Written comments must be received by July 17



Apalachicola Savannas Inventoried Roadless Area, Apalachicola National Forest, Florida

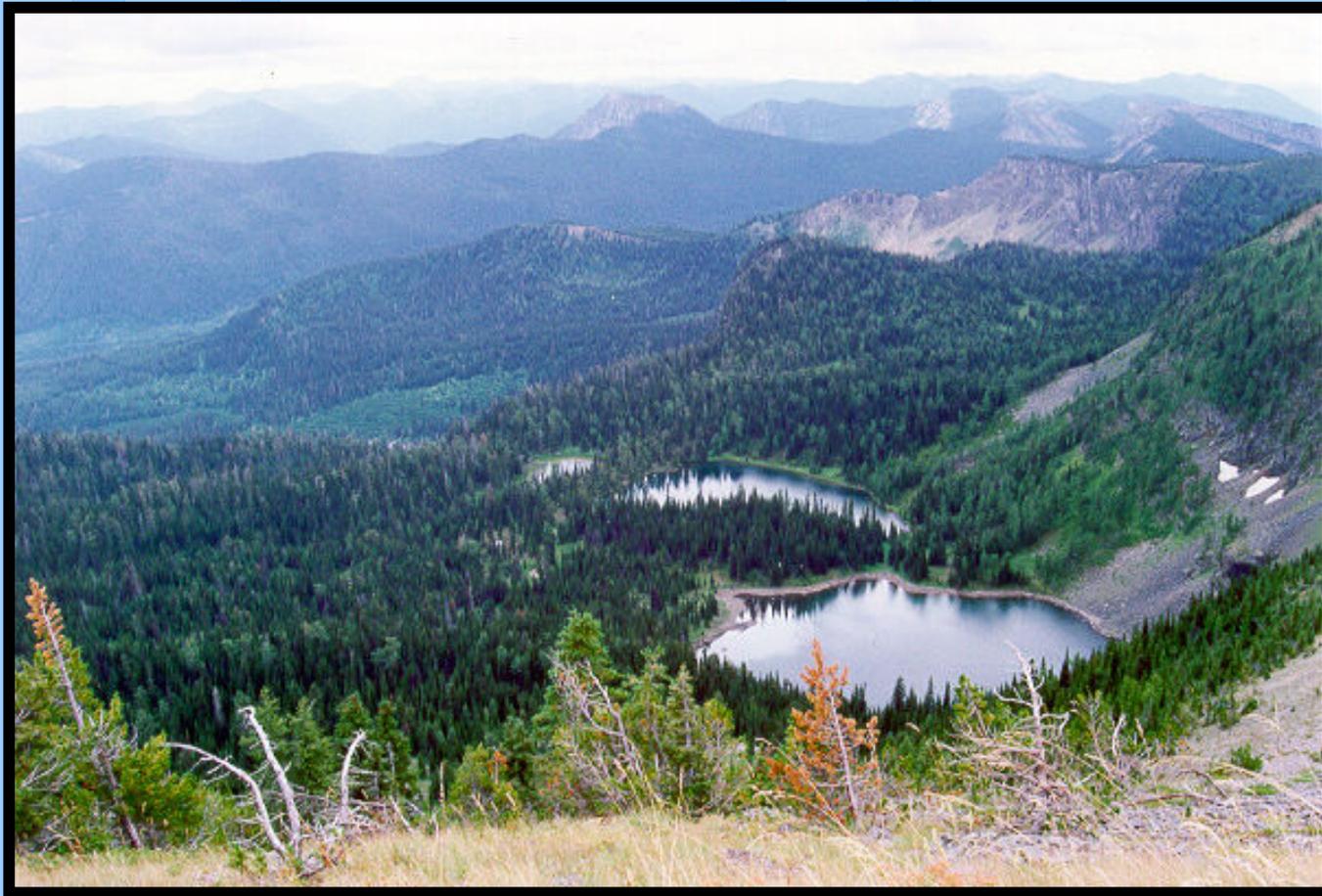
# Summary

- Remaining roadless areas are increasingly valuable for the benefits they provide
- We have shared our proposal and other options to protect roadless areas
- Please send us your comments!!



Brown Mountain Roadless Area, Rogue River and Winema National Forests, Oregon

Thank you for participating in the  
Roadless Area Conservation Initiative!



Ten Lakes Area, Kootenai National Forest, Montana