



This is a short dissertation on the roadless areas situation and what you need to do to get involved.

The roadless areas resolution is one of two very important issues now facing motorized recreation; the other is the OHV Rule. You and your club members need to get involved in both decisions; it will seriously effect your motorized recreation on public lands.

There are 16,242,000 acres of National Forest lands in Colorado. There are 3,269,000 acres of Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA). Of the 3.2 million acres, only 11,000 acres (2000 in Pike-San Isabel and 9,000 in Arapahoe) meet the criteria of the 1964 Wilderness Act to be considered for Wilderness.

First of all, the name roadless area is a misnomer. There are roads in roadless areas; they are the ones we drive on. The forest service system roads have a maintenance level assigned to them when they are classified as a system road, i.e., FSR 100, level 2. There are 5 levels of system road maintenance, 1-5.

Here are the NFS descriptions. I have edited them to a simpler explanation. (Emphasis added by me)

Road Maintenance Level 1: Assigned to intermittent service roads during the time they are closed to vehicular traffic. However, while being maintained at level 1, they are closed to vehicular traffic, but may be open and suitable for non-motorized uses. (They are also used as NFS administrative roads.)

Road Maintenance Level 2: Assigned to roads open for use by high clearance vehicles. Log haul may occur at this level.

Road Maintenance Level 3: Assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities. Some roads may be fully surfaced with either native or processed material.

Road Maintenance Level 4: Assigned to roads that provide a moderate degree of user comfort and convenience at moderate travel speeds. Most roads are double lane and aggregate surfaced.

Road Maintenance Level 5: Assigned to roads that provide a high degree of user comfort and convenience.

As you can see, level 2 roads are the 4 Wheel Drive roads. However, there are NO level 3, 4, or 5 roads in the roadless areas. For maps of roadless areas, go to <http://roadless.fs.fed.us/>. These maps

ROADLESS AREAS 101

By: Gene W. King, CoA4WDCI Land Use Chairman

do not have any roads, rivers, etc on them but you may be able to identify the roadless area. In which it is located. I am currently trying to find NFS maps that identify all the Colorado roadless areas, but . . . well, this is the government, you know.

ACTION: If any 4wd roads you and your club members use DO NOT have a forest service designation (FSR), you need to GPS this road and EACH club member should write a letter to the task force indicating this heavily used 4wd road is in a roadless area and you want the task force to release this area from the IRA status to be managed by the USFS.

If any 4wd roads you and your club members use DO have a forest service designation (FSR) and In an IRA, do the same as above. Don't take for granted that just because it is a FSR that it will remain in the system.

I will have specific comments available later for you to use in your comment letters. Keep checking our web site, www.hightrails.org.

HISTORY: Roadless areas came from RARE I and II inventories in the 70's and were required to be a minimum of 5000 contiguous acres or abutted to a national forest and are the initial phase of being recommended for Wilderness designation or a Wilderness Study Area (WSA's).

Governor Owens created a Roadless Areas Task Force to obtain public comments on the future management of these lands. So far the task force has held meeting in Grand Junction, Durango, Pueblo and Denver. Go to the Colorado Department of Natural Resources website at <http://www.dnr.state.co.us> and click on "roadless

areas review" for more information.

The remaining task force meetings are; (meeting places and times are not yet set)

Steamboat Springs, May 18, 2006; Routt National Forest

Monte Vista, June 7, 2006; Rio Grande National Forest

Glenwood Springs, June 21, 2006; White River

The task force will hold another public comment meeting on the Western Slope to discuss the GMUG this spring or summer prior to deliberating on it.

You may send your comment letters on any forest to: The Keystone Center
ATTN: Roadless Areas Review
1628 Sts. John Road
Keystone, CO 80435

I also recommend you send a copy of your letter to Governor Bill Owens, 136 State Capital, Denver, CO 80203-1792.

The task force will present their findings to Governor Owens on September 12, 2006. The state's report to the National Roadless Advisory Committee is due November 13, 2006. This committee then provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture within 90 days of receipt. The Secretary is to respond to the state's petition within 18 months of receipt (The deadline would be June of 2008).

Time is of the essence: get your comment letters in - or prepare to get locked out of your favorite riding/driving recreation areas!!

Gillespie Gulch - Will it Remain a Trail?

By Valerie Douglas

In the fall of 2005 the Trail Ridge Runners were notified by a citizen of Jamestown, CO, that Gillespie Gulch, their adopted trail, had been bladed. What used to be a level 6 trail had been turned into a level 1 graded road over night.

Upon investigation, the Trail Ridge Runners have become apprehensive of the situation as to why the Boulder Ranger District had not notified them of changes to their adopted road. In a meeting with the Boulder Ranger District on February 23rd it was revealed that the Black Rose mine was reactivated and was seeking to close access to the public via a gate at the beginning of the Gillespie Gulch trail. The Black Rose mine is working with the land owner at the trailhead to install the gate.

Where do we go from here? This is a question left open. The Boulder Ranger District has washed its hands clean of the issue and will not be seeking an easement with the property owner. Furthermore, the Boulder Ranger District has clearly stated that it will not seek an easement with any land owners within their district because the it is not their job to manage roads, it is their job to manage the forest.

COHVCO and the Trail Ridge Runners are weighing the options at this point in time to find the best course of action to pursue the issue. Stay tuned to find out the outcome of this issue.