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Comments:

To the United States Forest Service,

I'm writing these comments to voice my opposition to any rules or rule changes that would allow the building of roads in the Colorado Roadless Areas, specifically the North Fork Coal Mining Area.

I believe that the US should stop supporting the coal industry with taxpayer funded subsidies and tax breaks, as well as land give-aways. I think it is important that our focus and resources be directed to cleaner energy sources, such as wind, solar, and hydro, which can provide jobs and energy while helping mitigate pollution and climate change. And allowing coal companies to build roads in pristine forests is certainly not a good way to move toward clean energy goals.

China is in fact changing its national policy on using coal, and are years ahead of our country in attempting to advance alternative energy. I think the US should take note and be more of a leader in this area.

Secondly, I believe that we are decimating our natural resources and pristine natural areas on a scale that is unsupported in the long run. Roads are the first intrusion into any wilderness, and that intrusion is never undone. Other development always follows. In Brazil or Borneo, the simplest method of taking the resources of the rainforest is to plow a road. It allows loggers, poachers, and ranchers to move in, eating away at the flora and fauna, until there is nothing left. Then the land is converted to managed agriculture. I hate to think that the soy milk I drink or the palm oil in my kid's peanut butter is responsible for species going extinct, but in fact it is.

I do not want pristine wilderness areas to go down this same path.

This is not how I want my world to be or what I want it to turn into. I want it to be shared with the myriad of fantastic creatures and plants that have been here from time immortal. I want to know the lessons the wilderness and wild spaces can teach from visiting them myself, not from reading about it in a glossy coffee table book. I want to know that I can run my business and live in my house using electricity that doesn't require a Superfund to clean up the mess when the coal is all trucked away. I don't want the cost of my food to go up or my fresh water to dry up because the climate is all out of whack. God forbid societies will become unstable when natural resources become scarce, as is already happening, and we will need to spend even more of our taxpayer dollars on national defense.

Can you imagine how great it would be if more of us could fish in our native waters, or breath better air, or see western forests not decimated by pine bark beetles that are increasing their range because winters are not harsh enough to keep them in check?

There is a price we pay for using dirty energy, which we often don't see at the surface, and we are paying for it now.

Please disallow roadbuilding at this time and in the future for the North Fork Coal Mining Area.

Thank you.