



September 15, 2025

Re: Deschutes Chapter of Trout Unlimited opposes Roadless Rule rescission

Dear Secretary Rollins and Chief Schultz,

On behalf of the Deschutes Redbands Chapter of Trout Unlimited, we would like to express our strong support for the U.S. Forest Service's commitment to protecting America's remaining roadless areas through the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. As anglers, conservationists, and stewards of our public lands, we understand firsthand the critical role these intact landscapes play in sustaining cold, clean water, and healthy fish populations.

Across the country, 58.5 million acres of National Forest land are protected under the Roadless Rule. 70% of public land within Roadless Areas is home to native trout and salmon.¹ Here in Oregon, approximately 1.9 million acres of National Forest land are designated as roadless.² Many of these areas feed the Deschutes River Basin, one of the West's most iconic trout fisheries and home to native redband trout.

Some of the roadless areas (RAs) nearest to our Chapter, which our members often visit and enjoy, are: North and South Paulina RAs, Bend Watershed RA, West-South Bachelor RA, Waldo RA, and Metolius Breaks RA.

In Central Oregon, our chapter has witnessed how roadless areas safeguard essential habitat to our native fish species. These areas not only sustain our wild fisheries, but also our local communities. Limiting new road construction in these sensitive areas prevents sedimentation, protects riparian vegetation, and ensures that future generations can experience the same fisheries we enjoy today.

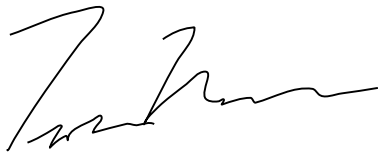
Our chapter's members spend thousands of volunteer hours annually restoring fish habitat, monitoring water quality, and engaging local communities to protect the Deschutes River along with our other fisheries. We see firsthand the connection

between intact headwaters and healthy redband trout populations. These lands also support recreation-based economies; fishing, hunting, camping, rafting, and skiing, that generate over \$862 billion in consumer spending nationally each year, providing sustainable jobs in rural communities.³

The Roadless Rule represents a balanced and science-based approach to land management, one that safeguards our natural heritage while maintaining access for recreation and traditional uses. Weakening these protections would jeopardize critical habitat and the outdoor opportunities that define our communities.

Thank you for considering our views on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dalton Romanowski', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dalton Romanowski
President, Deschutes Redbands Chapter of Trout Unlimited

1. Trout Unlimited. *State of the Trout: A Report on the Status and Trends of Native Trout in the United States* (2015).
2. Oregon Department of Forestry. *Roadless Areas in Oregon National Forests* (2022).
3. Outdoor Industry Association. *Outdoor Recreation Economy Report* (2023).