

## **Summary of points in opposition to McCarthy/Barrasso Bill July 2011**

**Introduction:** In short, roadless lands are untracked, untrashed and unspoiled. That said, the term “roadless” is a misnomer—Sportsmen should understand that “roadless” does not mean “inaccessible.”

The bottom line here is that roadless lands provide the best remaining fish and game habitat left in America, and intact habitat translates directly into opportunity.

- **Backcountry means better hunting and fishing.**
  - Hunting and fishing is allowed in roadless areas, and sporting success is greatest in the backcountry.
  - The biggest bulls and bucks are harvested each year from hunting units in roadless backcountry.
  - The country’s strongest wild and native fish populations depend on intact roadless backcountry habitat to survive.
- **Backcountry is accessible and available to everyone.**
  - Roadless land isn’t necessarily roadless—many inventoried roadless lands are accessible on designated routes by off-road vehicle, four-wheel-drive vehicles and passenger cars. Additionally, some roadless areas are bounded by paved highways and are readily accessible by numerous means of transportation, including bikes, vehicles, horses, etc.
  - The roadless backcountry is available for many of the same uses that are available on roaded public lands. In addition to hunting and angling, visitors can camp, hike, and target shoot. In many instances, visitors can cut or gather firewood.
  - The only real difference between developed front-country land and roadless backcountry land is the quality of the landscape and the opportunity the backcountry offers to sportsmen and others who wish to experience a place that looks a lot like it did 200 years ago.
  - The roadless backcountry is the playground for “Everyman,” who can’t afford to hire a guide or buy a hunt on a private ranch. These are sportsmen and women who don’t have the resources to purchase expensive off-road vehicles, but do value the opportunity to hunt and fish on public lands in order to fill their freezers and feed their families.
- **Backcountry provides the best fish and game habitat, even if you never hunt or fish in it.**
  - Ocean-going salmon and steelhead depend on intact roadless habitat for spawning and rearing. In fact, the roadless backcountry in the Northwest is likely what is keeping populations viable, given a host of other challenges these fish face en route to and from saltwater.
  - The roadless backcountry is vital for big-game calving and fawning and provides irreplaceable refuge for big game herds as they migrate to and from their winter range.

- Developing the roadless backcountry bisects big-game migration routes and adds silt and sediment to trout streams, putting fish and game habitat, hunting and fishing opportunities, and the rural economies that depend on these activities at risk.
- **The bill is an unprecedented attack on backcountry and our sporting heritage.**
  - The Bill simply goes too far in its misguided attempt to make public lands more accessible to industry and expanded motorized use. It amounts to heavy-handed federal interference in the management of public lands without proper public input.
  - The government cannot adequately fund its existing public-lands roads system. Opening up intact fish and game habitat to new road and motorized-trail construction is not only detrimental to hunting and angling opportunity, but to the federal road maintenance budget that is already in the red.
  - Wilderness study areas within the Bureau of Land Management system are also targeted by this bill. The future of WSAs is best determined by local stakeholders, not by overarching federal legislation that undermines the desires of the people who live and work near these backcountry lands.
- **We have a good balance today between backcountry and front-country. Let's not upset the balance.**