**Roadless Rule 101**

 You may have been hearing about the “roadless rule” in the past couple months, and if you’re wondering what it is, then you’re not alone. The Roadless Rule governs the management of “roadless areas”, which are particular designations within the National Forest System. This network covers 193 million acres and spans 44 states. 380,000 miles of roads provide access to about 100 million acres of forested land, offering a myriad of recreation opportunities. 58 million acres of this land are classified as roadless areas.

*What is the Roadless Rule?*

* The Roadless Rule, established on January 12, 2001, was put into place in order to protect certain parts of forested areas, known as roadless areas, from unnecessary development. This rule prohibits road building and logging in all 58 million acres of roadless areas across the United States. Exceptions generally include road building to access non-federal land inholdings and pre-existing mineral leases, and logging is permitted only to reduce fire risk or to improve habitat for endangered species.
* The protection of the Roadless Rule keeps ecosystems intact and healthy, as well as ensuring public access to a wealth of recreation opportunities.

*What are Roadless Areas?*

* Roadless areas are generally undeveloped landscapes that provide ecosystem services and recreation opportunities.
* 49 percent of Utah’s National Forests are designated as roadless areas
* These areas provide stunning opportunities for all types of outdoor recreation.
* Do you like to: hike, fish, mountain bike, climb, paddle, backcountry and cross-country ski, and ride ATVs? You’re in luck – these activities are all permitted, with some restrictions, within roadless areas.
* Roadless areas have several different classifications that dictate how they are managed. These range from no management at all to road construction and timber harvesting.
* You’ve probably recreated in a roadless area without even knowing it!