



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
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Region

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File Code: 1900

Date: JAN 27 2005

Mr. Michael Chrisman
Secretary
CA Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street - Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Chrisman:

Thank you for your letter of January 21⁴, 2005, concerning the management of Inventoried Roadless Areas in the national forests in California. I share your view that California's interests are best served when truly roadless areas remain roadless consistent with the need to avoid compromising our fire-fighting efforts.

You are correct that Forest Service Interim Directive 1920-2004-1 will expire in January 2006. It is our expectation that the Forest Service will complete a new roadless rule prior to that date. Future roadless protection will be determined by the forthcoming rule.

With respect to the four changes you request for interim roadless protection, we can agree with each.

The Interim Directive does grant the Chief of the Forest Service broader discretion than Regional Foresters to approve road construction in Inventoried Roadless Areas. To date, the Chief has not approved any road construction in roadless areas in California under the terms of the Interim Directive. There are no plans to do so. By this letter, you can assume that will remain the Agency's policy for California pending the completion of a final roadless rule.

We will provide you updated maps of the Inventoried Roadless Areas as they are completed. We concur with the need to provide appropriate access for: 1) Native American sacred sites; 2) legitimate public safety objectives; 3) well-managed recreational use; and 4) fire-fighting efforts. We look forward to continuing to work with the state in decommissioning Forest Service roads that are negatively affecting sensitive watersheds.

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Finally, as we complete work on a final roadless rule, we look forward to developing a regulation that fully protects roadless values at least as successfully as the Interim Directive and in a fashion that meets the State's goals for the protection of wild areas in California.

Sincerely,


JACK A. BLACKWELL
Regional Forester