



Protecting Creation, Generation to Generation

COEJLAction: *Tu B'Shvat* Action Alert

DEFEND PROTECTION OF NATIONAL FORESTS

Your help is needed to ensure that the new policy to protect 58.5 million acres of roadless areas in our National Forests is not reversed.

On January 5, 2001, after nearly two years of intensive policy development, including the participation of a record 1.6 million Americans, President Clinton announced the protection of 58.5 million acres of roadless areas in our National Forests – one of most sweeping conservation measures in American history. Jewish activists around the country sent letters and testified at hearings in favor of this policy. Many of you joined in this battle, and we thank you for your efforts.

Roadless areas are the more pristine, wild parts of our forests, providing habitat to numerous threatened and endangered species and the source of clean water for tens of millions of Americans. In addition, wild forests also serve as refuges for the human spirit, places where we can witness the Creator's majesty, reflect upon the mystery of life, and hear the small, still voice within. We have already lost 96% of the old growth forests in the United States.

The policy to protect roadless National Forest areas is being attacked by members of Congress, several governors of western states, and industry groups who are opposed to restrictions on logging. However, the new rule is expected to impact only 4 percent of the timber volume of the national forests. As the entire National Forest system only accounts for 5% of all U.S. domestic timber production, the effect of this policy on timber harvesting is negligible. The effect on natural gas production is also expected to be small as the entire National Forest system only accounts for 4/10 of 1 percent of domestic gas production.

The new rule is being reviewed by the Bush Administration, which is undertaking a review of all executive orders and rules issued by the Clinton Administration. Members of Congress are threatening to overturn the policy by using a law enacted in 1996 which allows Congress to overturn any executive branch rule within 60 legislative days of it being published by a majority vote in both Houses of Congress.

WHAT CAN I DO?

At the season of *Tu B'Shvat*, COEJL calls on Jewish activists to tell their Senators that they support the policy to protect roadless areas in National Forests and oppose any attempt to defeat it. (*Tu B'Shvat* is February 8, 2001.)

Sign the attached postcard to your Senators. And pass out postcards to people attending *Tu B'Shvat seders* and other events in your community. COEJL will forward postcards in bulk to Senators just after *Tu B'Shvat*.

For further information, contact Ariana Silverman, COEJL legislative assistant in Washington, D.C., at: coejlindc@coejl.org or 202.387.2800 ext. 29.