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First name: Michael

Last name: Kurman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am strongly against exempting any forested land from the roadless rule. With the effects of climate change still to be determined, but with evidence of increased drought in the West, losing additional forest acreage can only worsen the temperature increases in the near and farther future. Increased temperatures may lead to the introduction of pests that have wreaked havoc on Western forests further south.

We need our forests, and increased forest acreage, to help mitigate the effects of climate change. The less forests are disturbed, the stronger their ability to take up carbon dioxide and to resist pests.

We here in Maryland have lost iconic forest trees to pests, trees that were once flourishing in our area:

The American hemlock has succumbed to introduced woody adelgid. The mighty green ash has succumbed to the Emerald Ash Borer.

Forests that are weakened by road construction and non-contiguity will more easily succumb to pests such as this.

I was just in Colorado and saw the effects of the Douglas fir beetle. Not pretty. Many acres of trees and dead and brown.

We need to keep the trees in Alaska, the U.S.'s largest contiguous forest area, healthy. Cutting roads through wilderness only harms the forest as a whole.

Your mission is to preserve, maintain, and protect. Some parts of our world are off limits. This is one of them. I implore you to do your job and protect Alaskan forests. They could be our last hope as the years roll by.

[Position]

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