

## **Washington State Leaders Relish "Roadless Rule" Victory**

### **Local News**

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**OLYMPIA-** State officials are celebrating a court victory that walls off millions of acres of public lands from new development. On Wednesday the 9th Circuit Court ruled in favor of a lower court's decision to turn back a 2005 effort to open up some federal lands to new road construction and the harvest of timber. "This is a great victory for Washingtonians, who have long stood for the protection of our roadless areas," said Gov. Chris Gregoire. "These special places provide clean water, fish and wildlife habitat, and priceless recreational opportunities for Washington families. Gregoire added that the decision underscores the need for federal agencies to comply with federal laws, like the National Environmental Policy Act and Endangered Species Act, when proposing significant changes in regulations or management actions.

The Attorney General's Office, working on behalf of the Governor and the State of Washington, has done the legal legwork to successfully challenge the 2005 rulemaking action. "Today's victory is sweet for those of us who want to see our forests conserved for future generations," said Attorney General Rob McKenna. "The conservation of natural resources is something that all state citizens strongly support. And that's why we've made the legal defense of our environment a top priority." The 2001 rule set aside millions of acres of public lands as off limits for the building of new roads or the harvesting of timber. The 2001 rule was repealed by the federal government in 2005 but without any review of possible impacts to the environment or endangered species. "I am pleased to see that roadless areas will continue to be protected," said Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark. "The reason conservation organizations in Washington, Oregon, New Mexico, and California joined together to overturn the 2005 action is because of a shared commitment to preserving our natural heritage."