



Wildlife Habitat, Migration Routes Under Threat

Snowy owl, Western Arctic, Alaska
Florian Schulz

Around the globe, plants and animals are losing their natural habitats due to human development and the effects of climate change. To survive, they must be able to migrate and establish themselves in new areas.

But in the U.S., only 14 percent of the land is protected from development in scattered islands of wild nature, such as parks, wilderness areas and wildlife refuges. To give wildlife a chance to adapt and endure, we must conserve, expand and connect wildlands across the nation.

Unfortunately, our elected officials are taking the opposite stance, directed by the “energy dominance” agenda of the new administration. This agenda is a sweeping effort to deregulate industry, sell off national public lands and allow private interests to exploit and damage those lands without consideration for wildlife or people. If successful, it may push more species to the brink of extinction.

Disastrous Rollbacks

Claiming the existence of an “energy emergency,” the administration has indicated on numerous occasions that it intends to roll back national monument designations and reopen other protected lands to extractive uses. Other tangible threats include the administration’s announcements to rescind protections for over 13 million acres of public lands in Alaska’s Western Arctic and to revoke the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule that protects more than 44 million acres of intact national forest lands.

While the human impacts of these actions—including air and water quality degradation, cultural site destruction and outdoor access restriction—would be devastating, the impact would be especially disastrous to the wildlife that call public lands home. As documented examples reveal, when roads slice across intact wildlands to service energy and

[continues on page 3](#)



Dear Conservation Champion,

Thank you for your unwavering support for America's public lands and waters throughout this very challenging year.

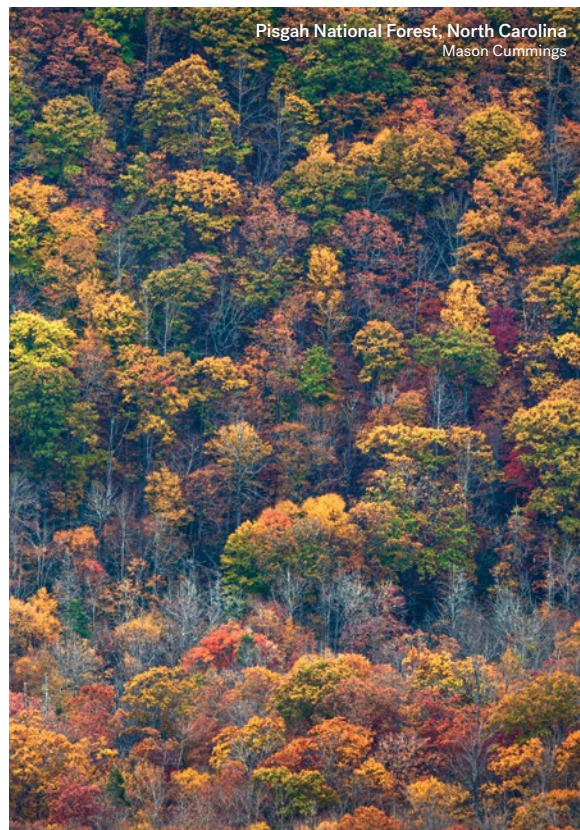
In our 90-year history, The Wilderness Society has rarely faced such an onslaught of attacks threatening nature and people. The wildest areas of our national forests, the most fragile Arctic landscapes and the beloved national monuments that span our country are at great risk. It's shocking to think of losing these places that not only mean so much to us, but also to the wildlife that depend on them.

This organization knows how to push back with resilience, creativity and purpose. As my first year here comes to a close, I can say that we are uniquely equipped to stand up for the freedom these wild places provide and for our country's remarkable conservation legacy.

With your unwavering support, we helped stop one of the most aggressive efforts to sell off public lands ever attempted by Congress (see page 4)—proof that collectively raising our voices has the power to protect the lands that belong to all of us and to future generations.

Thank you for being part of this growing community and trusting our expertise to protect public lands. We can't do any of it without you.

Tracy Stone-Manning
President



The Wilderness Society recognizes Native Americans and Indigenous peoples as the longest serving stewards of the land.

To learn more visit:
wilderness.org/landacknowledgment

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Design: Owen Design Co.

Grizzly bear, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming
A. Falgout, NPS



Mojave Desert tortoise, California
Sam Roberts



WILDLIFE HABITAT, MIGRATION ROUTES UNDER THREAT continued from page 1

logging projects, natural movement pathways are cut off, habitats are degraded and animals are killed. Additionally, noise disturbances disrupt wildlife behavior, and physical barriers, such as the border wall that snakes across southwestern states, deter wildlife movement.

Mapping the Value of Public Lands for Wildlife

To illustrate this threat, Wilderness Society mapping analysts gathered data comparing select existing land protection boundaries with identified critical habitat and migration corridors of imperiled North American wildlife. The results of this mapping effort are clear: national monuments, roadless areas within national forests, and other protected lands across the country are helping to preserve vital wildlife habitat.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in the southwestern United States, where national monuments and mineral withdrawals create a vital network of protected habitat for sensitive desert wildlife. The Mojave Desert tortoise, for example, has critical habitat in an area that spans Chuckwalla, Mojave Trails, Avi Kwa Ame, Gold Butte and Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monuments. Nearby, the Mexican spotted owl roams across three national monuments that comprise over four million acres: Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni—Ancestral

Footprints of the Grand Canyon, Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears National Monuments.

A Tough Fight Ahead—But We Can Help

Countless other imperiled species like polar bears, lynx, salmon, wolves, sage-grouse, pronghorn and more have critical habitat that will be fragmented or destroyed if the administration follows through with its reckless “energy dominance” agenda. Additional threats to more than 44 million acres of roadless forests (see page 6) will further jeopardize the undisturbed public lands that wildlife desperately need to survive.

As hopeless as this seems, our science—and your voices—are the best tools we have to challenge these harmful decisions and loudly show our support for public lands (see page 4). Thank you for joining us as we continue the fight to defend the vital public lands and waters that enable wildlife to adapt, move and thrive.



Scan to view our analysis showing how land protection rollbacks could jeopardize wildlife habitat.



Anatomy of a Victory

Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Utah
Howie Garber

Before the ink was dry on President Trump's first round of executive orders in early 2025, multiple members of Congress were toying with the concept of selling off our shared public lands to pay for massive tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. The reckless idea gained significant traction as part of the budget reconciliation process, the major vehicle relied on by Congress and the administration to advance domestic policy priorities.

In late spring, a public lands sell-off provision was added to the House budget package by Representatives Mark Amodei of Nevada and Celeste Maloy of Utah, calling for the sale of more than half a million acres of public lands in these two states.

Thanks to the expertise of our staff and public pressure applied by The Wilderness Society's members and partners, objection came swiftly from Representative Ryan Zinke of Montana, who has repeatedly voiced his firm objection to public lands sales. Rallying multiple fellow colleagues, including Representative Mike Simpson from Idaho, Representative Zinke successfully removed the provision from the House budget package.

Unfortunately, other disastrous measures remained on the bill, including measures to dramatically expand mining, logging and energy development across the West and in Alaska's Arctic, strip protections for iconic places like national monuments, and effectively silence the American people from having a say in development projects impacting their communities.

Here's what you can do to help us save public lands:

1. **Sign up for Wild Alerts at wilderness.org/alert and voice your concern about threats to public lands to your elected officials.**
2. **Attend public lands town hall meetings to show your support to keep public lands in public hands.**
3. **Say thank you and applaud good actions in person and on social media.**
4. **Join your community by attending public lands rallies.**
5. **Submit an opinion column for your local news outlet sharing your support for public lands.**

Despite bipartisan opposition in the House, Utah Senator Mike Lee introduced a brazen provision to sell off approximately three million acres of public lands in the Senate version of the budget.

Again, The Wilderness Society sprang into action, tapping into our unique set of skills and wide-ranging expertise, to expose the threat this provision would have on more than 250 million acres of national forests and other public lands across the country. Our mapping analysts' groundbreaking interactive map showed the astounding array of beloved lands at risk of sale in Senator Lee's legislation. Using the map's zoom-in capabilities, people found their favorite public land destinations on the congressional chopping block, sparking widespread outrage across the country and the ideological spectrum.

Propelled by your incredible support, The Wilderness Society channeled that outrage into calls and emails to congressional switchboards and inboxes, where millions of Americans exercised their constitutional rights to demand that public lands stay in public hands.

Not on Our Watch

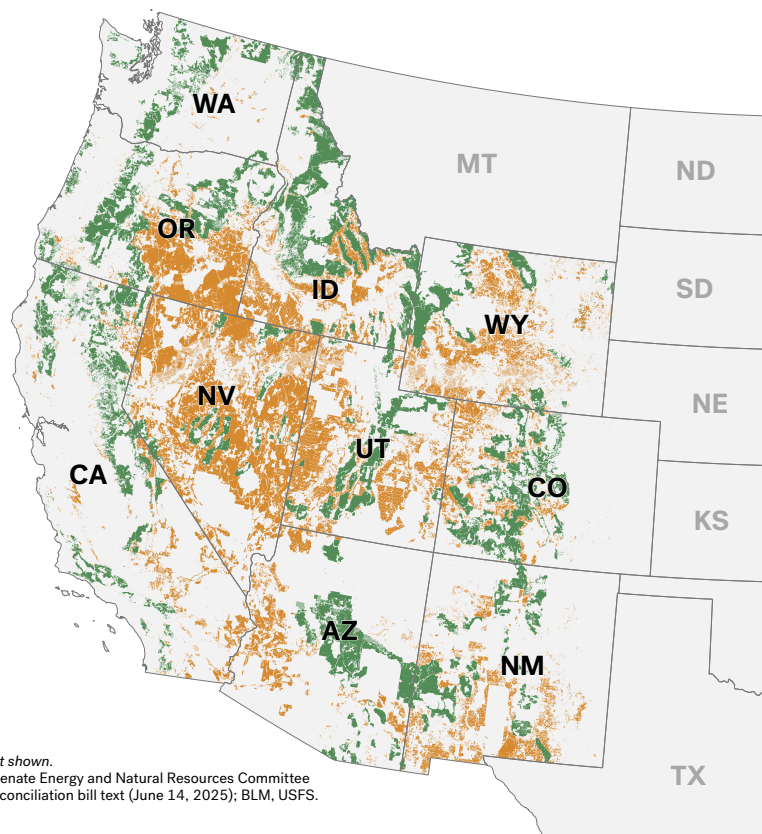
The map didn't just inform; it inspired powerful action and played a central role in building the grassroots and political pressure that ultimately led to Senator Lee withdrawing his land sale provision in late June. It's a bright moment to celebrate—but also a call to keep pushing forward.

A Map that Motivated Millions

Public lands eligible for sale under the defeated first version of the Senate budget measure

 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands eligible for sale

 U.S. Forest Service lands eligible for sale



Shown here is a portion of the map that we published in June, enabling users to view public lands that would have been sold off. To see the full interactive map, including Alaska, visit wilderness.org/map.

Our focus now shifts to mitigating damage from the other public lands provisions that became law: sweeping, mandated oil and gas lease sales across the West—including in Alaska's Arctic—forced timber sales on public lands, and rollbacks to renewable energy development. The administration plans to rescind the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, as well (see page 6 for more on this fight).

The battle is not over: we need to be louder than we were in June. Consulting with the White House, Senator Lee is building a new sell-off bill that could allow the piecemeal sale of Bureau of Land Management lands for housing developments. **Sign up for our WildAlerts to stand with us in this fight by visiting wilderness.org/take-action.**

Wild Forests at Risk

Fall is a spectacular time to soak in the beauty of our country's national forests—many of which are showcasing brilliant colors that signal the change of seasons. These ecologically diverse public lands provide us with myriad opportunities to enjoy nature; for migrating wildlife, they serve as vital havens.

Yet, our national forests are under attack. The administration has announced it intends to roll back the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, ending 25 years of protection for more than 44 million acres of the healthiest national forests left in America. This short-sighted plan would open these precious wild areas in 38 states and Alaska to unmitigated logging,

road construction and other development and, in doing so, threaten drinking water supplies for 47 million people in major cities like Phoenix, Denver and Las Vegas.

Commonly called the “Roadless Rule,” the rule was adopted at the end of the Clinton administration to protect America's last wild forests from degradation. It has successfully safeguarded the crown jewels of our National Forest System—places like the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world. With its towering old-growth trees, the Tongass serves as the traditional homelands of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian peoples, supplies a quarter of all commercial salmon

caught on the West Coast, and absorbs and captures more heat-trapping carbon than any other U.S. forest.

In addition to gutting protections, the administration is dismantling the U.S. Forest Service. Firefighting support staff, trail maintenance crews and forest scientists have been sacked, hollowing out a 120-year-old agency that stewards more than 193 million acres of our public forests. Every day the administration's end goal becomes clearer: to deeply eradicate the functions of the agency so they can justify a ‘solution’ of turning these lands over to state or private management—a de facto sell-out. We will not let it happen.

When we raise our collective voices and hold our elected leaders accountable—just as we did in June defeating plans to sell off millions of acres of public lands in the president's domestic policy bill (see pages 4 and 5)—*we are unstoppable*. Our national forests deserve no less.



Tongass National Forest, Alaska
Colin Arisman



To add your voice and help us keep national forests wild and protected, visit

wilderness.org/protectforests or scan the QR code above.

Griff Washburn, a popular singer-songwriter who goes by Goth Babe, and Wild Confluence Media are working with The Wilderness Society to bring awareness to the administration's plans to rescind the Roadless Rule and strip protections from over 44 million acres of national forests—including the Tongass in Alaska.

Nature isn't just a place to visit...it's home.

It nurtures us, feeds us and lifts our spirits.
It also has the power to protect a sustainable
climate, flourishing wildlife, our collective
health—and ultimately, our survival.
Wouldn't it feel good to return the favor?

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