



5

ROGUE RIVER

THREAT: Logging, mining, and road building that will increase wildfire risk

STATES: Oregon

SUMMARY

The Rogue River is a beloved destination for anglers, hunters, and boaters, an engine for the local economy, and vital habitat for salmon and wildlife. But this wild treasure is threatened by logging and mining, which would pollute tributary streams, destroy wildlife habitat, and increase wildfire risk. The U.S. Department of Agriculture must uphold existing protections under the Roadless Rule that help prevent harmful logging, mining, and road building so that the Rogue remains protected for today's communities and future generations.

BOB WICK

THE RIVER

The Rogue River flows 215 miles through volcanic rock in the Cascade Range then weaves through the Klamath and Siskiyou Mountains before reaching the Pacific Ocean. At over 5,100 square miles, the Rogue River watershed drains an area roughly the size of the state of Connecticut. The Rogue is internationally known as one of the most outstanding rivers in the United States and was designated as one of the first Wild and Scenic Rivers in 1968. It is home to the second largest salmon run (100,000 annually) in the contiguous United States, only behind the Columbia River that has a watershed 50 times its size. Salmon fishing, hunting, rafting, and other outdoor recreation contribute over \$30 million annually to local communities in southwest Oregon. The wildlands and waters of the Rogue River, and its main tributary the Illinois River, are at the heart of the most ecologically important unprotected landscapes in the American West.

THE THREAT

The Rogue and Illinois rivers are threatened by unsustainable timber harvesting, mining, road-building, and increased fire risk. Proposed nickel strip mining by a foreign-owned company is a persistent threat. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced its intention to remove existing river protections provided by the federal Roadless Rule, which for over two decades has prohibited the construction of new roads and commercial logging in "roadless areas" in national forests in 39 states including Oregon, putting clean water and freshwater habitat at serious risk. One of Oregon's largest Roadless Areas — the North and South Kalmiopsis — is located in the Illinois/Rogue watershed.

This rollback could remove protection for at least 200,000 acres of wild, road-free habitat and sources of clean water in the Rogue and Illinois River watersheds.

5

ROGUE RIVER

Continued



Removal of these protections will increase the likelihood of harmful logging and mining, including proposed industrial nickel strip mining long opposed by local communities.

Removal of protections under the Roadless Rule could have significant direct effect on the clean water of the Rogue River watershed, degrading habitat and increasing water temperatures. This would increase wildfire risk, as wildfires are four times as likely to start in areas with roads than in roadless forest tracks. Across the country, over 90% of all wildfires occurred within a half mile of a road.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is required to consider public input on its process to review the environmental impacts of its proposal as a part of its Draft Environmental Impact Statement expected to be issued in the spring of 2026. The public must urge the agency to uphold existing protections under the Roadless Rule that help prevent harmful logging, mining, and road-building that will increase catastrophic wildfire risk.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

DAVID MORYC
Senior Director River Protection
American Rivers
503-307-1137
dmoryc@americanrivers.org

MICHAEL DOTSON
Executive Director
Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center
541-488-5789
Michael@kswild.org

TAKE ACTION:

[AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/
ROGUERIVER2026](https://AMERICANRIVERS.ORG/ROGUERIVER2026)