The Whole Argument, in Order.

Memo 023 in about 6 minutes: one short paragraph for each part, with a link to the full section behind it.

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ONE MORE VOICE, ONE MORE POINT OF VIEW

I got to know the bill. I read what the critics and supporters had to say, considered the context, and thought about how these things come about. I thought there might be room for one more voice, one more point of view, maybe even one more idea. This is the overview of Tymmber Outdoor Memo 023. Let me know what you think.

Memo 023 asks one question: when a permitted project on public land ends, what should the land become, and who decides? The full memo is long because it shows its sources. This overview keeps the argument and leaves out the detail. Each part ends with a link to the section where the evidence is.

THE ARGUMENT, IN ORDER

1. **Who has been in the room.** Decisions about public land have been shaped by a small number of agencies, organizations and courts. About 1.2 million entries were filed in the 2026 Roadless Rule docket, and organizations account for most of them [3]. The 183.2 million Americans who took part in outdoor recreation in 2025 [5] are mostly not in that record. SECTION 1 →
2. **What we ask of the land.** About 28 percent of the country is federal land [37]. The U.S. population grew from 76 million in 1900 to 331 million in 2020 [36]. The National Park Service recorded 323 million visits in 2025 [44] and carries a $24.2 billion maintenance backlog [45]. We ask more of the land every decade, and the care we pay for has not grown with the ask. SECTION 2 →
3. **Why birds declined.** North America has about 3 billion fewer birds than in 1970 [11], and greater sage-grouse are down 78.8 percent since 1966 [13]. The causes are many and mostly unowned: lost grassland, intensive farming, pesticides, outdoor cats and window collisions [49]. Wind turbines are one contributor among them. A permit cannot set bird populations, but it can decide whether anyone writes down what is known about the wildlife at a site. SECTION 3 →
4. **Why game animals came back.** Elk fell to about 41,000 in 1907 and white-tailed deer to 500,000 or fewer around 1900, and both have recovered. Bald eagle nesting pairs rose from 417 in 1963 to about 71,400 in 2020 [7][8][10]. For game species, part of the reason is steady, dedicated money: hunters and shooters have paid an excise tax since 1937, and more than $15.3 billion has been collected for state wildlife agencies [50]. SECTION 4 →
5. **What has been tried.** Funding tied to a clear job and collected on a schedule, such as the Duck Stamp, Pittman-Robertson and the coal reclamation fee, has tended to last [9][14][15]. Funding that depends on yearly budget decisions, or on bonds that are not indexed, has tended to fall short. Federal oil and gas bond minimums date from the 1950s and 1960s, and the Government Accountability Office found 84 percent of sampled bonds likely too small [21]. SECTION 5 →
6. **Where things stand.** Two decisions are open on separate legal tracks. Congress is considering a 417-page bill, the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act of 2026, that would make permitting faster and more predictable for energy and mining projects [1]. The United States Department of Agriculture has proposed ending the Roadless Rule. Its comment window closed on October 6, 2026, and a final decision is still ahead [30][31]. The bill text reviewed does not appear to contain a restoration duty for wind, solar, storage or transmission projects [1]. SECTION 6 →
7. **Who speaks for us.** Special interest groups are ordinary organizations of people who share a stake, and most of us are heard through one. It helps to know who is behind a message. Five questions apply to any group, including Tymmber Outdoor: who funds it, who runs it, who gains if its side wins, what it says in its own words, and how it asked its members. SECTION 7 →
8. **Whose voice counts more.** A public comment is not a vote. What carries weight is reasoning and first-hand experience [48]. The memo tests one idea: weight by the question, not by the person. On fire behavior or evacuation, the account of someone who has fought fires counts most. On a trail closure, regular users count most. On cleanup, reclamation workers and downstream neighbors count most. SECTION 8 →

9. **Two groups, shared ground.** BlueRibbon Coalition and More Than Just Parks disagree about the Roadless Rule. Both cite recreation, both describe the condition of the land, each accepts some limits, and both want decisions that last [3][27][28]. Memo 023 invites both to respond. SECTION 9 →

THE PROPOSAL

When a permitted project on public land ends for any reason, the site becomes a designated outdoor recreation or wildlife restoration area. A plan filed with the permit sets the end state, and the sponsor and the public fund it together. A project is approved for its economic return, and the proposal asks that the site's next use be judged the same way, as outdoor economic development. The proposal has eight parts:

1. A reuse plan filed with the permit, written with residents and users.
2. Automatic triggers: the project ends, is abandoned, never starts, is handed back or is revoked.
3. Financial assurance sized to the disturbance, posted at permit time and released in stages.
4. A shared cost: the sponsor pays to restore the site to a safe baseline, and the sponsor and the public share the cost of the new area.
5. Dedicated receipts from that project type for the public share, so it does not depend on a yearly appropriation.
6. A named steward for each site.
7. Local tailoring and Tribal consultation.
8. A short wildlife statement, prepared by a regional university and paid for by the sponsor, for every project type.

For the sponsor, the trade is a known end-of-life cost on day one, permit protection tied to following the plan, and staged release of its money. SECTION 10, WITH THE FUNDING LAYERS →

THE TEST AND THE QUESTION

A New Mexico test case. Sierra County offers a place to try the idea at modest scale. The Copper Flat mine site shows the question: if a project does not go forward, or when it ends, what does the site become and who pays? The memo takes no position on the mine. It proposes a first meeting of ranchers, growers, recreation users, hunters and anglers, conservation groups, Tribal governments, county government, land managers and both groups from part 9. SECTION 11 →

What we owe the unborn. The people who will inherit this land cannot file a comment or buy a stamp. The memo offers three commitments: land is not left disturbed and unclaimed when a project ends, the people who use the land have a seat when the decision is made at the start, and the money for restoration does not depend on any one year's budget. SECTION 12 →

WHAT WE ARE ASKING

- **The Senate, including Senator Heinrich:** Could the Permitting Tracker in §1132 carry a recreation field? Would sponsors support a reuse-plan provision in the permit? Could a Government Accountability Office review of the bill's effects on public-land uses be requested? [1]
- **BlueRibbon Coalition and More Than Just Parks:** Is the description of your positions accurate, and what would you add or correct?
- **Hunting, fishing and recreation groups:** Would a reuse-plan requirement and a seat at a shared table serve your members?
- **Anyone:** What is missing from the three commitments?

Several design questions remain open in Section 10, including the public's share of the new area, whether the duty covers private land with federal approvals, how assurance is indexed, and how a sponsor-paid wildlife statement stays independent.

BRACKETED NUMBERS LINK TO THE SOURCE LIST IN MEMO 023. FIGURES ARE AS REPORTED IN THOSE SOURCES AND ARE SUBJECT TO CORRECTION. READ THE FULL MEMO: ENSURING THE OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL VOICE ALWAYS HAS A SEAT AT THE TABLE