

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 197

To provide for a land exchange in the Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota,
and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 3, 2025

Mr. STAUBER (for himself and Mr. FINSTAD) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To provide for a land exchange in the Chippewa National
Forest, Minnesota, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Lake Winnibigoshish
5 Land Exchange Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) BWLT.—The term “BWLT” means Big
9 Winnie Land and Timber, LLC, a Minnesota Lim-
10 ited Liability Corporation.

1 (2) MAP.—The term “Map” means the map en-
2 titled “Heig Land Exchange” and dated December
3 14, 2023.

4 (3) FEDERAL LAND.—The term “Federal land”
5 means the approximately 17.5 acres of Federal land
6 in Itasca County, Minnesota, generally depicted as
7 the “Federal Parcel” on the Map.

8 (4) NON-FEDERAL LAND.—The term “non-Fed-
9 eral land” means the approximately 36.7 acres of
10 non-Federal land in Itasca County, Minnesota, gen-
11 erally depicted as the “Non-Federal Parcel” on the
12 Map.

13 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
14 the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the
15 Chief of the Forest Service.

16 **SEC. 3. EXCHANGE OF LAND.**

17 (a) EXCHANGE AUTHORIZED.—Subject to the provi-
18 sions of this Act, if BWLT offers to convey the non-Fed-
19 eral land to the United States, the Secretary shall, not
20 later than 1 year after the date on which such offer is
21 made—

22 (1) accept the offer;

23 (2) convey to BWLT all right, title, and inter-
24 est of the United States in and to the Federal land,
25 excepting and reserving an easement for road access

1 to National Forest System land west of the Federal
2 Parcel; and

3 (3) accept from BWLT all right, title, and in-
4 terest of BWLT in and to the non-Federal land.

5 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—The exchange under sub-
6 section (a) shall be—

7 (1) conditioned on title approval for the non-
8 Federal land by the Secretary in accordance with
9 subsection (e);

10 (2) conditioned on a cash equalization payment
11 made by BWLT to the United States in accordance
12 with subsection (c) if, under the appraisals con-
13 ducted in accordance with this Act, it is determined
14 that the value of the Federal land exceeds the value
15 of the non-Federal land;

16 (3) conditioned on the satisfactory completion
17 of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment by
18 BWLT, provided to the Secretary, in advance of the
19 acceptance of the non-Federal parcel;

20 (4) subject to valid existing rights; and

21 (5) subject to any other terms and conditions
22 the Secretary determines appropriate.

23 (c) EQUAL VALUE AND CASH EQUALIZATION.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
25 graph (2), the exchange under subsection (a) shall

1 be for equal value or the values shall be equalized
2 by a cash payment.

3 (2) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding any other
4 provision of law, if the appraised value of the non-
5 Federal land to be conveyed to the United States ex-
6 ceeds the appraised value of the Federal land, a cash
7 equalization payment by the United States to
8 BWLT is hereby waived and the amount of such
9 waived payment shall be considered a donation by
10 BWLT to the United States for all purposes of law.

11 (d) APPRAISALS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The value of the land to be
13 exchanged under this Act shall be determined by ap-
14 praisals conducted by an independent and qualified
15 appraiser mutually agreed to by the Secretary and
16 BWLT.

17 (2) APPRAISAL STANDARDS.—The Secretary
18 shall complete appraisals of the land to be ex-
19 changed under this Act in accordance with—

20 (A) the Uniform Appraisal Standards for
21 Federal Land Acquisitions; and

22 (B) the Uniform Standards of Professional
23 Appraisal Practice.

24 (e) FORMAT.—Title to the non-Federal land to be
25 conveyed to the United States under this Act shall be

1 found sufficient by the Secretary pursuant to section 3111
2 of title 40, United States Code.

3 (f) MANAGEMENT OF ACQUIRED LAND.—The non-
4 Federal land acquired by the United States under sub-
5 section (a) shall be—

6 (1) added to, and managed as part of, the
7 Chippewa National Forest; and

8 (2) managed in accordance with the laws, rules,
9 and regulations pertaining to National Forest Sys-
10 tem lands.

11 (g) MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after
13 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
14 shall finalize the Map and legal descriptions of all
15 land to be conveyed under this Act.

16 (2) CONTROLLING DOCUMENT.—In the case of
17 a discrepancy between the Map and a legal descrip-
18 tion, the Map shall control.

19 (3) CORRECTIONS.—The Secretary and BWLT,
20 by mutual agreement, may correct any minor errors
21 in the Map or in the legal descriptions, including
22 with respect to the boundaries of the Federal land
23 and the non-Federal land.

1 (4) MAP ON FILE.—The Map and legal descrip-
2 tions shall be on file and available for public inspec-
3 tion in appropriate offices of the Forest Service.

4 (h) CLOSING COSTS.—As a condition for the ex-
5 change under subsection (a), BWLT shall pay all closing
6 costs associated with the exchange, including for—

7 (1) title insurance and title search;

8 (2) any applicable inspection fees, escrow fees,
9 attorneys fees, and recording fees; and

10 (3) any environmental analysis or resource sur-
11 vey required under Federal law, regulation, or pol-
12 icy, including a Phase I Environmental Site Assess-
13 ment of the non-Federal land.

14 (i) SURVEY.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The exact acreages and legal
16 descriptions of the Federal and non-Federal land to
17 be exchanged under subsection (a) shall be deter-
18 mined by surveys satisfactory to the Secretary.

19 (2) COSTS OF SURVEY.—BWLT shall bear all
20 costs associated with the surveys under paragraph
21 (1).

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