

## **NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION ESTABLISHMENT ACT**

[Public Law 98–244, Approved Mar. 26, 1984, 98 Stat. 107]

[As Amended Through P.L. 118–198, Enacted December 23, 2024]

【Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Public Law 98–244. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/>】

【Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).】

AN ACT To establish a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the  
United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act”.

【16 U.S.C. 3701 note】

### **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSES OF FOUNDATION.**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the “Foundation”). The Foundation is a charitable and nonprofit corporation and is not an agency or establishment of the United States.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Foundation are—

(1) to encourage, accept, and administer private gifts of property for the benefit of, or in connection with, the activities and services of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to further the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources;

(2) to undertake and conduct such other activities as will further the conservation and management of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources of the United States, and its territories and possessions, for present and future generations of Americans; and

(3) to participate with, and otherwise assist, foreign governments, entities, and individuals in undertaking and conducting activities that will further the conservation and man-

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agement of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources of other countries.

【16 U.S.C. 3701】

**SEC. 3. BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE FOUNDATION.****(a) ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP.—**

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Foundation shall have a governing Board of Directors (referred to in this Act as the “Board”), which shall consist of 30 Directors appointed in accordance with subsection (b), each of whom shall be a United States citizen.

(2) **REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSE POINTS OF VIEW.**—To the maximum extent practicable, the membership of the Board shall represent diverse points of view relating to conservation and management of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources.

(3) **NOT FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.**—Appointment as a Director of the Foundation shall not constitute employment by, or the holding of an office of, the United States for the purpose of any Federal law.

**(b) APPOINTMENT AND TERMS.—**

(1) **AGENCY HEADS.**—The Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere shall be Directors of the Foundation.

(2) **APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS.**—After consulting with the Secretary of Commerce and considering the recommendations submitted by the Board, the Secretary of the Interior shall appoint 28 Directors who, to the maximum extent practicable, shall—

(A) be knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to the conservation of fish, wildlife, or other natural resources; and

(B) represent a balance of expertise in ocean, coastal, freshwater, and terrestrial resource conservation.

(3) **TERMS.**—Each Director (other than a Director described in paragraph (1)) shall be appointed for a term of 6 years.

**(4) VACANCIES.—**

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of the Interior shall fill a vacancy on the Board.

(B) **TERM OF APPOINTMENTS TO FILL UNEXPIRED TERMS.**—An individual appointed to fill a vacancy that occurs before the expiration of the term of a Director shall be appointed for the remainder of the term.

(5) **REAPPOINTMENT.**—An individual (other than an individual described in paragraph (1)) shall not serve more than 2 consecutive terms as a Director, excluding any term of less than 6 years.

(6) **REQUEST FOR REMOVAL.**—The executive committee of the Board may submit to the Secretary of the Interior a letter describing the nonperformance of a Director and requesting the removal of the Director from the Board.

(7) CONSULTATION BEFORE REMOVAL.—Before removing any Director from the Board, the Secretary of the Interior shall consult with the Secretary of Commerce.

(c) CHAIRMAN.—The Chairman shall be elected by the Board from its members for a 2-year term.

(d) QUORUM.—A majority of the current membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

(e) MEETINGS.—The Board shall meet at the call of the Chairman at least once a year. If a Director misses 3 consecutive regularly scheduled meetings, that individual may be removed from the Board and that vacancy filled in accordance with subsection (b).

(f) REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES.—Members of the Board shall serve without pay, but may be reimbursed for the actual and necessary traveling and subsistence expenses incurred by them in the performance of the duties of the Foundation.

(g) GENERAL POWERS.—

(1) The Board may complete the organization of the Foundation by—

(A) appointing officers and employees;

(B) adopting a constitution and bylaws consistent with the purposes of the Foundation and the provisions of this Act; and

(C) undertaking of other such acts as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

(2) The following limitations apply with respect to the appointment of officers and employees of the Foundation:

(A) IN GENERAL.—Officers and employees of the Foundation shall be appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(B) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Foundation shall have an Executive Director who shall be—

(i) appointed by, and serve at the direction of, the Board as the chief executive officer of the Foundation; and

(ii) knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to fish and wildlife conservation.

[16 U.S.C. 3702]

#### SEC. 4. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE FOUNDATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Foundation—

(1) shall have perpetual succession;

(2) may conduct business throughout the several States, territories, and possessions of the United States and abroad;

(3) shall have its principal offices in the District of Columbia or in a county in the State of Maryland or Virginia that borders on the District of Columbia; and

(4) shall at all times maintain a designated agent authorized to accept service of process for the Foundation.

The serving of notice to, or service of process upon, the agent required under paragraph (4), or mailed to the business address of

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such agent, shall be deemed as service upon or notice to the Foundation.

(b) SEAL.—The Foundation shall have an official seal selected by the Board which shall be judicially noticed.

(c) POWERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out the purposes described in section 2, the Foundation shall have, in addition to the powers otherwise given it under this Act, the usual powers of a corporation acting as a trustee in the District of Columbia, including the power—

(A) to accept, receive, solicit, hold, administer, and use any gift, devise, or bequest, either absolutely or in trust, of real or personal property or any income therefrom or other interest therein;

(B) to acquire by purchase or exchange any real or personal property or interest therein, subject to subsection (e);

(C) to invest any funds provided to the Foundation by the Federal Government in obligations of the United States or in obligations or securities that are guaranteed or insured by the United States;

(D) to deposit any funds provided to the Foundation by the Federal Government into accounts at 1 or more financial institutions that are members of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or the Securities Investment Protection Corporation;

(E) to make use of any interest or investment income that accrues as a consequence of actions taken under subparagraph (C) or (D) to carry out the purposes of the Foundation;

(F) to use Federal funds to make payments under cooperative agreements entered into with willing private landowners to provide substantial long-term benefits for the restoration or enhancement of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources on private land;

(G) unless otherwise required by the instrument of transfer, to sell, donate, lease, invest, reinvest, retain or otherwise dispose of any property or income therefrom;

(H) to borrow money and issue bonds, debentures, or other debt instruments;

(I) to sue and be sued, and complain and defend itself in any court of competent jurisdiction, except that the Directors of the Foundation shall not be personally liable, except for gross negligence;

(J) to enter into contracts or other arrangements with public agencies and private organizations and persons and to make such payments as may be necessary to carry out its functions;

(K) to receive and administer restitution and community service payments, amounts for mitigation of impacts to natural resources, and other amounts arising from legal, regulatory, or administrative proceedings, subject to the condition that the amounts are received or administered for purposes that further the conservation and manage-

ment of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources; and <sup>1</sup>

(L) to do acts necessary to carry out the purposes of the Foundation.

(2) TREATMENT OF REAL PROPERTY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this Act, an interest in real property shall be treated as including easements or other rights for preservation, conservation, protection, or enhancement by and for the public of natural, scenic, historic, scientific, educational, inspirational, or recreational resources.

(B) ENCUMBERED REAL PROPERTY.—A gift, devise, or bequest may be accepted by the Foundation even though the gift, devise, or bequest is encumbered, restricted, or subject to beneficial interests of private persons if any current or future interest in the gift, devise, or bequest is for the benefit of the Foundation.

(3) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—The acceptance and administration of amounts by the Foundation under paragraph (1)(K) does not alter, supersede, or limit any regulatory or statutory requirement associated with those amounts.

(d) CERTAIN LANDS, WATERS, AND INTERESTS NOT SUBJECT TO CONDEMNATION.—No lands or waters, or interests therein, that are owned by the Foundation and are determined by the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service or the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, as the case may be, to be valuable for purposes of fish and wildlife conservation or management shall be subject to condemnation by any State or political subdivision, or any agent or instrumentality thereof.

(e) ACQUISITION, MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL OF REAL PROPERTY.—(1) The Foundation may only use Federal funds for the acquisition of interests in real property if—

(A) the interest is a long-term property interest; and

(B) the Foundation notifies the Federal agency that administers the program under which the funds were provided of the proposed acquisition, and the agency does not object in writing to the proposed acquisition within 60 calendar days after the date of the notification.

(2) The Foundation shall convey to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for inclusion within the National Wildlife Refuge System any real property acquired by the Foundation in whole or in part with Federal funds if the Director, within 1 year after the date on which the property was acquired by the Foundation, requests the conveyance in writing.

(3)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), the Foundation may—

<sup>1</sup> Stipulated in reauthorizing language in P.L. 102-440: "Beginning in fiscal year 1993 and hereafter, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation may continue to draw down Federal funds when matching requirements have been met: *Provided*, That interest earned by the Foundation and its subgrantees on funds drawn down to date, but not immediately disbursed, shall be used to fund all activities as approved by the Board of Directors: *Provided further*, That the Foundation's subgrantees shall be exempt from the audit reporting and compliance requirements of OMB Circular A-133, for all grants of \$100,000 or less. The Foundation shall amend its grant contracts to ensure that its subgrantees are advised and certify that they will comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations imposed on individuals or organizations receiving Federal funds."

(i) convey to another person any real property acquired in whole or in part with Federal funds and not conveyed under paragraph (2); and

(ii) grant or otherwise provide Federal funds to another person for purposes of assisting that person to acquire real property in whole or in part with such funds.

(B) The Foundation may only make a conveyance or provide Federal funds under subparagraph (A) if—

(i) the conveyance or provision is subject to terms and conditions that will ensure that the real property will be administered for the long-term conservation and management of fish and wildlife and in a manner that will provide for appropriate public access and use; and

(ii) the Foundation notifies the Federal agency that administers the Federal program under which the funds were provided of the proposed conveyance or provision of Federal funds, and the agency does not object in writing to the proposed conveyance or provision of Federal funds within 60 calendar days after the date of the notification.

(4) All real property acquired by the Foundation in whole or in part with Federal funds and held by it shall be administered for the conservation and management of fish and wildlife and in a manner that will provide for appropriate public access and use.

(5) RECONVEYANCE OF REAL PROPERTY.—The Foundation shall convey at not less than fair market value any real property acquired by the Foundation in whole or in part with Federal funds if the Foundation notifies the Federal agency that administers the Federal program under which the funds were provided, and the agency does not disagree within 60 calendar days after the date of the notification, that—

(A) the property is no longer valuable for the purpose of conservation or management of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources; and

(B) the purposes of the Foundation would be better served by use of the proceeds of the conveyance for other authorized activities of the Foundation.

(f) EXPENDITURES FOR PRINTING SERVICES OR CAPITAL EQUIPMENT.—The Foundation shall not make any expenditure of Federal funds in connection with any one transaction for printing services or capital equipment that is greater than \$10,000 unless the expenditure is approved by the Federal agency that administers the Federal program under which the funds were provided.

(g) NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.—The Foundation shall not make a grant of Federal funds in an amount greater than \$10,000 unless, by not later than 30 days before the grant is made, the Foundation provides notice of the grant to the Member of Congress for the congressional district in which the project to be funded with the grant will be carried out.

[16 U.S.C. 3703]

#### SEC. 5. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND SUPPORT.

(a) PROVISION OF SERVICES.—The Secretary may provide personnel, facilities, and other administrative services to the Foundation, including reimbursement of expenses under section 3, not to

exceed the current Federal Government per diem rates, for a period of up to five years from the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) REIMBURSEMENT.—The Foundation may reimburse the Secretary for any administrative service provided under subsection (a). The Secretary shall deposit any reimbursement received under this subsection into the Treasury to the credit of the appropriations then current and chargeable for the cost of providing such services.

[16 U.S.C. 3704]

#### SEC. 6. VOLUNTEER STATUS.

The Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce may accept, without regard to the civil service classification laws, rules, or regulations, the services of the Foundation, the Board, and the officers and employees of the Board, without compensation from the Department of the Interior or the Department of Commerce, as volunteers in the performance of the functions authorized herein, in the manner provided for under section 7(c) of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742f(c)).

[16 U.S.C. 3705]

#### SEC. 7. AUDITS, REPORT REQUIREMENTS, AND PETITION OF ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR EQUITABLE RELIEF.

(a) AUDITS.—For purposes of the Act entitled “An Act for audit accounts of private corporations established under Federal law” approved August 30, 1964 (Public Law 88–504, 36 U.S.C. 1101–1103), the Foundation shall be treated as a private corporation established under Federal law.

(b) REPORT.—The Foundation shall, as soon as practicable after the end of each fiscal year, transmit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report of its proceedings and activities during such year, including a full and complete statement of its receipts, expenditures, and investments; and a description of all acquisition and disposal of real property that is subject to section 4(e). The report shall include a detailed statement of the recipient, amount, and purpose of each grant made by the Foundation in the fiscal year.

(c) RELIEF WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN FOUNDATION ACTS OR FAILURE TO ACT.—If the Foundation—

(1) engages in, or threatens to engage in, any act, practice, or policy that is inconsistent with its purposes set forth in section 2(b); or

(2) refuses, fails, or neglects to discharge its obligations under this Act, or threatens to do

the Attorney General of the United States may petition in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia for such equitable relief as may be necessary or appropriate.

[16 U.S.C. 3706]

#### SEC. 8. UNITED STATES RELEASE FROM LIABILITY.

The United States shall not be liable for any debts, defaults, acts, or omissions of the Foundation nor shall the full faith and credit of the United States extend to any obligation of the Foundation.

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[16 U.S.C. 3707]

**SEC. 9. AMENDMENT AND REPEAL.**

The Congress expressly reserves the right to repeal or amend this Act at any time.

[16 U.S.C. 3708]

**SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.****(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—**

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2030—

- (A) \$15,000,000 to the Secretary of the Interior;
- (B) \$5,000,000 to the Secretary of Agriculture; and
- (C) \$5,000,000 to the Secretary of Commerce.

(2) **REQUIREMENT OF ADVANCE PAYMENT.**—The amount made available for a fiscal year under paragraph (1) shall be provided to the Foundation in an advance payment of the entire amount on October 1, or as soon as practicable thereafter, of the fiscal year.

(3) **USE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS.**—Subject to paragraph (4), amounts made available under paragraph (1) shall be provided to the Foundation for use for matching, on a 1-to-1 basis, contributions (whether in currency, services, or property) made to the Foundation, or to a recipient of a grant provided by the Foundation, by private persons and State and local government agencies.

(4) **PROHIBITION ON USE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.**—No Federal funds made available under paragraph (1) shall be used by the Foundation for administrative expenses of the Foundation, including for salaries, travel and transportation expenses, and other overhead expenses.

**(b) ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION.—****(1) AMOUNTS FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—**

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—In addition to the amounts authorized to be appropriated under subsection (a), Federal departments, agencies, or instrumentalities are authorized to provide funds to the Foundation through Federal financial assistance grants, cooperative agreements, participating agreements, and similar instruments used for providing partnership funds, subject to the condition that the amounts are used for purposes that further the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources in accordance with this Act.

(B) **FUNDING AGREEMENTS.**—Federal departments, agencies, and instrumentalities may enter into a Federal funding agreement with the Foundation for a period of not more than 10 years.

(C) **ADVANCES.**—Federal departments, agencies, or instrumentalities may, and should when possible, advance amounts described in subparagraph (A) to the Foundation in a lump sum without regard to when the expenses for which the amounts are used are incurred.

(D) MANAGEMENT FEES.—The Foundation may assess and collect fees for the management of amounts received under this paragraph.

(2) USE OF AMOUNTS ACCEPTED FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Federal funds provided to the Foundation under paragraph (1) may be used by the Foundation for matching, in whole or in part, contributions (whether in currency, services, or property) made to the Foundation by private persons, State and local government agencies, and other entities.

(3) ADMINISTRATION OF AMOUNTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In entering into contracts, agreements, or other partnerships pursuant to this Act, a Federal department, agency, or instrumentality shall have discretion to waive any competitive process applicable to the department, agency, or instrumentality for entering into contracts, agreements, or partnerships with the Foundation if the purpose of the waiver is—

(i) to address an environmental emergency resulting from a natural or other disaster; or

(ii) as determined by the head of the applicable Federal department, agency, or instrumentality, to reduce administrative expenses and expedite the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources.

(B) REPORTS.—The Foundation shall include in the annual report submitted under section 7(b) a description of any use of the authority under subparagraph (A) by a Federal department, agency, or instrumentality in that fiscal year.

(c) PROHIBITION ON USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS FOR LITIGATION AND LOBBYING EXPENSES.—Amounts provided as a grant by the Foundation shall not be used for—

(1) any expense related to litigation; or

(2) any activity the purpose of which is to influence legislation pending before Congress.

(d) USE OF GIFTS, DEVISES, OR BEQUESTS OF MONEY OR OTHER PROPERTY.—Any gifts, devises, or bequests of amounts or other property, or any other amounts or other property, transferred to, deposited with, or otherwise in the possession of the Foundation pursuant to this Act, may be made available by the Foundation to Federal departments, agencies, or instrumentalities and may be accepted and expended (or the disposition of the amounts or property directed), without further appropriation, by those Federal departments, agencies, or instrumentalities, subject to the condition that the amounts or property be used for purposes that further the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, plants, and other natural resources.

[16 U.S.C. 3709]

#### SEC. 11. LIMITATION ON AUTHORITY.

Nothing in this Act authorizes the Foundation to perform any function the exclusive authority for which is provided to the National Park Foundation by subchapter II of chapter 1011 of title 54, United States Code.

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**【16 U.S.C. 3710】**