

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 952

To clarify the mission, purposes, and authorized uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and to establish requirements for administration and conservation planning for that system.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 5, 1997

Mr. MILLER of California (for himself, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. HINCHAY, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. FARR of California, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. VENTO, Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Mr. SHAYS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To clarify the mission, purposes, and authorized uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and to establish requirements for administration and conservation planning for that system.

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 “Theodore Roosevelt
5 Wildlife Legacy Act of 1997”.

1 **SEC. 2. MISSION AND PURPOSES OF THE SYSTEM.**

2 (a) MISSION.—The overall mission of the National
3 Wildlife Refuge System (in this Act referred to as the
4 “System”) is to preserve a network of lands and waters
5 for the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and
6 plants of the United States for the benefit of present and
7 future generations.

8 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the System are—

9 (1) to conserve, manage, and where appro-
10 priate, restore fish and wildlife habitats so as to pro-
11 vide, in perpetuity, for the diversity of fish, wildlife,
12 and plants and the ecological processes that sustain
13 them;

14 (2) to provide a diverse national network of
15 lands and waters designed to conserve and manage,
16 in perpetuity, fish, wildlife, and plants of the United
17 States, and their habitats;

18 (3) to conserve and manage migratory birds,
19 endangered species, anadromous or interjurisdic-
20 tional fish species, marine mammals, and other fish,
21 wildlife, and plants; and

22 (4) to fulfill international treaty obligations of
23 the United States with respect to fish, wildlife, and
24 plants, and their habitats.

1 **SEC. 3. PRIORITY USES.**

2 The priority public uses of the System are wildlife
3 observation and photography, hunting, fishing, and envi-
4 ronmental education and interpretation.

5 **SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE SYSTEM.**

6 In administering the System, the Secretary of the In-
7 terior shall—

8 (1) ensure that the mission and purposes of the
9 System described in section 2 and the purposes of
10 each refuge are carried out, except that if a conflict
11 exists between the primary purpose of a National
12 Wildlife Refuge and any purpose of the System, the
13 conflict shall be resolved in a manner that first ful-
14 fills the primary purpose of the refuge, and, to the
15 extent practicable, also achieves the purposes of the
16 System;

17 (2) ensure that opportunities for the uses de-
18 scribed in section 3 receive priority attention in
19 planning and management within the System, con-
20 sistent with the mission and purposes of the System
21 described in sections 2(a) and (b);

22 (3) plan, propose, and direct expansion of the
23 System—

24 (A) to accomplish the mission and pur-
25 poses of the System and the purposes of each
26 National Wildlife Refuge; and

1 (B) to contribute to the conservation of the
2 ecosystems of the United States; and
3 (4) inventory and monitor the status and trends
4 of fish, wildlife, and plants in each National Wildlife
5 Refuge.

6 **SEC. 5. COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES.**

7 (a) GENERAL RULE.—Except as provided in sub-
8 section (b), effective beginning on the date that is 3 years
9 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall
10 not initiate or permit a new use of a National Wildlife
11 Refuge or expand, renew, or extend an existing allowed
12 use unless the Secretary determines that the use is com-
13 patible with the primary purposes of the refuge and the
14 mission and purposes of the System specified in section
15 2 of this Act. Such determinations shall—

16 (1) be made in writing, be based on the best
17 available scientific information, and represent the
18 best professional judgment of the refuge officer in-
19 volved;

20 (2) be made after an opportunity has been pro-
21 vided for the public to review and comment on the
22 evaluations;

23 (3) where appropriate, be made concurrently
24 with the development of a conservation plan for the
25 refuge under section 6; and

1 (4) be reevaluated when conditions under which
2 the use is permitted change significantly or when
3 there is significant new information regarding the
4 effects of the use, but not less frequently than every
5 10 years.

6 (b) PRIOR IDENTIFICATION FOR NEW ACQUISI-
7 TIONS.—On lands added to the System after the date of
8 enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall identify, prior
9 to acquisition, existing compatible priority public uses (as
10 described in section 3) that shall be permitted to continue
11 on an interim basis pending completion of comprehensive
12 planning.

13 **SEC. 6. REFUGE CONSERVATION PLANNING PROGRAM.**

14 (a) GENERAL RULE.—Except with respect to Na-
15 tional Wildlife Refuge lands in Alaska (which shall be gov-
16 erned by the refuge planning provision of the Alaska Na-
17 tional Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 3101
18 et seq.)), the Secretary shall—

19 (1) propose a comprehensive conservation plan
20 for each refuge or ecologically related complex of ref-
21 uges consistent with section 2 of this Act within 15
22 years after the date of enactment of this Act and re-
23 vise such plans not less frequently than every 15
24 years thereafter;

1 (2) develop and implement a process to ensure
2 an opportunity for active public involvement in the
3 preparation and revision of conservation plans; and
4 (3) manage each refuge in a manner consistent
5 with the conservation plan for the refuge.

6 (b) NEW REFUGES.—With respect to any refuge es-
7 tablished after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-
8 retary shall prepare a conservation plan for the refuge not
9 later than 2 years after the Secretary has determined that
10 sufficient land has been acquired to warrant comprehen-
11 sive planning.

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