

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 554

To provide for the protection of paleontological resources on Federal lands,
and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 18, 2007

Mr. McGOVERN (for himself and Mr. RENZI) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition
to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently de-
termined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions
as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To provide for the protection of paleontological resources
on Federal lands, 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 “Paleontological Re-
5 sources Preservation Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 As used in this Act:

8 (1) CASUAL COLLECTING.—The term “casual
9 collecting” means the collecting of a reasonable

1 amount of common invertebrate and plant paleon-
2 tological resources for non-commercial personal use,
3 either by surface collection or the use of non-pow-
4 ered hand tools resulting in only negligible disturb-
5 ance to the Earth's surface and other resources. As
6 used in this paragraph, the terms "reasonable
7 amount", "common invertebrate and plant paleon-
8 tological resources" and "negligible disturbance"
9 shall be determined by the Secretary.

10 (2) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means
11 the Secretary of the Interior with respect to lands
12 controlled or administered by the Secretary of the
13 Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture with respect
14 to National Forest System Lands controlled or ad-
15 ministered by the Secretary of Agriculture.

16 (3) FEDERAL LANDS.—The term "Federal
17 lands" means—

18 (A) lands controlled or administered by the
19 Secretary of the Interior, except Indian lands;
20 or

21 (B) National Forest System lands con-
22 trolled or administered by the Secretary of Ag-
23 riculture.

24 (4) INDIAN LANDS.—The term "Indian Land"
25 means lands of Indian tribes, or Indian individuals,

1 which are either held in trust by the United States
2 or subject to a restriction against alienation imposed
3 by the United States.

4 (5) STATE.—The term “State” means the fifty
5 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth
6 of Puerto Rico, and any other territory or possession
7 of the United States.

8 (6) PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCE.—The term
9 “paleontological resource” means any fossilized re-
10 mains, traces, or imprints of organisms, preserved in
11 or on the earth’s crust, that are of paleontological
12 interest and that provide information about the his-
13 tory of life on earth, except that the term does not
14 include—

15 (A) any materials associated with an ar-
16 chaeological resource (as defined in section 3(1)
17 of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act
18 of 1979 (16 U.S.C. 470bb(1)); or

19 (B) any cultural item (as defined in section
20 2 of the Native American Graves Protection
21 and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. 3001)).

22 **SEC. 3. MANAGEMENT.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall manage and
24 protect paleontological resources on Federal lands using
25 scientific principles and expertise. The Secretary shall de-

1 develop appropriate plans for inventory, monitoring, and the
2 scientific and educational use of paleontological resources,
3 in accordance with applicable agency laws, regulations,
4 and policies. These plans shall emphasize interagency co-
5 ordination and collaborative efforts where possible with
6 non-Federal partners, the scientific community, and the
7 general public.

8 (b) COORDINATION.—To the extent possible, the Sec-
9 retary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture
10 shall coordinate in the implementation of this Act.

11 SEC. 4. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.

12 The Secretary shall establish a program to increase
13 public awareness about the significance of paleontological
14 resources.

15 SEC. 5. COLLECTION OF PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

16 (a) PERMIT REQUIREMENT.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in this
18 Act, a paleontological resource may not be collected
19 from Federal lands without a permit issued under
20 this Act by the Secretary.

21 (2) CASUAL COLLECTING EXCEPTION.—The
22 Secretary may allow casual collecting without a per-
23 mit on Federal lands controlled or administered by
24 the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of
25 Reclamation, and the Forest Service, where such col-

1 lection is consistent with the laws governing the
2 management of those Federal lands and this Act.

3 (3) PREVIOUS PERMIT EXCEPTION.—Nothing in
4 this section shall affect a valid permit issued prior
5 to the date of enactment of this Act.

6 (b) CRITERIA FOR ISSUANCE OF A PERMIT.—The
7 Secretary may issue a permit for the collection of a paleon-
8 tological resource pursuant to an application if the Sec-
9 retary determines that—

10 (1) the applicant is qualified to carry out the
11 permitted activity;

12 (2) the permitted activity is undertaken for the
13 purpose of furthering paleontological knowledge or
14 for public education;

15 (3) the permitted activity is consistent with any
16 management plan applicable to the Federal lands
17 concerned; and

18 (4) the proposed methods of collecting will not
19 threaten significant natural or cultural resources.

20 (c) PERMIT SPECIFICATIONS.—A permit for the col-
21 lection of a paleontological resource issued under this sec-
22 tion shall contain such terms and conditions as the Sec-
23 retary deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this
24 Act. Every permit shall include requirements that—

4 (2) the paleontological resource and copies of
5 associated records will be preserved for the public in
6 an approved repository, to be made available for sci-
7 entific research and public education; and

11 (d) MODIFICATION, SUSPENSION, AND REVOCATION
12 OF PERMITS.—

15 (A) for resource, safety, or other manage-
16 ment considerations; or

17 (B) when there is a violation of term or
18 condition of a permit issued pursuant to this
19 section

24 (e) AREA CLOSURES.—In order to protect paleon-
25 tological or other resources and to provide for public safe-

1 ty, the Secretary may restrict access to or close areas
2 under the Secretary's jurisdiction to the collection of pale-
3 ontological resources.

4 **SEC. 6. CURATION OF RESOURCES.**

5 Any paleontological resource, and any data and
6 records associated with the resource, collected under a per-
7 mit, shall be deposited in an approved repository. The Sec-
8 retary may enter into agreements with non-Federal reposi-
9 tories regarding the curation of these resources, data, and
10 records.

11 **SEC. 7. PROHIBITED ACTS; CRIMINAL PENALTIES.**

12 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—A person may not—

13 (1) excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise
14 alter or deface or attempt to excavate, remove, dam-
15 age, or otherwise alter or deface any paleontological
16 resources located on Federal lands unless such activ-
17 ity is conducted in accordance with this Act;

18 (2) exchange, transport, export, receive, or offer
19 to exchange, transport, export, or receive any pale-
20 ontological resource if, in the exercise of due care,
21 the person knew or should have known such resource
22 to have been excavated or removed from Federal
23 lands in violation of any provisions, rule, regulation,
24 law, ordinance, or permit in effect under Federal
25 law, including this Act; or

7 (b) FALSE LABELING OFFENSES.—A person may not
8 make or submit any false record, account, or label for,
9 or any false identification of, any paleontological resource
10 excavated or removed from Federal lands.

11 (c) PENALTIES.—A person who knowingly violates or
12 counsels, procures, solicits, or employs another person to
13 violate subsection (a) or (b) shall, upon conviction, be
14 fined in accordance with title 18, United States Code, or
15 imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both; but if the
16 sum of the commercial and paleontological value of the
17 paleontological resources involved and the cost of restora-
18 tion and repair of such resources does not exceed \$500,
19 such person shall be fined in accordance with title 18,
20 United States Code, or imprisoned not more than one
21 year, or both.

22 (d) GENERAL EXCEPTION.—Nothing in subsection
23 (a) shall apply to any person with respect to any paleon-
24 tological resource which was in the lawful possession of
25 such person prior to the date of the enactment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 8. CIVIL PENALTIES.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—

3 (1) HEARING.—A person who violates any pro-
4 hibition contained in an applicable regulation or per-
5 mit issued under this Act may be assessed a penalty
6 by the Secretary after the person is given notice and
7 opportunity for a hearing with respect to the viola-
8 tion. Each violation shall be considered a separate
9 offense for purposes of this section.

10 (2) AMOUNT OF PENALTY.—The amount of
11 such penalty assessed under paragraph (1) shall be
12 determined under regulations promulgated pursuant
13 to this Act, taking into account the following factors:

14 (A) The scientific or fair market value,
15 whichever is greater, of the paleontological re-
16 source involved, as determined by the Secretary.

17 (B) The cost of response, restoration, and
18 repair of the resource and the paleontological
19 site involved.

20 (C) Any other factors considered relevant
21 by the Secretary assessing the penalty.

22 (3) MULTIPLE OFFENSES.—In the case of a
23 second or subsequent violation by the same person,
24 the amount of a penalty assessed under paragraph
25 (2) may be doubled.

8 (b) PETITION FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW; COLLECTION
9 OF UNPAID ASSESSMENTS.—

(1) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—Any person against whom an order is issued assessing a penalty under subsection (a) may file a petition for judicial review of the order in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia or in the district in which the violation is alleged to have occurred within the 30-day period beginning on the date the order making the assessment was issued. Upon notice of such filing, the Secretary shall promptly file such a certified copy of the record on which the order was issued. The court shall hear the action on the record made before the Secretary and shall sustain the action if it is supported by substantial evidence on the record considered as a whole.

24 (2) FAILURE TO PAY.—If any person fails to
25 pay a penalty under this section within 30 days—

(A) after the order making assessment has become final and the person has not filed a petition for judicial review of the order in accordance with paragraph (1); or

(B) after a court in an action brought in paragraph (1) has entered a final judgment upholding the assessment of the penalty, the Secretary may request the Attorney General to institute a civil action in a district court of the United States for any district in which the person if found, resides, or transacts business, to collect the penalty (plus interest at currently prevailing rates from the date of the final order or the date of the final judgment, as the case may be). The district court shall have jurisdiction to hear and decide any such action. In such action, the validity, amount, and appropriateness of such penalty shall not be subject to review. Any person who fails to pay on a timely basis the amount of an assessment of a civil penalty as described in the first sentence of this paragraph shall be required to pay, in addition to such amount and interest, attorneys fees and costs for collection proceedings.

1 (c) HEARINGS.—Hearings held during proceedings
2 instituted under subsection (a) shall be conducted in ac-
3 cordance with section 554 of title 5, United States Code.

4 (d) USE OF RECOVERED AMOUNTS.—Penalties col-
5 lected under this section shall be available to the Secretary
6 and without further appropriation may be used only as
7 follows:

8 (1) To protect, restore, or repair the paleon-
9 tological resources and sites which were the subject
10 of the action, or to acquire sites with equivalent re-
11 sources, and to protect, monitor, and study the re-
12 sources and sites. Any acquisition shall be subject to
13 any limitations contained in the organic legislation
14 for such Federal lands.

15 (2) To provide educational materials to the
16 public about paleontological resources and sites.

17 (3) To provide for the payment of rewards as
18 provided in section 9.

19 **SEC. 9. REWARDS AND FORFEITURE.**

20 (a) REWARDS.—The Secretary may pay from pen-
21 alties collected under section 7 or 8—

22 (1) consistent with amounts established in regu-
23 lations by the Secretary; or

24 (2) if no such regulation exists, an amount
25 equal to the lesser of one-half of the penalty or

1 \$500, to any person who furnishes information
2 which leads to the finding of a civil violation, or the
3 conviction of criminal violation, with respect to
4 which the penalty was paid. If several persons pro-
5 vided the information, the amount shall be divided
6 among the persons. No officer or employee of the
7 United States or of any State or local government
8 who furnishes information or renders service in the
9 performance of his official duties shall be eligible for
10 payment under this subsection.

11 (b) FORFEITURE.—All paleontological resources with
12 respect to which a violation under section 7 or 8 occurred
13 and which are in the possession of any person, and all
14 vehicles and equipment of any person that were used in
15 connection with the violation, shall be subject to civil for-
16 feiture, or upon conviction, to criminal forfeiture. All pro-
17 visions of law relating to the seizure, forfeiture, and con-
18 demnation of property for a violation of this Act, the dis-
19 position of such property or the proceeds from the sale
20 thereof, and remission or mitigation of such forfeiture, as
21 well as the procedural provisions of chapter 46 of title 18,
22 United States Code, shall apply to the seizures and forfei-
23 tures incurred or alleged to have incurred under the provi-
24 sions of this Act.

1 (c) TRANSFER OF SEIZED RESOURCES.—The Sec-
2 retary may transfer administration of seized paleontolog-
3 ical resources to Federal or non-Federal educational insti-
4 tutions to be used for scientific or educational purposes.

5 **SEC. 10. CONFIDENTIALITY.**

6 Information concerning the nature and specific loca-
7 tion of a paleontological resource the collection of which
8 requires a permit under this Act or under any other provi-
9 sion of Federal law shall be exempt from disclosure under
10 section 552 of title 5, United States Code, and any other
11 law unless the Secretary determines that disclosure
12 would—

13 (1) further the purposes of this Act;
14 (2) not create risk of harm to or theft or de-
15 struction of the resource or the site containing the
16 resource; and
17 (3) be in accordance with other applicable laws.

18 **SEC. 11. REGULATIONS.**

19 As soon as practical after the date of the enactment
20 of this Act, the Secretary shall issue such regulations as
21 are appropriate to carry out this Act, providing opportuni-
22 ties for public notice and comment.

23 **SEC. 12. SAVINGS PROVISIONS.**

24 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to—

20 (3) apply to, or require a permit for, casual col-
21 lecting of a rock, mineral, or invertebrate or plant
22 fossil that is not protected under this Act;

23 (4) affect any lands other than Federal lands or
24 affect the lawful recovery, collection, or sale of pale-

1 ontological resources from lands other than Federal
2 lands;

3 (5) alter or diminish the authority of a Federal
4 agency under any other law to provide protection for
5 paleontological resources on Federal lands in addi-
6 tion to the protection provided under this Act; or

7 (6) create any right, privilege, benefit, or enti-
8 tlement for any person who is not an officer or em-
9 ployee of the United States acting in that capacity.

10 No person who is not an officer or employee of the
11 United States acting in that capacity shall have
12 standing to file any civil action in a court of the
13 United States to enforce any provision or amend-
14 ment made by this Act.

15 **SEC. 13. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
17 as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

