

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION FOR STUDY.

Section 5(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1276(a)) is amended—

(1) by designating the undesignated paragraph following (135) as paragraph (136); and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(137) TAUNTON RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS.—The segment downstream from the headwaters, from the confluence of the Town River and the Matfield River in Bridgewater to the confluence with the Forge River in Raynham, Massachusetts.”.

SEC. 4. STUDY AND REPORT.

Section 5(b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1276(b)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating the second paragraph (8) as paragraph (10);

(2) by redesignating the second paragraph (11) as paragraph (12);

(3) by redesignating the third paragraph (11) as paragraph (13);

(4) by redesignating the fourth paragraph (11) as paragraph (14);

(5) by redesignating the first undesignated paragraph as paragraph (15);

(6) by redesignating the second undesignated paragraph as paragraph (16);

(7) in paragraph (16), as so redesignated by paragraph (6) of this subsection, by striking “paragraph ()” and inserting “paragraph (136)”; and

(8) by adding at the end the following:

“(17) TAUNTON RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary of the Interior—

“(A) shall complete the study of the Taunton River, Massachusetts; and

“(B) shall submit to Congress a report describing the results of the study.”.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2778.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. SOUDER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2778, as amended, and introduced by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY). This bill authorizes a study of the Taunton River for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The Taunton River contains a variety of natural and cultural resources important to America's heritage. H.R. 2778 will assess these resources and determine whether the river meets the requirements for inclusion into the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The study authorized by H.R. 2778 has strong public support from State and local officials, residents, and river users.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2778, as amended.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, H.R. 2778, introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), amends the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to provide for a study of the Taunton River in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The Taunton River is located in southeastern Massachusetts, about 30 miles from Boston. The Taunton and its tributaries form the second largest watershed in the Commonwealth. Much of the river corridor is forested or in agricultural use.

H.R. 2778 is a noncontroversial bill. The administration has testified in support of the study. Further, it is our understanding that there is strong local support for this initiative.

During consideration of the bill by the Committee on Resources, an amendment was adopted that made a number of technical corrections to the bill and the underlying Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. These changes improve the legislation, and we support the bill as amended.

Madam Speaker, I also have a statement from the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), the sponsor of H.R. 2778, who is unavoidably unable to be here during the consideration of this bill; and I include his statement for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during consideration of this bill.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, Representative GEORGE MILLER, Representative DON YOUNG, Representative CARLOS ROMERO-BARCELO, and Representative JAMES HANSEN for bringing this important bill to the floor.

H.R. 2778 would direct the National Park Service to study the Taunton River in Massachusetts to determine if it should be added to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The 70-mile river is threatened by an alarming rate of residential and commercial development. If the river meets the necessary federal requirements and is added to the system, then its flow could not be hindered or diverted and local regional planners would be able to receive federal assistance to help manage the river.

The Taunton River is of tremendous historical and ecological value to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and also the nation. In the early 1600's, the Taunton River was the first river the Pilgrims encountered as they moved inland, and they used the river as a meeting spot with the Native Americans. Chief Massasoit of the Wompanoag tribe befriended the Pilgrims, who were ill-prepared for New England's harsh winters. Without the help of the Native Americans, the early settlers would have perished. As a result of the goodwill of the local Native Americans, the Pilgrims dedicated a day in celebration of the harvest and their good fortune. This day is celebrated

throughout the country today and is better known as our national holiday of Thanksgiving.

From an ecological standpoint, the Taunton River is a tremendous resource because of its improved water quality and the various species of marine life that thrive there. There have been numerous sightings of the American Bald Eagle. The improved water quality of the river has resulted in the river becoming a tremendous recreational resource for thousands of Southeastern Massachusetts residents. The river is part of a river water trail called the Wampanoag Commemorative canoe passage. The course, which was the main travel route for the Wampanoag Native Americans, is now used by scouting groups, conservation leaders, and recreational enthusiasts.

The river is of tremendous historical and scenic value to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I strongly support H.R. 2778 and thank my colleagues for bringing the measure to the House floor.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SOUDER. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2778, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□

CAT ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ESTABLISHMENT ACT

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3292) to provide for the establishment of the Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3292

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 “Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge Establishment Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) as the southernmost unleveed portion of the Mississippi River, Cat Island, Louisiana, is one of the last remaining tracts in the lower Mississippi Valley that is still influenced by the natural dynamics of the river;

(2) Cat Island supports one of the highest densities of virgin bald cypress trees in the entire Mississippi River Valley, including the Nation's champion cypress tree which is 17 feet wide and has a circumference of 53 feet;

(3) Cat Island is important habitat for several declining species of forest songbirds and supports thousands of wintering waterfowl;

(4) Cat Island supports high populations of deer, turkey, and furbearers, such as mink and bobcats;

(5) conservation and enhancement of this area through inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System would help meet the

habitat conservation goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan;

(6) these forested wetlands represent one of the most valuable and productive wildlife habitat types in the United States, and have extremely high recreational value for hunters, anglers, birdwatchers, nature photographers, and others; and

(7) the Cat Island area is deserving of inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS:

For purposes of this Act—

(1) the term "Refuge" means the Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge; and

(2) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 4. PURPOSES.

The purposes for which the Refuge is established and shall be managed are—

(1) to conserve, restore, and manage habitats as necessary to contribute to the migratory bird population goals and habitat objective as established through the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture;

(2) to conserve, restore, and manage the significant aquatic resource values associated with the area's forested wetlands and to achieve the habitat objectives of the "Mississippi River Aquatic Resources Management Plan";

(3) to conserve, enhance, and restore the historic native bottomland community characteristics of the lower Mississippi alluvial valley and its associated fish, wildlife, and plant species;

(4) to conserve, enhance, and restore habitat to maintain and assist in the recovery of endangered, and threatened plants and animals;

(5) to provide opportunities for priority public wildlife dependent uses for compatible hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation; and

(6) to encourage the use of volunteers and facilitate partnerships among the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, local communities, conservation organizations, and other non-Federal entities to promote public awareness of the resources of the Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System and public participation in the conservation of those resources.

SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF REFUGE.

(a) ACQUISITION BOUNDARY.—The Secretary is authorized to establish the Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge, consisting of approximately 36,500 acres of land and water, as depicted upon a map entitled "Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge-Proposed", dated February 8, 2000, and available for inspection in appropriate offices of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

(b) BOUNDARY REVISIONS.—The Secretary may make such minor revisions of the boundary designated under this section as may be appropriate to carry out the purposes of the Refuge or to facilitate the acquisition of property within the Refuge.

(c) ACQUISITION.—The Secretary is authorized to acquire the lands and waters, or interests therein, within the acquisition boundary described in subsection (a) of this section.

(d) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish the Refuge by publication of a notice to that effect in the Federal Register and publications of local circulation whenever sufficient property has been acquired to constitute an area that can be efficiently managed as a National Wildlife Refuge.

SEC. 6. ADMINISTRATION.

The Secretary shall administer all lands, waters, and interests therein acquired under this Act in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act

(16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.). The Secretary may use such additional statutory authority as may be available for the conservation of fish and wildlife, and the provision of fish- and wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities as the Secretary considers appropriate to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Interior—

(1) such funds as may be necessary for the acquisition of lands and waters designated in section 5(c); and

(2) such funds as may be necessary for the development, operation, and maintenance of the Refuge.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3292, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3292 was introduced by our distinguished colleague the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER). This measure would establish the Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana.

Cat Island is a unique habitat of bottomland hardwoods that has never been leveed, and it is one of the few natural resources along the Mississippi River that still experiences seasonal overflows. It is an area that is teeming with wildlife, and it contains prime habitat for many species of shorebirds, 1,000-year-old bald cypress trees, and millions of migratory ducks.

According to testimony received, the forested wetlands typical of Cat Island represent one of the most valuable and productive wildlife habitat types in the United States.

Under the terms of H.R. 3292, the Secretary of the Interior would be directed to acquire by purchase or donated property that would form the basis of the proposed Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge.

At the subcommittee markup, I offered an amendment in the nature of a substitute that expanded the size of Cat Island Refuge from 9,477 acres to 36,500 acres and clarified the purposes for establishing the refuge. This amendment was supported by both the sponsor and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Once established, this would become the 21st National Wildlife Refuge in the State of Louisiana.

I want to compliment the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) for his outstanding leadership in this matter.

I know that he has spent an extraordinary amount of time working with both local and State officials, industry representatives, and conservation groups to develop this refuge. This is how the process should work, and I remain convinced that local support for a proposed refuge is absolutely essential.

Madam Speaker, I urge an aye vote on H.R. 3292.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3292, a bill which would establish the Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge in the State of Louisiana.

The biological diversity and ecological significance of Cat Island is most impressive. It would appear by all measures that this habitat in the bayou of southern Louisiana would be a handsome addition to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

I believe that the bill was greatly improved by the Committee on Resources when the total authorization for land acquisition was, by unanimous vote, increased from 9,400 acres to 36,500 acres. It makes sense since the land is presently available and because the entire tract is ecologically significant to ensure the protection of the core 9,400 acres. I want to thank the sponsor of the bill, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER), for agreeing to add these additional lands.

It is also my understanding that the administration fully supports H.R. 3292. The Fish and Wildlife Service has asked for \$4.1 million in their fiscal year 2001 budget request to begin the acquisition process for this new refuge. Hopefully, with the passage of this legislation, the Fish and Wildlife Service can get started on this process very soon.

The House should pass H.R. 3292 today. I urge all Members to support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3292, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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TAKING CERTAIN LAND INTO TRUST FOR MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate