

Public Law 106–538  
106th Congress

An Act

To establish the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area in the State of Arizona.

Dec. 6, 2000

[H.R. 2941]

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

**SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS.**

16 USC  
460ooo.

For the purposes of this Act, the following definitions apply:

(1) **CONSERVATION AREA.**—The term “Conservation Area” means the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area established by section 4(a).

(2) **ACQUISITION PLANNING DISTRICT.**—The term “Acquisition Planning District” means the Sonoita Valley Acquisition Planning District established by section 2(a).

(3) **MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—The term “management plan” means the management plan for the Conservation Area.

(4) **PUBLIC LANDS.**—The term “public lands” has the meaning given the term in section 103(e) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702(e)), except that such term shall not include interest in lands not owned by the United States.

(5) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

**SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SONOITA VALLEY ACQUISITION PLANNING DISTRICT.**

16 USC  
460ooo–1.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In order to provide for future acquisitions of important conservation land within the Sonoita Valley region of the State of Arizona, there is hereby established the Sonoita Valley Acquisition Planning District.

(b) **AREAS INCLUDED.**—The Acquisition Planning District shall consist of approximately 142,800 acres of land in the Arizona counties of Pima and Santa Cruz, including the Conservation Area, as generally depicted on the map entitled “Sonoita Valley Acquisition Planning District and Las Cienegas National Conservation Area” and dated October 2, 2000.

(c) **MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.**—As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a map and legal description of the Acquisition Planning District. In case of a conflict between the map referred to in subsection (b) and the map and legal description submitted by the Secretary, the map referred to in subsection (b) shall control. The map and legal description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct clerical and typographical errors in such map and legal description. Copies of the map and legal description shall be on file and available

for public inspection in the Office of the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, and in the appropriate office of the Bureau of Land Management in Arizona.

16 USC  
460000-2.

**SEC. 3. PURPOSES OF THE ACQUISITION PLANNING DISTRICT.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall negotiate with land owners for the acquisition of lands and interest in lands suitable for Conservation Area expansion that meet the purposes described in section 4(a). The Secretary shall only acquire property under this Act pursuant to section 7.

(b) **FEDERAL LANDS.**—The Secretary, through the Bureau of Land Management, shall administer the public lands within the Acquisition Planning District pursuant to this Act and the applicable provisions of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), subject to valid existing rights, and in accordance with the management plan. Such public lands shall become part of the Conservation Area when they become contiguous with the Conservation Area.

(c) **FISH AND WILDLIFE.**—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction or responsibilities of the State of Arizona with respect to fish and wildlife within the Acquisition Planning District.

(d) **PROTECTION OF STATE AND PRIVATE LANDS AND INTERESTS.**—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as affecting any property rights or management authority with regard to any lands or interest in lands held by the State of Arizona, any political subdivision of the State of Arizona, or any private property rights within the boundaries of the Acquisition Planning District.

(e) **PUBLIC LANDS.**—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as in any way diminishing the Secretary's or the Bureau of Land Management's authorities, rights, or responsibilities for managing the public lands within the Acquisition Planning District.

(f) **COORDINATED MANAGEMENT.**—The Secretary shall coordinate the management of the public lands within the Acquisition Planning District with that of surrounding county, State, and private lands consistent with the provisions of subsection (d).

16 USC  
460000-3.

**SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LAS CIENEGAS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In order to conserve, protect, and enhance for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations the unique and nationally important aquatic, wildlife, vegetative, archaeological, paleontological, scientific, cave, cultural, historical, recreational, educational, scenic, rangeland, and riparian resources and values of the public lands described in subsection (b) while allowing livestock grazing and recreation to continue in appropriate areas, there is hereby established the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area in the State of Arizona.

(b) **AREAS INCLUDED.**—The Conservation Area shall consist of approximately 42,000 acres of public lands in the Arizona counties of Pima and Santa Cruz, as generally depicted on the map entitled "Sonora Valley Acquisition Planning District and Las Cienegas National Conservation Area" and dated October 2, 2000.

(c) **MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.**—As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a map and legal description of the Conservation Area. In case of a conflict between the map referred to in subsection (b) and the map and legal description submitted by the Secretary,

the map referred to in subsection (b) shall control. The map and legal description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act, except that the Secretary may correct clerical and typographical errors in such map and legal description. Copies of the map and legal description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, and in the appropriate office of the Bureau of Land Management in Arizona.

(d) **FOREST LANDS.**—Any lands included in the Coronado National Forest that are located within the boundaries of the Conservation Area shall be considered to be a part of the Conservation Area. The Secretary of Agriculture shall revise the boundaries of the Coronado National Forest to reflect the exclusion of such lands from the Coronado National Forest.

**SEC. 5. MANAGEMENT OF THE LAS CIENEGAS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA.**

16 USC  
460ooo-4.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall manage the Conservation Area in a manner that conserves, protects, and enhances its resources and values, including the resources and values specified in section 4(a), pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) and other applicable law, including this Act.

(b) **USES.**—The Secretary shall allow only such uses of the Conservation Area as the Secretary finds will further the purposes for which the Conservation Area is established as set forth in section 4(a).

(c) **GRAZING.**—The Secretary of the Interior shall permit grazing subject to all applicable laws, regulations, and Executive orders consistent with the purposes of this Act.

(d) **MOTORIZED VEHICLES.**—Except where needed for administrative purposes or to respond to an emergency, use of motorized vehicles on public lands in the Conservation Area shall be allowed only—

(1) before the effective date of a management plan prepared pursuant to section 6, on roads and trails designated for use of motorized vehicles in the management plan that applies on the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) after the effective date of a management plan prepared pursuant to section 6, on roads and trails designated for use of motor vehicles in that management plan.

(e) **MILITARY AIRSPACE.**—Prior to the date of the enactment of this Act the Federal Aviation Administration approved restricted military airspace (Areas 2303A and 2303B) which covers portions of the Conservation Area. Designation of the Conservation Area shall not impact or impose any altitude, flight, or other airspace restrictions on current or future military operations or missions. Should the military require additional or modified airspace in the future, the Congress does not intend for the designation of the Conservation Area to impede the military from petitioning the Federal Aviation Administration to change or expand existing restricted military airspace.

(f) **ACCESS TO STATE AND PRIVATE LANDS.**—Nothing in this Act shall affect valid existing rights-of-way within the Conservation Area. The Secretary shall provide reasonable access to nonfederally owned lands or interest in lands within the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

(g) HUNTING.—Hunting shall be allowed within the Conservation Area in accordance with applicable laws and regulations of the United States and the State of Arizona, except that the Secretary, after consultation with the Arizona State wildlife management agency, may issue regulations designating zones where and establishing periods when no hunting shall be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment.

(h) PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.—Nothing in this Act shall preclude such measures as the Secretary determines necessary to prevent devastating fire or infestation of insects or disease within the Conservation Area.

(i) NO BUFFER ZONES.—The establishment of the Conservation Area shall not lead to the creation of protective perimeters or buffer zones around the Conservation Area. The fact that there may be activities or uses on lands outside the Conservation Area that would not be permitted in the Conservation Area shall not preclude such activities or uses on such lands up to the boundary of the Conservation Area consistent with other applicable laws.

(j) WITHDRAWALS.—Subject to valid existing rights all Federal lands within the Conservation Area and all lands and interest therein which are hereafter acquired by the United States are hereby withdrawn from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws and from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and from operation of the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws and all amendments thereto.

#### SEC. 6. MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) PLAN REQUIRED.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, through the Bureau of Land Management, shall develop and begin to implement a comprehensive management plan for the long-term management of the public lands within the Conservation Area in order to fulfill the purposes for which it is established, as set forth in section 4(a). Consistent with the provisions of this Act, the management plan shall be developed—

(1) in consultation with appropriate departments of the State of Arizona, including wildlife and land management agencies, with full public participation;

(2) from the draft Empire-Cienega Ecosystem Management Plan/EIS, dated October 2000, as it applies to Federal lands or lands with conservation easements; and

(3) in accordance with the resource goals and objectives developed through the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership process as incorporated in the draft Empire-Cienega Ecosystem Management Plan/EIS, dated October 2000, giving full consideration to the management alternative preferred by the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership, as it applies to Federal lands or lands with conservation easements.

(b) CONTENTS.—The management plan shall include—

(1) provisions designed to ensure the protection of the resources and values described in section 4(a);

(2) an implementation plan for a continuing program of interpretation and public education about the resources and values of the Conservation Area;

(3) a proposal for minimal administrative and public facilities to be developed or improved at a level compatible with achieving the resource objectives for the Conservation Area

and with the other proposed management activities to accommodate visitors to the Conservation Area;

(4) cultural resources management strategies for the Conservation Area, prepared in consultation with appropriate departments of the State of Arizona, with emphasis on the preservation of the resources of the Conservation Area and the interpretive, educational, and long-term scientific uses of these resources, giving priority to the enforcement of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (16 U.S.C. 470aa et seq.) and the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) within the Conservation Area;

(5) wildlife management strategies for the Conservation Area, prepared in consultation with appropriate departments of the State of Arizona and using previous studies of the Conservation Area;

(6) production livestock grazing management strategies, prepared in consultation with appropriate departments of the State of Arizona;

(7) provisions designed to ensure the protection of environmentally sustainable livestock use on appropriate lands within the Conservation Area;

(8) recreation management strategies, including motorized and nonmotorized dispersed recreation opportunities for the Conservation Area, prepared in consultation with appropriate departments of the State of Arizona;

(9) cave resources management strategies prepared in compliance with the goals and objectives of the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988 (16 U.S.C. 4301 et seq.); and

(10) provisions designed to ensure that if a road or trail located on public lands within the Conservation Area, or any portion of such a road or trail, is removed, consideration shall be given to providing similar alternative access to the portion of the Conservation Area serviced by such removed road or trail.

(c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—In order to better implement the management plan, the Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies pursuant to section 307(b) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1737(b)).

(d) RESEARCH ACTIVITIES.—In order to assist in the development and implementation of the management plan, the Secretary may authorize appropriate research, including research concerning the environmental, biological, hydrological, cultural, agricultural, recreational, and other characteristics, resources, and values of the Conservation Area, pursuant to section 307(a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1737(a)).

#### SEC. 7. LAND ACQUISITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) PRIORITY TO CONSERVATION EASEMENTS.—In acquiring lands or interest in lands under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to such acquisitions in the form of conservation easements.

(2) PRIVATE LANDS.—The Secretary is authorized to acquire privately held lands or interest in lands within the boundaries

16 USC  
460ooo-6.

of the Acquisition Planning District only from a willing seller through donation, exchange, or purchase.

(3) COUNTY LANDS.—The Secretary is authorized to acquire county lands or interest in lands within the boundaries of the Acquisition Planning District only with the consent of the county through donation, exchange, or purchase.

(4) STATE LANDS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to acquire lands or interest in lands owned by the State of Arizona located within the boundaries of the Acquisition Planning District only with the consent of the State and in accordance with State law, by donation, exchange, or purchase.

(B) CONSIDERATION.—As consideration for the acquisitions by the United States of lands or interest in lands under this paragraph, the Secretary shall pay fair market value for such lands or shall convey to the State of Arizona all or some interest in Federal lands (including buildings and other improvements on such lands or other Federal property other than real property) or any other asset of equal value within the State of Arizona.

(C) TRANSFER OF JURISDICTION.—All Federal agencies are authorized to transfer jurisdiction of Federal lands or interest in lands (including buildings and other improvements on such lands or other Federal property other than real property) or any other asset within the State of Arizona to the Bureau of Land Management for the purpose of acquiring lands or interest in lands as provided for in this paragraph.

(b) MANAGEMENT OF ACQUIRED LANDS.—Lands acquired under this section shall, upon acquisition, become part of the Conservation Area and shall be administered as part of the Conservation Area. These lands shall be managed in accordance with this Act, other applicable laws, and the management plan.

Deadlines.  
16 USC  
460ooo-7.

#### **SEC. 8. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**

(a) PROTECTION OF CERTAIN LANDS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing the most effective measures to protect the lands north of the Acquisition Planning District within the Rincon Valley, Colossal Cave area, and Agua Verde Creek corridor north of Interstate 10 to provide an ecological link to Saguaro National Park and the Rincon Mountains and contribute to local government conservation priorities.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT.—Not later than 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and at least at the end of every 10-year period thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing the implementation of this Act, the condition of the resources and values of the Conservation Area, and the progress of the Secretary in achieving the purposes for

which the Conservation Area is established as set forth in section 4(a).

Approved December 6, 2000.

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LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 2941:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 106–934 (Comm. on Resources).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 146 (2000):

Oct. 5, considered and passed House.

Oct. 27, considered and passed Senate.

