

107TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4844

To enhance ecosystem protection and the range of outdoor opportunities protected by statute in the Skykomish River valley of the State of Washington by designating certain lower-elevation Federal lands as wilderness, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2002

Mr. LARSEN of Washington (for himself, Mr. DICKS, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. INSLEE, and Mr. BAIRD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To enhance ecosystem protection and the range of outdoor opportunities protected by statute in the Skykomish River valley of the State of Washington by designating certain lower-elevation Federal lands as wilderness, 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 “Wild Sky Wilderness
5 Act of 2002”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Americans cherish the continued existence
2 of diverse wilderness ecosystems and wildlife found
3 on their Federal lands and share a strong sense of
4 moral responsibility to protect their wilderness herit-
5 age as an enduring resource to cherish, protect, and
6 bequeath undisturbed to future generations of Amer-
7 icans.

8 (2) The values an area of wilderness offer to
9 this and future generations of Americans are greatly
10 enhanced to the degree that the area is diverse in to-
11 pography, elevation, life zones and ecosystems, and
12 to the extent that it offers a wide range of outdoor
13 recreational and educational opportunities accessible
14 in all seasons of the year.

15 (3) Large blocks of wildlands embracing a wide
16 range of ecosystems and topography, including low-
17 elevation forests, have seldom remained undisturbed
18 due to many decades of development.

19 (4) Certain wildlands on the western slope of
20 the Cascade Range in the Skykomish River valley of
21 the State of Washington offer an outstanding rep-
22 resentation of the original character of the forested
23 landscape, ranging from high alpine meadows and
24 extremely rugged peaks to low-elevation mature and
25 old-growth forests, including groves with some of the

1 largest and most spectacular trees in Washington,
2 with diameters of eight feet and larger.

3 (5) These diverse, thickly forested mountain
4 slopes and valleys of mature and old-growth trees in
5 the Skykomish River valley harbor nearly the full
6 complement of the original wildlife and fish species
7 found by settlers of the 19th century, including
8 mountain goats, bald eagles, black bear, pine
9 marten, black-tailed deer, as well as rare and endan-
10 gered wildlife such as northern spotted owls and gos-
11 hawks, Chinook and Coho salmon, and steelhead and
12 bull trout.

13 (6) An ecologically and topographical diverse
14 wilderness area in the Skykomish River valley acces-
15 sible in all seasons of the year will be enjoyable to
16 users of various kinds, such as hikers, horse riders,
17 hunters, anglers, and educational groups, but also to
18 the many who cherish clean water and clean air, fish
19 and wildlife (including endangered species such as
20 wild salmon), and pristine mountain and riverside
21 scenery.

22 (b) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—Congress hereby de-
23 clares that it is the policy of the United States:

24 (1) to better serve the diverse wilderness and
25 environmental education needs of the people of the

1 State of Washington and its burgeoning metropoli-
2 tan regions by granting wilderness protection to cer-
3 tain lower elevation wildlands in the Skykomish
4 River valley of the State of Washington; and

5 (2) to protect additional lands adjacent to the
6 Henry M. Jackson Wilderness designated by the
7 Washington Wilderness Act of 1984 (Public Law
8 98–339), in further tribute to the ecologically en-
9 lightened vision of the distinguished Senator from
10 the State of Washington and former Chairman of
11 the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Re-
12 sources (formerly the Senate Interior and Insular
13 Affairs Committee).

14 **SEC. 3. ADDITIONS TO THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRES-**
15 **ERVATION SYSTEM.**

16 (a) ADDITIONS.—The following Federal lands in the
17 State of Washington are hereby designated as wilderness
18 and, therefore, as components of the National Wilderness
19 Preservation System:

20 (1) Certain lands which comprise approximately
21 106,000 acres, as generally depicted on a map enti-
22 tled “Wild Sky Wilderness Proposal”, dated May
23 2002, which shall be known as the Wild Sky Wilder-
24 ness.

1 (b) MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—As soon as
2 practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the
3 Secretary of Agriculture shall file a map and a legal de-
4 scription for the wilderness area designated under this Act
5 with the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of
6 the United States Senate and the Committee on Resources
7 of the United States House of Representatives. The map
8 and description shall have the same force and effect as
9 if included in this Act, except that the Secretary of Agri-
10 culture may correct clerical and typographical errors in
11 the legal description and map. The map and legal descrip-
12 tion shall be on file and available for public inspection in
13 the office of the Chief of the Forest Service, Department
14 of Agriculture.

15 **SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to valid existing rights,
17 lands designated as wilderness by this Act shall be man-
18 aged by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with
19 the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) and this Act,
20 except that, with respect to any wilderness areas des-
21 ignated by this Act, any reference in the Wilderness Act
22 to the effective date of the Wilderness Act shall be deemed
23 to be a reference to the date of enactment of this Act.

24 (b) NEW TRAILS.—

1 (1) The Secretary of Agriculture shall consult
2 with interested parties and shall establish a hiking
3 trail plan designed to develop a system of hiking
4 trails within or adjacent to or to provide access to
5 the wilderness designated by this Act in a manner
6 consistent with the Wilderness Act, Public Law 88–
7 577 (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.).

8 (2) Within two years after the date of enact-
9 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall
10 complete a report on the implementation of the hik-
11 ing trail plan required under this Act. This report
12 shall include the identification of priority hiking
13 trails for development.

14 (c) REPEATER SITE.—Within the Wild Sky Wilder-
15 ness, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to use heli-
16 copter access to construct and maintain, in a manner com-
17 patible with the preservation of the wilderness environ-
18 ment, a Forest Service communication repeater site to
19 provide improved communication for safety and health
20 purposes.

21 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION FOR LAND ACQUISITION.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture is
23 authorized to acquire lands and interests therein, by pur-
24 chase, donation, or exchange, identified as “Priority Ac-
25 quisition Lands” on the map entitled “Wild Sky Wilder-

ness Proposal”, dated May 2002. The boundaries of the Snoqualmie National Forest and the Wild Sky Wilderness shall be adjusted to encompass any lands acquired pursuant to this section.

(b) ACCESS.—Consistent with section 5(a) of the Wilderness Act (Public Law 88–577; 16 U.S.C. 1134(a)), the Secretary of Agriculture shall assure adequate access to private inholdings within the Wild Sky Wilderness.

(c) APPRAISAL.—Valuation of private lands shall be determined without reference to any restrictions on access or use which arise out of designation as a wilderness area as a result of this Act.

SEC. 6. LAND EXCHANGES.

The Secretary of Agriculture shall exchange lands and interests in lands, as generally depicted on a map entitled Chelan County Public Utility District Exchange and dated May 22, 2002, with the Chelan County Public Utility District in accordance with the following provisions:

(1) If the Chelan County Public Utility District, within ninety days after the date of enactment of this Act, offers to the Secretary of Agriculture approximately 371.8 acres within the Snoqualmie National Forest in the State of Washington, the Secretary shall accept such lands.

1 (2) Upon acceptance of title by the Secretary of
2 Agriculture to such lands and interests therein, the
3 Secretary of Agriculture shall convey to the Chelan
4 County Public Utility District a permanent ease-
5 ment, including helicopter access, consistent with
6 such levels as used as of date of enactment, to main-
7 tain an existing snowtel site on 1.82 acres on the
8 Wenatchee National Forest in the State of Wash-
9 ington.

10 (3) The exchange directed by this Act shall be
11 consummated if Chelan County Public Utility Dis-
12 trict conveys title acceptable to the Secretary and
13 provided there is no hazardous material on the site,
14 which is objectionable to the Secretary.

15 (4) In the event Chelan County Public Utility
16 District determines there is no longer a need to
17 maintain a snowtel site to monitor the snow pack for
18 calculating expected runoff into the Lake Chelan hy-
19 droelectric project and the hydroelectric projects in
20 the Columbia River Basin, the Secretary shall be no-
21 tified in writing and the easement shall be extin-
22 guished and all rights conveyed by this exchange
23 shall revert to the United States.

○