

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1316) was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 1316

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 “Red Tide Emergency Relief Act of 2005”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) shellfish growers, known as “aquaculturists”, from the Schoodic Peninsula in Maine to Buzzards Bay in Massachusetts have suffered substantial economic injury due to the worst occurrence of toxic algae bloom, known as “Red Tide”, along the New England Coast since 1972;

(2) toxins produced by the Red Tide algae contaminate shellfish like clams and mussels, making them unsafe for people and animals to eat, forcing the extended closure of shellfish beds along contaminated areas.

(3) hundreds of shellfish growers have been affected by the Red Tide, and losses industrywide are estimated at \$3 million a week; and

(4) shellfish growers are currently considered to be agricultural enterprises, and are therefore ineligible for economic injury disaster loans available to other small business concerns through the Small Business Administration;

(5) shellfish growers are only eligible for emergency loans through the Farm Service Agency of the Department of Agriculture under limited circumstances;

(6) the Small Business Act should be amended to make shellfish growers eligible for emergency small business assistance, as a complement to assistance otherwise offered through Federal programs.

SEC. 3. AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE DISASTER ASSISTANCE TO AQUACULTURE ENTERPRISES.

Section 18(b)(1) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 647(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking “aquaculture,”; and

(2) by inserting before the semicolon at the end “, other than aquaculture”.

PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 134, S. 260.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 260) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore, enhance, and manage private land to improve fish and wildlife habitats through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with amendments.

[Strike the parts shown in black brackets and insert the part shown in italic.]

S. 260

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 “Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) approximately 60 percent of fish and wildlife in the United States are on private land;

(2) it is imperative to facilitate private landowner-centered and results-oriented efforts that promote efficient and innovative ways to protect and enhance natural resources;

(3) there is no readily available source of technical biological information that the public can access to assist with the application of state-of-the-art techniques to restore, enhance, and manage fish and wildlife habitats;

(4) a voluntary cost-effective program that leverages public and private funds to assist private landowners in the conduct of state-of-the-art fish and wildlife habitat restoration, enhancement, and management projects is needed;

(5) durable partnerships working collaboratively with willing private landowners to implement on-the-ground projects has led to the reduction of endangered species listings;

(6) Executive Order No. 13352 (69 Fed. Reg. 52989) directs the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency to pursue new cooperative conservation programs involving the collaboration of Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and non-profit institutions, non-governmental entities, and individuals;

(7) since 1987, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has exemplified cooperative conservation as an innovative, voluntary partnership program that helps private landowners restore wetland and other important fish and wildlife habitat; and

(8) through 33,103 agreements with private landowners, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has accomplished the restoration of 677,000 acres of wetland, 1,253,700 acres of prairie and native grasslands, and 5,560 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat since 1987, demonstrating much of that success since only 2001.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to provide for the restoration, enhancement, and management of fish and wildlife habitats on private land through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, a program that works with private landowners to conduct cost-effective habitat projects for the benefit of fish and wildlife resources in the United States.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) FEDERAL TRUST SPECIES.—The term “Federal trust species” means migratory birds, threatened species, endangered species, interjurisdictional fish, marine mammals, and other species of concern.

(2) HABITAT ENHANCEMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “habitat enhancement” means the manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a [native] habitat to change a specific function or seral stage of the [native] habitat.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “habitat enhancement” includes—

(i) an activity conducted to increase or decrease a specific function for the purpose of benefitting species, including—

(I) increasing the hydroperiod and water depth of a stream or wetland beyond what would naturally occur;

(II) improving waterfowl habitat conditions;

(III) establishing water level management capabilities for native plant communities;

(IV) creating mud flat conditions important for shorebirds; and

(V) cross fencing or establishing a rotational grazing system on native range to improve grassland nesting bird habitat conditions; and

(i) an activity conducted to shift a native plant community successional stage, including—

(I) burning an established native grass community to reduce or eliminate invading brush or exotic species;

(II) brush shearing to set back early successional plant communities; and

(III) forest management that promotes a particular seral stage.

(C) EXCLUSIONS.—The term “habitat enhancement” does not include regularly scheduled and routine maintenance and management activities, such as annual mowing or spraying of unwanted vegetation.

(3) HABITAT ESTABLISHMENT.—The term “habitat establishment” means the manipulation of physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a project site to create and maintain habitat that did not previously exist on the project site, including construction of—

(A) shallow water impoundments on non-hydric soils; and

(B) side channel spawning and rearing habitat.

(4) HABITAT IMPROVEMENT.—The term “habitat improvement” means restoring [or artificially providing], enhancing, or establishing physiographic, hydrological, or disturbance conditions necessary to establish or maintain native plant and animal communities, including periodic manipulations to maintain intended habitat conditions on completed project sites.

(5) HABITAT RESTORATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “habitat restoration” means the manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of returning the majority of natural functions to the lost or degraded native habitat.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “habitat restoration” includes—

(i) an activity conducted to return a project site, to the maximum extent practicable, to the ecological condition that existed prior to the loss or degradation, including—

(I) removing tile drains or plugging drainage ditches in former or degraded wetland;

(II) returning meanders and sustainable profiles to straightened streams;

(III) burning grass communities heavily invaded by exotic species to reestablish native grass and plant communities; and

(IV) planting plant communities that are native to the project site;

(ii) if restoration of a project site to its original ecological condition is not practicable, an activity that repairs 1 or more of the original habitat functions and that involve the use of native vegetation, including—

(I) the installation of a water control structure in a swale on land isolated from overbank flooding by a major levee to simulate natural hydrological processes; and

(II) the placement of streambank or instream habitat diversity structures in streams that cannot be restored to original conditions or profile; and

(iii) removal of a disturbing or degrading element to enable the native habitat to reestablish or become fully functional.

(6) PRIVATE LAND.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “private land” means any land that is not owned by the

Federal Government[, a State, or a political subdivision of a State] or a State.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “private land” includes tribal land and Hawaiian homeland.

(7) PROJECT.—The term “project” means a project carried out under the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program established by section 4.

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

[SEC. 4. PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM.]

[The Secretary shall carry out the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program within the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners for the conduct of voluntary projects to benefit Federal trust species by promoting habitat improvement, habitat restoration, habitat enhancement, and habitat establishment.]

SEC. 4. PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM.

[The Secretary shall carry out the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program within the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to provide—

(1) technical and financial assistance to private landowners for the conduct of voluntary projects to benefit Federal trust species by promoting habitat improvement, habitat restoration, habitat enhancement, and habitat establishment; and

(2) technical assistance to other public and private entities regarding fish and wildlife habitat restoration on private land.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act not more than \$75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2011.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent the committee-reported amendments be agreed to, the bill as amended be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee amendments were agreed to.

The bill (S. 260), as amended, was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 260

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 “Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act”.

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(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

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(2) it is imperative to facilitate private landowner-centered and results-oriented efforts that promote efficient and innovative ways to protect and enhance natural resources;

(3) there is no readily available source of technical biological information that the public can access to assist with the application of state-of-the-art techniques to restore, enhance, and manage fish and wildlife habitats;

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(5) durable partnerships working collaboratively with willing private landowners to

implement on-the-ground projects has led to the reduction of endangered species listings;

(6) Executive Order No. 13352 (69 Fed. Reg. 52989) directs the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency to pursue new cooperative conservation programs involving the collaboration of Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and non-profit institutions, non-governmental entities, and individuals;

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