

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 528

To direct Federal public land management officials to exercise their authority under existing law to facilitate use of and access to Federal public lands for fishing, sport hunting, and recreational shooting, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 26, 2015

Mr. BENISHEK (for himself, Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. PITTINGER, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. HANNA, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. GUINTA, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. MESSER, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. SALMON, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. WALBERG, and Mr. COLLINS of New York) 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 determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct Federal public land management officials to exercise their authority under existing law to facilitate use of and access to Federal public lands for fishing, sport hunting, and recreational shooting, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Recreational Fishing
3 and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds that—

6 (1) recreational fishing and hunting are impor-
7 tant and traditional activities in which millions of
8 Americans participate;

9 (2) recreational anglers and hunters have been
10 and continue to be among the foremost supporters
11 of sound fish and wildlife management and conserva-
12 tion in the United States;

13 (3) recreational fishing and hunting are envi-
14 ronmentally acceptable and beneficial activities that
15 occur and can be provided on Federal public lands
16 and waters without adverse effects on other uses or
17 users;

18 (4) recreational anglers, hunters, and sporting
19 organizations provide direct assistance to fish and
20 wildlife managers and enforcement officers of the
21 Federal Government as well as State and local gov-
22 ernments by investing volunteer time and effort to
23 fish and wildlife conservation;

24 (5) recreational anglers, hunters, and the asso-
25 ciated industries have generated billions of dollars of
26 critical funding for fish and wildlife conservation, re-

1 search, and management by providing revenues from
2 purchases of fishing and hunting licenses, permits,
3 and stamps, as well as excise taxes on fishing, hunt-
4 ing, and shooting equipment that have generated bil-
5 lions of dollars of critical funding for fish and wild-
6 life conservation, research, and management;

7 (6) recreational shooting is also an important
8 and traditional activity in which millions of Ameri-
9 cans participate, safe recreational shooting is a valid
10 use of Federal public lands, including the establish-
11 ment of safe and convenient shooting ranges on such
12 lands, and participation in recreational shooting
13 helps recruit and retain hunters and contributes to
14 wildlife conservation;

15 (7) opportunities to recreationally fish, hunt,
16 and shoot are declining, which depresses participa-
17 tion in these traditional activities, and depressed
18 participation adversely impacts fish and wildlife con-
19 servation and funding for important conservation ef-
20 forts; and

21 (8) the public interest would be served, and our
22 citizens' fish and wildlife resources benefitted, by ac-
23 tion to ensure that opportunities are facilitated to
24 engage in fishing and hunting on Federal public
25 land as recognized by Executive Order No. 12962,

1 relating to recreational fisheries, and Executive
2 Order No. 13443, relating to facilitation of hunting
3 heritage and wildlife conservation.

4 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

5 In this Act:

6 (1) **FEDERAL PUBLIC LAND.**—The term “Fed-
7 eral public land” means any land or water that is
8 owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Man-
9 agement or the Forest Service.

10 (2) **FEDERAL PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT OF-
11 FICIALS.**—The term “Federal public land manage-
12 ment officials” means—

13 (A) the Secretary of the Interior and Di-
14 rector of the Bureau of Land Management re-
15 garding Bureau of Land Management lands
16 and waters; and

17 (B) the Secretary of Agriculture and Chief
18 of the Forest Service regarding the National
19 Forest System.

20 (3) **HUNTING.**—

21 (A) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in
22 subparagraph (B), the term “hunting” means
23 use of a firearm, bow, or other authorized
24 means in the lawful—

(4) RECREATIONAL FISHING.—The term “recreational fishing” means the lawful—

15 (B) attempt to capture, collect, or kill fish.

21 SEC. 4. RECREATIONAL FISHING, HUNTING, AND SHOOT-

22 ING.

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to valid existing rights
24 and subsection (g), and cooperation with the respective
25 State fish and wildlife agency, Federal public land man-

1 agement officials shall exercise authority under existing
2 law, including provisions regarding land use planning, to
3 facilitate use of and access to Federal public lands, includ-
4 ing National Monuments, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness
5 Study Areas, and lands administratively classified as wil-
6 derness eligible or suitable and primitive or semi-primitive
7 areas, for fishing, sport hunting, and recreational shoot-
8 ing, except as limited by—

9 (1) statutory authority that authorizes action or
10 withholding action for reasons of national security,
11 public safety, or resource conservation;

12 (2) any other Federal statute that specifically
13 precludes recreational fishing, hunting, or shooting
14 on specific Federal public lands, waters, or units
15 thereof; and

16 (3) discretionary limitations on recreational
17 fishing, hunting, and shooting determined to be nec-
18 essary and reasonable as supported by the best sci-
19 entific evidence and advanced through a transparent
20 public process.

21 (b) MANAGEMENT.—Consistent with subsection (a),
22 the head of each Federal public land management agency
23 shall exercise its land management discretion—

1 (1) in a manner that supports and facilitates
2 recreational fishing, hunting, and shooting opportu-
3 nities;

4 (2) to the extent authorized under applicable
5 State law; and

6 (3) in accordance with applicable Federal law.

7 (c) PLANNING.—

8 (1) EVALUATION OF EFFECTS ON OPPORTUNI-
9 TIES TO ENGAGE IN RECREATIONAL FISHING, HUNT-
10 ING, OR SHOOTING.—Federal public land planning
11 documents, including land resources management
12 plans, resource management plans, and comprehen-
13 sive conservation plans, shall include a specific eval-
14 uation of the effects of such plans on opportunities
15 to engage in recreational fishing, hunting, or shoot-
16 ing.

17 (2) NO MAJOR FEDERAL ACTION.—No action
18 taken under this Act, or under section 4 of the Na-
19 tional Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of
20 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd), either individually or cu-
21 mulative with other actions involving Federal pub-
22 lic lands or lands managed by the United States
23 Fish and Wildlife Service, shall be considered to be
24 a major Federal action significantly affecting the
25 quality of the human environment, and no additional

1 identification, analysis, or consideration of environmental effects, including cumulative effects, is necessary or required.

4 (3) OTHER ACTIVITY NOT CONSIDERED.—Federal public land management officials are not required to consider the existence or availability of recreational fishing, hunting, or shooting opportunities on adjacent or nearby public or private lands in the planning for or determination of which Federal public lands are open for these activities or in the setting of levels of use for these activities on Federal public lands, unless the combination or coordination of such opportunities would enhance the recreational fishing, hunting, or shooting opportunities available to the public.

16 (d) FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS.—

17 (1) LANDS OPEN.—Lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, including Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, lands designated as wilderness or administratively classified as wilderness eligible or suitable and primitive or semi-primitive areas and National Monuments, but excluding lands on the Outer Continental Shelf, shall be open to recreational fishing, hunting, and shooting unless the

1 managing Federal agency acts to close lands to such
2 activity. Lands may be subject to closures or restric-
3 tions if determined by the head of the agency to be
4 necessary and reasonable and supported by facts
5 and evidence, for purposes including resource con-
6 servation, public safety, energy or mineral produc-
7 tion, energy generation or transmission infrastruc-
8 ture, water supply facilities, protection of other per-
9 mittees, protection of private property rights or in-
10 terest, national security, or compliance with other
11 law.

12 (2) SHOOTING RANGES.—

13 (A) IN GENERAL.—The head of each Fed-
14 eral agency shall use his or her authorities in
15 a manner consistent with this Act and other ap-
16 plicable law, to—

17 (i) lease or permit use of lands under
18 the jurisdiction of the agency for shooting
19 ranges; and

20 (ii) designate specific lands under the
21 jurisdiction of the agency for recreational
22 shooting activities.

23 (B) LIMITATION ON LIABILITY.—Any des-
24 ignation under subparagraph (A)(ii) shall not
25 subject the United States to any civil action or

1 claim for monetary damages for injury or loss
2 of property or personal injury or death caused
3 by any activity occurring at or on such des-
4 ignated lands.

5 (e) NECESSITY IN WILDERNESS AREAS AND “WITH-
6 IN AND SUPPLEMENTAL TO” WILDERNESS PURPOSES.—

7 (1) MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMINIS-
8 TRATION.—The provision of opportunities for hunt-
9 ing, fishing and recreational shooting, and the con-
10 servation of fish and wildlife to provide sustainable
11 use recreational opportunities on designated Federal
12 wilderness areas shall constitute measures necessary
13 to meet the minimum requirements for the adminis-
14 tration of the wilderness area, provided that this de-
15 termination shall not authorize or facilitate com-
16 modity development, use, or extraction, motorized
17 recreational access or use that is not otherwise al-
18 lowed under the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et
19 seq.), or permanent road construction or mainte-
20 nance within designated wilderness areas.

21 (2) APPLICATION OF WILDERNESS ACT.—Provi-
22 sions of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et
23 seq.), stipulating that wilderness purposes are “with-
24 in and supplemental to” the purposes of the under-
25 lying Federal land unit are reaffirmed. When seek-

1 ing to carry out fish and wildlife conservation pro-
2 grams and projects or provide fish and wildlife de-
3 pendent recreation opportunities on designated wil-
4 derness areas, the head of each Federal agency shall
5 implement these supplemental purposes so as to fa-
6 cilitate, enhance, or both, but not to impede the un-
7 derlying Federal land purposes when seeking to
8 carry out fish and wildlife conservation programs
9 and projects or provide fish and wildlife dependent
10 recreation opportunities in designated wilderness
11 areas, provided that such implementation shall not
12 authorize or facilitate commodity development, use
13 or extraction, or permanent road construction or use
14 within designated wilderness areas.

15 (f) REPORT.—Beginning on the second October 1
16 after the date of the enactment of this Act and biennially
17 on October 1 thereafter, the head of each Federal agency
18 who has authority to manage Federal public land on which
19 fishing, hunting, or recreational shooting occurs shall sub-
20 mit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House
21 of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and
22 Natural Resources of the Senate a report that describes—
23 (1) any Federal public land administered by the
24 agency head that was closed to recreational fishing,

1 sport hunting, or shooting at any time during the
2 preceding year; and

3 (2) the reason for the closure.

4 (g) CLOSURES OR SIGNIFICANT RESTRICTIONS OF
5 640 OR MORE ACRES.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Other than closures estab-
7 lished or prescribed by land planning actions re-
8 ferred to in subsection (d) or emergency closures de-
9 scribed in paragraph (3) of this subsection, a perma-
10 nent or temporary withdrawal, change of classifica-
11 tion, or change of management status of Federal
12 public land that effectively closes or significantly re-
13 stricts 640 or more contiguous acres of Federal pub-
14 lic land to access or use for fishing or hunting or ac-
15 tivities related to fishing, hunting, or both, shall
16 take effect only if, before the date of withdrawal or
17 change, the head of the Federal agency that has ju-
18 risdiction over the Federal public land—

19 (A) publishes appropriate notice of the
20 withdrawal or change, respectively;

21 (B) demonstrates that coordination has oc-
22 curred with a State fish and wildlife agency;
23 and

24 (C) submits to the Committee on Natural
25 Resources of the House of Representatives and

1 the Committee on Energy and Natural Re-
2 sources of the Senate written notice of the with-
3 drawal or change, respectively.

4 (2) AGGREGATE OR CUMULATIVE EFFECTS.—If
5 the aggregate or cumulative effect of separate with-
6 drawals or changes effectively closes or significantly
7 restricts 1,280 or more acres of land or water, such
8 withdrawals and changes shall be treated as a single
9 withdrawal or change for purposes of paragraph (1).

10 (3) EMERGENCY CLOSURES.—Nothing in this
11 Act prohibits a Federal land management agency
12 from establishing or implementing emergency clo-
13 sures or restrictions of the smallest practicable area
14 to provide for public safety, resource conservation,
15 national security, or other purposes authorized by
16 law. Such an emergency closure shall terminate after
17 a reasonable period of time unless converted to a
18 permanent closure consistent with this Act.

19 (h) NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UNITS NOT AF-
20 FECTED.—Nothing in this Act shall affect or modify man-
21 agement or use of units of the National Park System.

22 (i) NO PRIORITY.—Nothing in this Act requires a
23 Federal land management agency to give preference to
24 recreational fishing, hunting, or shooting over other uses

1 of Federal public land or over land or water management
2 priorities established by Federal law.

3 (j) CONSULTATION WITH COUNCILS.—In fulfilling
4 the duties set forth in this Act, the heads of Federal agen-
5 cies shall consult with respective advisory councils as es-
6 tablished in Executive Order Nos. 12962 and 13443.

7 (k) AUTHORITY OF THE STATES.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act shall be
9 construed as interfering with, diminishing, or con-
10 flicting with the authority, jurisdiction, or responsi-
11 bility of any State to exercise primary management,
12 control, or regulation of fish and wildlife under State
13 law (including regulations) on land or water within
14 the State, including on Federal public land.

15 (2) FEDERAL LICENSES.—Nothing in this Act
16 shall be construed to authorize the head of a Federal
17 agency to require a license, fee, or permit to fish,
18 hunt, or trap on land or water in a State, including
19 on Federal public land in the States, except that this
20 paragraph shall not affect the Migratory Bird Stamp
21 requirement set forth in the Migratory Bird Hunting
22 and Conservation Stamp Act (16 U.S.C. 718 et
23 seq.).

