

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 972

To establish the Western Riverside County Wildlife Refuge, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

Mr. CALVERT (for himself and Mr. TAKANO) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To establish the Western Riverside County Wildlife Refuge,
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 “Wildlife Refuge Con-
5 servation and Recreation for the Community Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY**
7 **NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior (in
9 this section referred to as the “Secretary”), acting
10 through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, shall

1 establish as a national wildlife refuge the lands, waters,
2 and interests therein acquired under subsection (g). The
3 national wildlife refuge shall be known as the “Western
4 Riverside County National Wildlife Refuge” (in this sec-
5 tion referred to as the “Wildlife Refuge”).

6 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Wildlife Refuge
7 shall be—

8 (1) to conserve, manage, and restore wildlife
9 habitats for the benefit of present and future gen-
10 erations of Americans;

11 (2) to conserve species listed as threatened or
12 endangered under the Endangered Species Act of
13 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) or the California En-
14 dangered Species Act (California Fish and Game
15 Code 2050–2068), or which is a covered species
16 under the Western Riverside County Multiple Spe-
17 cies Habitat Conservation Plan;

18 (3) to support the recovery and protection of
19 threatened and endangered species under the En-
20 dangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et
21 seq.); and

22 (4) to provide for wildlife habitat connectivity
23 and migratory corridors within the Western River-
24 side County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation
25 Plan Area.

1 (c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
2 gress that the Secretary shall seek to acquire land, water,
3 or interests therein (including conservation easements), or
4 sufficient to satisfy the goals established in the Multiple
5 Species Habitat Conservation Plan, within the acquisition
6 boundaries pursuant to this section, including but not lim-
7 ited to those which have been heretofore or may be herein-
8 after acquired by the Western Riverside County Regional
9 Conservation Authority for Purposes of the Multiple Spe-
10 cies Habitat Conservation Plan.

11 (d) NOTIFICATION OF ESTABLISHMENT.—The Sec-
12 retary shall publish notice of the establishment of the
13 Wildlife Refuge in the Federal Register.

14 (e) ACQUISITION BOUNDARIES.—The Secretary shall
15 establish the acquisition boundaries of the Wildlife Refuge
16 as the lands and waters within the Western Riverside
17 County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area
18 (as depicted on maps and described in the Final Western
19 Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation
20 Plan dated June 17, 2003).

21 (f) ADMINISTRATION.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Upon the establishment of
23 the Wildlife Refuge and thereafter, the Secretary
24 shall administer all federally owned lands, waters,
25 and interests in the Wildlife Refuge in accordance

1 with the National Wildlife Refuge System Adminis-
2 tration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.) and
3 this section. The Secretary may use such additional
4 statutory authority as may be available to the Sec-
5 retary for the conservation, management, recovery
6 and restoration of fish and wildlife and habitat, the
7 development of compatible wildlife dependent out-
8 door recreation opportunities, and the facilitation of
9 fish and wildlife interpretation and education as the
10 Secretary considers appropriate to carry out the pur-
11 poses of this section and serve the objectives of the
12 Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat
13 Conservation Plan.

14 (2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS REGARDING
15 NON-FEDERAL LANDS.—The Secretary may enter
16 into cooperative agreements with the State of Cali-
17 fornia, any political subdivision thereof, or any other
18 person—

19 (A) for the management, in a manner con-
20 sistent with this section and the Western River-
21 side County Multiple Species Habitat Conserva-
22 tion Plan, of lands that are owned by such
23 State, subdivision, or other person and located
24 within the acquisition boundaries of the Wildlife
25 Refuge;

1 (B) to promote public awareness of the
2 natural resources of the Western Riverside
3 County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation
4 Plan Area; or

5 (C) to encourage public participation in the
6 conservation of those resources.

7 (g) ACQUISITION AND TRANSFERS OF LANDS AND
8 WATERS FOR WILDLIFE REFUGE.—

9 (1) ACQUISITIONS.—The Secretary shall ac-
10 quire by donation, purchase with appropriated
11 funds, or exchange such lands and waters, or inter-
12 ests therein (including conservation easements), as
13 they become available, that will achieve the purposes
14 of subsection (b), within the acquisition boundaries
15 of the Wildlife Refuge, except that the lands, waters,
16 and interests therein owned by the State of Cali-
17 fornia and its political subdivisions may be acquired
18 only by donation.

19 (2) TRANSFERS.—

20 (A) IN GENERAL.—The head of any Fed-
21 eral department or agency, including any agen-
22 cy within the Department of the Interior, that
23 has jurisdiction of any Federal property located
24 within the boundaries of the Wildlife Refuge as
25 described by this section shall, not later than 1

1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act,
2 submit to the Secretary an assessment of the
3 suitability of such property for inclusion in the
4 Wildlife Refuge.

5 (B) ASSESSMENT.—Any assessment under
6 subparagraph (A) shall include—

7 (i) parcel descriptions and best exist-
8 ing land surveys for such property;

9 (ii) a list of existing special reserva-
10 tions designations, or purposes of the prop-
11 erty;

12 (iii) a list of all known or suspected
13 hazardous substance contamination of such
14 property, and any facilities, surface water,
15 or groundwater on such property;

16 (iv) the status of withdrawal of such
17 property from—

18 (I) the Mineral Leasing Act (30
19 U.S.C. 181 et seq.); and

20 (II) the General Mining Act of
21 1872 (30 U.S.C. 22 et seq.); and

22 (v) a recommendation as to whether
23 such property is or is not suitable for in-
24 clusion in the Wildlife Refuge, and the rea-
25 sons supporting the recommendation.

1 (C) INCLUSION IN WILDLIFE REFUGE.—

2 (i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary
3 shall, not later than 60 days after receiving
4 an assessment submitted pursuant to sub-
5 paragraph (A), determine if the property
6 described in such assessment is suitable for
7 inclusion in the Wildlife Refuge.

8 (ii) TRANSFER.—If the Secretary de-
9 termines the property in an assessment
10 submitted under subparagraph (A) is suit-
11 able for inclusion in the Wildlife Refuge,
12 the head of the Federal department or
13 agency that has jurisdiction of such prop-
14 erty shall transfer such property to the ad-
15 ministrative jurisdiction of the Secretary
16 for the purposes of this section.

17 (D) PROPERTY UNSUITABLE FOR INCLU-
18 SION.—Property determined by the Secretary to
19 be unsuitable for inclusion in the Wildlife Ref-
20 uge based on an assessment submitted under
21 subparagraph (A) shall be subsequently trans-
22 ferred to the Secretary for purposes of this sec-
23 tion by the head of the department or agency
24 that has jurisdiction of such property if such
25 property becomes suitable for inclusion in the

1 Wildlife Refuge as determined by the Secretary
2 in consultation with the head of the department
3 or agency that has jurisdiction of such prop-
4 erty.

5 (E) PUBLIC ACCESS.—If property trans-
6 ferred to the Secretary under this paragraph al-
7 lows for public access at the time of transfer,
8 such access shall be maintained unless such ac-
9 cess—

10 (i) would be incompatible with the
11 purposes of the Wildlife Refuge;

12 (ii) would jeopardize public health or
13 safety; or

14 (iii) must be limited due to emergency
15 circumstances.

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