

Union Calendar No. 216

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 972

[Report No. 117-294]

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

APRIL 25, 2022

Additional sponsor: Mr. AGUILAR

APRIL 25, 2022

Reported from the Committee on Natural Resources; committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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
11 establish as a national wildlife refuge the lands, waters,
12 and interests therein acquired under subsection (g). The
13 national wildlife refuge shall be known as the “Western
14 Riverside County National Wildlife Refuge” (in this sec-
15 tion referred to as the “Wildlife Refuge”).

16 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Wildlife Refuge
17 shall be—

18 (1) to conserve, manage, and restore wildlife
19 habitats for the benefit of present and future gen-
20 erations of Americans;

21 (2) to conserve species listed as threatened or
22 endangered under the Endangered Species Act of
23 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) or the California En-
24 dangered Species Act (California Fish and Game
25 Code 2050–2068), or which is a covered species

1 under the Western Riverside County Multiple Spe-
2 cies Habitat Conservation Plan;

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

7 (4) to provide for wildlife habitat connectivity
8 and migratory corridors within the Western River-
9 side County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation
10 Plan Area.

11 (c) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
12 gress that the Secretary shall seek to acquire land, water,
13 or interests therein (including conservation easements), or
14 sufficient to satisfy the goals established in the Multiple
15 Species Habitat Conservation Plan, within the acquisition
16 boundaries pursuant to this section, including but not lim-
17 ited to those which have been heretofore or may be herein-
18 after acquired by the Western Riverside County Regional
19 Conservation Authority for Purposes of the Multiple Spe-
20 cies Habitat Conservation Plan.

21 (d) NOTIFICATION OF ESTABLISHMENT.—The Sec-
22 retary shall publish notice of the establishment of the
23 Wildlife Refuge in the Federal Register.

24 (e) ACQUISITION BOUNDARIES.—The Secretary shall
25 establish the acquisition boundaries of the Wildlife Refuge

1 as the lands and waters within the Western Riverside
2 County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area
3 (as depicted on maps and described in the Final Western
4 Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation
5 Plan dated June 17, 2003).

6 (f) ADMINISTRATION.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Upon the establishment of
8 the Wildlife Refuge and thereafter, the Secretary
9 shall administer all federally owned lands, waters,
10 and interests in the Wildlife Refuge in accordance
11 with the National Wildlife Refuge System Adminis-
12 tration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.) and
13 this section. The Secretary may use such additional
14 statutory authority as may be available to the Sec-
15 retary for the conservation, management, recovery
16 and restoration of fish and wildlife and habitat, the
17 development of compatible wildlife dependent out-
18 door recreation opportunities, and the facilitation of
19 fish and wildlife interpretation and education as the
20 Secretary considers appropriate to carry out the pur-
21 poses of this section and serve the objectives of the
22 Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat
23 Conservation Plan.

24 (2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS REGARDING
25 NON-FEDERAL LANDS.—The Secretary may enter

1 into cooperative agreements with the State of Cali-
2 fornia, any political subdivision thereof, or any other
3 person—

4 (A) for the management, in a manner con-
5 sistent with this section and the Western River-
6 side County Multiple Species Habitat Conserva-
7 tion Plan, of lands that are owned by such
8 State, subdivision, or other person and located
9 within the acquisition boundaries of the Wildlife
10 Refuge;

11 (B) to promote public awareness of the
12 natural resources of the Western Riverside
13 County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation
14 Plan Area; or

15 (C) to encourage public participation in the
16 conservation of those resources.

17 (g) ACQUISITION AND TRANSFERS OF LANDS AND
18 WATERS FOR WILDLIFE REFUGE.—

19 (1) ACQUISITIONS.—The Secretary shall ac-
20 quire by donation, purchase with appropriated
21 funds, or exchange such lands and waters, or inter-
22 ests therein (including conservation easements), as
23 they become available, that will achieve the purposes
24 of subsection (b), within the acquisition boundaries
25 of the Wildlife Refuge, except that the lands, waters,

1 and interests therein owned by the State of Cali-
2 fornia and its political subdivisions may be acquired
3 only by donation.

4 (2) TRANSFERS.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—The head of any Fed-
6 eral department or agency, including any agen-
7 cy within the Department of the Interior, that
8 has jurisdiction of any Federal property located
9 within the boundaries of the Wildlife Refuge as
10 described by this section shall, not later than 1
11 year after the date of the enactment of this Act,
12 submit to the Secretary an assessment of the
13 suitability of such property for inclusion in the
14 Wildlife Refuge.

15 (B) ASSESSMENT.—Any assessment under
16 subparagraph (A) shall include—

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

19 (ii) a list of existing special reserva-
20 tions designations, or purposes of the prop-
21 erty;

22 (iii) a list of all known or suspected
23 hazardous substance contamination of such
24 property, and any facilities, surface water,
25 or groundwater on such property;

1 (iv) the status of withdrawal of such
2 property from—

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

5 (II) the General Mining Act of
6 1872 (30 U.S.C. 22 et seq.); and

7 (v) a recommendation as to whether
8 such property is or is not suitable for in-
9 clusion in the Wildlife Refuge, and the rea-
10 sons supporting the recommendation.

11 (C) INCLUSION IN WILDLIFE REFUGE.—

12 (i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary
13 shall, not later than 60 days after receiving
14 an assessment submitted pursuant to sub-
15 paragraph (A), determine if the property
16 described in such assessment is suitable for
17 inclusion in the Wildlife Refuge.

18 (ii) TRANSFER.—If the Secretary de-
19 termines the property in an assessment
20 submitted under subparagraph (A) is suit-
21 able for inclusion in the Wildlife Refuge,
22 the head of the Federal department or
23 agency that has jurisdiction of such prop-
24 erty shall transfer such property to the ad-

1 ministrative jurisdiction of the Secretary
2 for the purposes of this section.

3 (D) PROPERTY UNSUITABLE FOR INCLU-
4 SION.—Property determined by the Secretary to
5 be unsuitable for inclusion in the Wildlife Ref-
6 uge based on an assessment submitted under
7 subparagraph (A) shall be subsequently trans-
8 ferred to the Secretary for purposes of this sec-
9 tion by the head of the department or agency
10 that has jurisdiction of such property if such
11 property becomes suitable for inclusion in the
12 Wildlife Refuge as determined by the Secretary
13 in consultation with the head of the department
14 or agency that has jurisdiction of such prop-
15 erty.

16 (E) PUBLIC ACCESS.—If property trans-
17 ferred to the Secretary under this paragraph al-
18 lows for public access at the time of transfer,
19 such access shall be maintained unless such ac-
20 cess—

21 (i) would be incompatible with the
22 purposes of the Wildlife Refuge;

23 (ii) would jeopardize public health or
24 safety; or

- 1 (iii) must be limited due to emergency
- 2 circumstances.

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