

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 952

To clarify the mission, purposes, and authorized uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and to establish requirements for administration and conservation planning for that system.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 5, 1997

Mr. MILLER of California (for himself, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. FARR of California, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. VENTO, Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Mr. SHAYS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

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## A BILL

To clarify the mission, purposes, and authorized uses of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and to establish requirements for administration and conservation planning for that system.

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 “Theodore Roosevelt  
5 Wildlife Legacy Act of 1997”.

1 **SEC. 2. MISSION AND PURPOSES OF THE SYSTEM.**

2 (a) MISSION.—The overall mission of the National  
3 Wildlife Refuge System (in this Act referred to as the  
4 “System”) is to preserve a network of lands and waters  
5 for the conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and  
6 plants of the United States for the benefit of present and  
7 future generations.

8 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the System are—

9 (1) to conserve, manage, and where appro-  
10 priate, restore fish and wildlife habitats so as to pro-  
11 vide, in perpetuity, for the diversity of fish, wildlife,  
12 and plants and the ecological processes that sustain  
13 them;

14 (2) to provide a diverse national network of  
15 lands and waters designed to conserve and manage,  
16 in perpetuity, fish, wildlife, and plants of the United  
17 States, and their habitats;

18 (3) to conserve and manage migratory birds,  
19 endangered species, anadromous or interjurisdic-  
20 tional fish species, marine mammals, and other fish,  
21 wildlife, and plants; and

22 (4) to fulfill international treaty obligations of  
23 the United States with respect to fish, wildlife, and  
24 plants, and their habitats.

1 **SEC. 3. PRIORITY USES.**

2 The priority public uses of the System are wildlife  
3 observation and photography, hunting, fishing, and envi-  
4 ronmental education and interpretation.

5 **SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE SYSTEM.**

6 In administering the System, the Secretary of the In-  
7 terior shall—

8 (1) ensure that the mission and purposes of the  
9 System described in section 2 and the purposes of  
10 each refuge are carried out, except that if a conflict  
11 exists between the primary purpose of a National  
12 Wildlife Refuge and any purpose of the System, the  
13 conflict shall be resolved in a manner that first ful-  
14 fills the primary purpose of the refuge, and, to the  
15 extent practicable, also achieves the purposes of the  
16 System;

17 (2) ensure that opportunities for the uses de-  
18 scribed in section 3 receive priority attention in  
19 planning and management within the System, con-  
20 sistent with the mission and purposes of the System  
21 described in sections 2(a) and (b);

22 (3) plan, propose, and direct expansion of the  
23 System—

24 (A) to accomplish the mission and pur-  
25 poses of the System and the purposes of each  
26 National Wildlife Refuge; and

1 (B) to contribute to the conservation of the  
2 ecosystems of the United States; and

3 (4) inventory and monitor the status and trends  
4 of fish, wildlife, and plants in each National Wildlife  
5 Refuge.

6 **SEC. 5. COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES.**

7 (a) GENERAL RULE.—Except as provided in sub-  
8 section (b), effective beginning on the date that is 3 years  
9 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall  
10 not initiate or permit a new use of a National Wildlife  
11 Refuge or expand, renew, or extend an existing allowed  
12 use unless the Secretary determines that the use is com-  
13 patible with the primary purposes of the refuge and the  
14 mission and purposes of the System specified in section  
15 2 of this Act. Such determinations shall—

16 (1) be made in writing, be based on the best  
17 available scientific information, and represent the  
18 best professional judgment of the refuge officer in-  
19 volved;

20 (2) be made after an opportunity has been pro-  
21 vided for the public to review and comment on the  
22 evaluations;

23 (3) where appropriate, be made concurrently  
24 with the development of a conservation plan for the  
25 refuge under section 6; and

1           (4) be reevaluated when conditions under which  
2           the use is permitted change significantly or when  
3           there is significant new information regarding the  
4           effects of the use, but not less frequently than every  
5           10 years.

6           (b) **PRIOR IDENTIFICATION FOR NEW ACQUISI-**  
7 **TIONS.**—On lands added to the System after the date of  
8 enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall identify, prior  
9 to acquisition, existing compatible priority public uses (as  
10 described in section 3) that shall be permitted to continue  
11 on an interim basis pending completion of comprehensive  
12 planning.

13 **SEC. 6. REFUGE CONSERVATION PLANNING PROGRAM.**

14           (a) **GENERAL RULE.**—Except with respect to Na-  
15 tional Wildlife Refuge lands in Alaska (which shall be gov-  
16 erned by the refuge planning provision of the Alaska Na-  
17 tional Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 3101  
18 et seq.)), the Secretary shall—

19           (1) propose a comprehensive conservation plan  
20           for each refuge or ecologically related complex of ref-  
21           uges consistent with section 2 of this Act within 15  
22           years after the date of enactment of this Act and re-  
23           vise such plans not less frequently than every 15  
24           years thereafter;

1           (2) develop and implement a process to ensure  
2           an opportunity for active public involvement in the  
3           preparation and revision of conservation plans; and

4           (3) manage each refuge in a manner consistent  
5           with the conservation plan for the refuge.

6           (b) NEW REFUGES.—With respect to any refuge es-  
7           tablished after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
8           retary shall prepare a conservation plan for the refuge not  
9           later than 2 years after the Secretary has determined that  
10          sufficient land has been acquired to warrant comprehen-  
11          sive planning.

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