

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 260

To establish the Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Conservation Area.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 11, 2007

Mr. DOMENICI (for himself and Mr. BINGAMAN) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Nat-
ural Resources

A BILL

To establish the Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National
Conservation Area.

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 “Fort Stanton-Snowy
5 River Cave National Conservation Area Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) CONSERVATION AREA.—The term “Con-
9 servation Area” means the Fort Stanton-Snowy

1 River Cave National Conservation Area established
2 by section 3(a).

3 (2) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—The term “manage-
4 ment plan” means the management plan developed
5 for the Conservation Area under section 4(c).

6 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
7 the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Di-
8 rector of the Bureau of Land Management.

9 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF FORT STANTON-SNOWY RIVER**
10 **CAVE NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA.**

11 (a) ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSES.—There is estab-
12 lished the Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Con-
13 servation Area in Lincoln County, New Mexico, to protect,
14 conserve, and enhance the unique and nationally impor-
15 tant historic, cultural, scientific, archaeological, natural,
16 and educational subterranean cave resources of the Fort
17 Stanton-Snowy River cave system.

18 (b) AREA INCLUDED.—The Conservation Area shall
19 include the area within the boundaries depicted on the
20 map entitled “Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National
21 Conservation Area” and dated November 2005.

22 (c) MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after
24 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary

1 shall submit to Congress a map and legal description
2 of the Conservation Area.

3 (2) EFFECT.—The map and legal description of
4 the Conservation Area shall have the same force and
5 effect as if included in this Act, except that the Sec-
6 retary may correct any minor errors in the map and
7 legal description.

8 (3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The map and legal
9 description of the Conservation Area shall be avail-
10 able for public inspection in the appropriate offices
11 of the Bureau of Land Management.

12 **SEC. 4. MANAGEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.**

13 (a) MANAGEMENT.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall manage
15 the Conservation Area—

16 (A) in a manner that conserves, protects,
17 and enhances the resources and values of the
18 Conservation Area, including the resources and
19 values described in section 3(a); and

20 (B) in accordance with—

21 (i) this Act;

22 (ii) the Federal Land Policy and Man-
23 agement Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et
24 seq.); and

25 (iii) any other applicable laws.

1 (2) USES.—The Secretary shall only allow uses
2 of the Conservation Area that are consistent with
3 the protection of the cave resources.

4 (3) REQUIREMENTS.—In administering the
5 Conservation Area, the Secretary shall provide for—

6 (A) the conservation and protection of the
7 natural and unique features and environs for
8 scientific, educational, and other appropriate
9 public uses of the Conservation Area;

10 (B) public access, as appropriate, while
11 providing for the protection of the cave re-
12 sources and for public safety;

13 (C) the continuation of other existing uses
14 or other new uses of the Conservation Area that
15 do not impair the purposes for which the Con-
16 servation Area is established;

17 (D) management of the surface area of the
18 Conservation Area in accordance with the Fort
19 Stanton Area of Critical Environmental Con-
20 cern Final Activity Plan dated March, 2001, or
21 any amendments to the plan, consistent with
22 this Act; and

23 (E) scientific investigation and research
24 opportunities within the Conservation Area, in-
25 cluding through partnerships with colleges, uni-

1 versities, schools, scientific institutions, re-
2 searchers, and scientists to conduct research
3 and provide educational and interpretive serv-
4 ices within the Conservation Area.

5 (b) WITHDRAWALS.—Subject to valid existing rights,
6 all Federal surface and subsurface land within the Con-
7 servation Area and all land and interests in the land that
8 are acquired by the United States after the date of enact-
9 ment of this Act for inclusion in the Conservation Area,
10 are withdrawn from—

11 (1) all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal
12 under the general land laws;

13 (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining
14 laws; and

15 (3) operation under the mineral leasing and
16 geothermal leasing laws.

17 (c) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after
19 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
20 shall develop a comprehensive plan for the long-term
21 management of the Conservation Area.

22 (2) PURPOSES.—The management plan shall—

23 (A) describe the appropriate uses and
24 management of the Conservation Area;

1 (B) incorporate, as appropriate, decisions
 2 contained in any other management or activity
 3 plan for the land within or adjacent to the Con-
 4 servation Area;

5 (C) take into consideration any informa-
 6 tion developed in studies of the land and re-
 7 sources within or adjacent to the Conservation
 8 Area; and

9 (D) provide for a cooperative agreement
 10 with Lincoln County, New Mexico, to address
 11 the historical involvement of the local commu-
 12 nity in the interpretation and protection of the
 13 resources of the Conservation Area.

14 (d) ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE CONSERVATION AREA.—

15 The establishment of the Conservation Area shall not—

16 (1) create a protective perimeter or buffer zone
 17 around the Conservation Area; or

18 (2) preclude uses or activities outside the Con-
 19 servation Area that are permitted under other appli-
 20 cable laws, even if the uses or activities are prohib-
 21 ited within the Conservation Area.

22 (e) RESEARCH AND INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may establish
 24 facilities for—

25 (A) the conduct of scientific research; and

1 (B) the interpretation of the historical, cul-
2 tural, scientific, archaeological, natural, and
3 educational resources of the Conservation Area.

4 (2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Sec-
5 retary may, in a manner consistent with this Act,
6 enter into cooperative agreements with the State of
7 New Mexico and other institutions and organizations
8 to carry out the purposes of this Act.

9 (f) WATER RIGHTS.—Nothing in this Act constitutes
10 an express or implied reservation of any water right.

11 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

12 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
13 as are necessary to carry out this Act. To establish the
14 Fort Stanton-Snowy River Cave National Conservation
15 Area.

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