



HR 1581 the Wilderness and Roadless Act Release Act of 2011

SCI SUPPORTS H.R. 1581

H.R. 1581- Congressman Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)

Overview:

- 1581 would return decades of unmanaged lands back to multiple use and active management to improve wildlife habitat.
- Currently, the Bureau and Forest Service are managing nearly 43 million acres of public land under the prohibitions of wilderness area study area policy, *even though* the agencies have recommended to Congress that these areas are not suitable for wilderness designation.
- H.R. 1581 simply allows Congress the power to act on the BLM and USFS recommendations by lifting the currently restrictive management practices and puts these lands to multiple uses which include increased recreational opportunities, responsible resource development and better access for firefighting purposes.
- If passed, H.R. 1581 lands would be responsibly managed under current land use plans and revised through a public process. That process will determine how best to conserve these lands.
- Safari Club International stands in support of this legislation along with numerous sportsmen's groups such as the National Rifle Association, U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance

CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NEEDED

Safari Club International requests additional Congressional co-sponsors to support H.R. 1581.

- H.R. 1581 would release wilderness study areas administered by the Bureau of Land Management that are not suitable for wilderness designation from continued management as de facto wilderness areas and would allow these lands to be managed in accordance with multiple-use management. It would also release inventoried roadless areas within the National Forest System that are not recommended for wilderness designation from the land use restrictions of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Final Rule and the 2005 State Petitions for Inventoried Roadless Area Management Final Rule. Additionally, H.R. 1581 would help rectify the serious problem faced by hunters who are being denied or limited in their access to wilderness and roadless areas on public lands.



- H.R. 1581 would terminate Secretary Salazar's recently issued "Wild Lands" Order (Secretarial Order 3310). H.R. 1581 would also prevent the Secretary of the Interior from issuing future regulations that direct how lands unsuitable for wilderness designation will be managed.

Background:

- Currently the Bureau manages over 6.5 million acres as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) even though the agency has recommended to Congress that these areas are not suitable for wilderness designation.
- The Forest Service also has over 36 million acres under management that it has identified as not suitable for wilderness. Nevertheless, the Forest Service manages much of that land in ways that prohibit road construction and hunter access.
- The two agencies' protectionist management severely restricts hunter access to these lands.
- Studies have shown that one of the biggest reasons for the decline in hunting participation in recent years has been the lack of access to hunting lands.

Myth: H.R. 1581 would strip existing protections from nearly seven million acres of BLM Wilderness Study Areas that have not yet been considered by Congress for Wilderness designation.

- The Wilderness Society

FACT: Nearly seven million acres of BLM lands have been studied and the agency recommended returning those lands to multiple-use as permitted in the land management plan.

Myth: "Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act would remove safeguards from millions of acres of prime big-game and fish habitat." - TRCP press release Aug. 11, 2011

FACT: "Our field visits to national forests in western Oregon clearly showed that the nutritional needs of elk in the region were not being met with current forest management practices, and that land use plans on national forests contained little direction for managing habitat for elk nutrition."

-Michael Wisdom and Martin Vavra, Ungulate Scientists for USDA Forest Service Pacific NW Research

Myth: "This legislation would undo decades of public land protections by opening up an area the size of Wyoming to new industrial activity. It would allow some of the country's most pristine and spectacular landscapes to be exploited, including the vast majority of undisturbed national forests."

-Tom Wathen, Deputy Director of the Pew Environment Group



FACT: The Federal land agencies have already recommended that the lands addressed by H.R. 1581 are not suitable for designation as Wilderness or Roadless.

Myth: “Developing our nation’s backcountry public lands will result in fewer opportunities for Americans to hunt and fish.” -Dale Burk, supporter of “Banking on the Backcountry”

FACT: “The declines in populations of species like the American woodcock and golden-winged warbler will only continue unless we return proper management to these National Forest Lands.”
–Gary Zimmer, Coordinating Biologist, Ruffed Grouse Society

Myth: Multiple use would be a thing of the past: The Great Outdoors Giveaway would also overturn a decades-old policy of balancing the myriad uses of federal lands. Under this policy, known as “multiple use,” land managers analyze federal lands to determine the best uses for each landscape.
-The Wilderness Society

FACT: Areas in the bill have been inventoried and recommended for multiple-use as permitted in the land management plan.

FACT: “future management of these areas, if they are to be released, would be subject to the provisions of the local land plans.” -Bob Abbey, Director, BLM

Myth: “This legislation would effectively overturn the 2001 Roadless Rule, a multiple-use management plan for 49 million acres of backcountry national forest lands in 37 states.”
-TRCP press release Aug. 11, 2011

FACT: The 2001 Roadless Rule was set aside in 2008 in the United States District Court for the District of Wyoming for violating the National Environmental Policy act and the Wilderness Act. “In this case, the Forest Service’s designation of 58.5 million acres as “roadless areas” was a thinly veiled attempt to designate “wilderness areas” in violation of the clear and unambiguous process established by the Wilderness Act for such designation” - Judge Brimmer, District Court for the District of Wyoming

Myth: Undermines Congressional authority: Existing laws allow the Forest Service and BLM to identify and protect areas with wilderness characteristics from incompatible uses – authority that H.R. 1581 would gut. -The Wilderness Society

FACT: HR 1581 is an exercise of Congressional authority to act on the agencies’ recommendations.