Public Law 102-50
102d Congress

An Act

May 24, 1991
[S. 248]

To amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of the Niobrara River in Nebraska and a segment of the Missouri River in Nebraska and South Dakota as components of the wild and scenic rivers system, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Niobrara Scenic River Designation Act of 1991. Natural resources. 16 USC 1271 note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Niobrara Scenic River Designation Act of 1991".

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF THE RIVER.

Section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)) is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:

"( ) NIOBRARA, NEBRASKA.—(A) The 40-mile segment from Borman Bridge southeast of Valentine downstream to its confluence with Chimney Creek and the 30-mile segment from the river's confluence with Rock Creek downstream to the State Highway 137 bridge, both segments to be classified as scenic and administered by the Secretary of the Interior. That portion of the 40-mile segment designated by this subparagraph located within the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge shall continue to be managed by the Secretary through the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

"(B) The 25-mile segment from the western boundary of Knox County to its confluence with the Missouri River, including that segment of the Verdigre Creek from the north municipal boundary of Verdigre, Nebraska, to its confluence with the Niobrara, to be administered by the Secretary of the Interior as a recreational river.

"After consultation with State and local governments and the interested public, the Secretary shall take such action as is required under subsection (b) of this section.

"( ) MISSOURI RIVER, NEBRASKA AND SOUTH DAKOTA.—The 39-mile segment from the headwaters of Lewis and Clark Lake to the Ft. Randall Dam, to be administered by the Secretary of the Interior as a recreational river.".

SEC. 3. STUDY OF 6-MILE SEGMENT.

(a) STUDY.—Section 5(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1276(a)) is amended by adding the following at the end:

"( ) NIOBRARA, NEBRASKA.—The 6-mile segment of the river from its confluence with Chimney Creek to its confluence with Rock Creek.".

16 USC 1274 note.

(b) WATER RESOURCES PROJECT.—If, within 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, funds are not authorized and appropriated for the construction of a water resources project on the 6-mile segment of the Niobrara River from its confluence with Chimney Creek to its confluence with Rock Creek, at the expiration of such 5-

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year period the 6-mile segment shall be designated as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System by operation of law, to be administered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with sections 4 and 5 of this Act and the applicable provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1271-1287). The Secretary of the Interior shall publish notification to that effect in the Federal Register.

Federal Register, publication.

SEC. 4. LIMITATIONS ON CERTAIN ACQUISITION.

16 USC 1274 note.

(a) LIMITATIONS.—In the case of the 40-mile and 30-mile segments of the Niobrara River described in the amendment to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act made by section 2 of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall not, without the consent of the owner, acquire for purposes of such segment land or interests in land in more than 5 percent of the area within the boundaries of such segments, and the Secretary shall not acquire, without the consent of the owner, fee ownership of more than 2 percent of such area. The limitations on land acquisition contained in this subsection shall be in addition to, and not in lieu of, the limitations on acquisition contained in section 6 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

(b) FINDING; EXCEPTION.—The 5 percent limitation and the 2 percent limitation contained in subsection (a) of this section shall not apply if the Secretary of the Interior finds, after notice and opportunity for public comment, that State or local governments are not, through statute, regulation, ordinance, or otherwise, adequately protecting the values for which the segment concerned is designated as a component of the national wild and scenic rivers system.

SEC. 5. NIOBRARA SCENIC RIVER ADVISORY COMMISSION.

16 USC 1274 note.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established the Niobrara Scenic River Advisory Commission (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the "Commission"). The Commission shall advise the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") on matters pertaining to the development of a management plan, and the management and operation of the 40-mile and 30-mile segments of the Niobrara River designated by section 2 of this Act which lie outside the boundary of the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge and that segment of the Niobrara River from its confluence with Chimney Creek to its confluence with Rock Creek.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Commission shall consist of 11 members appointed by the Secretary—

(1) 3 of whom shall be owners of farm or ranch property within the upper portion of the designated river corridor between the Borman Bridge and the Meadville;

(2) 3 of whom shall be owners of farm or ranch property within the lower portion of the designated river corridor between the Meadville Bridge and the bridge on Highway 137;

(3) 1 of whom shall be a canoe outfitter who operates within the river corridors;

(4) 1 of whom shall be chosen from a list submitted by the Governor of Nebraska;

(5) 2 of whom shall be representatives of the affected county governments or natural resources districts; and

(6) 1 of whom shall be a representative of a conservation organization who shall have knowledge and experience in river conservation.

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(c) TERMS.—Members shall be appointed to the Commission for a term of 3 years. A member may serve after the expiration of his term until his successor has taken office.

(d) CHAIRPERSON; VACANCIES.—The Secretary shall designate 1 of the members of the Commission, who is a permanent resident of Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha, or Rock Counties, to serve as Chairperson. Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but the Secretary is authorized to pay expenses reasonably incurred by the Commission in carrying out its responsibilities under this Act on vouchers signed by the Chairperson.

(e) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall cease to exist 10 years from the date of enactment of this Act.

16 USC 1274 note.

SEC. 6. MISSOURI RIVER PROVISIONS.

(a) ADMINISTRATION.—The administration of the Missouri River segment designated in section 2 of this Act shall be in consultation with a recreational river advisory group to be established by the Secretary. Such group shall include in its membership representatives of the affected States and political subdivisions thereof, affected Federal agencies, organized private groups, and such individuals as the Secretary deems desirable.

(b) BRIDGES.—The designation of the Missouri River segment by the amendment made by section 2 of this Act shall not place any additional requirements on the placement of bridges other than those contained in section 303 of title 49, United States Code.

(c) EROSION CONTROL.—Within the Missouri River segment designated by the amendment made by section 2 of this Act, the Secretary shall permit the use of erosion control techniques, including the use of rocks from the area for streambank stabilization purposes, subject to such conditions as the Secretary may prescribe, in consultation with the advisory group described in subsection (a) of this section, to protect the resource values for which such river segment was designated.

16 USC 1274 note.

SEC. 7. NATIONAL RECREATION AREA STUDY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service, shall undertake and complete a study, within 18 months after the date of enactment of this section, regarding the feasibility and suitability of the designation of lands in Knox County and Boyd County, Nebraska, generally adjacent to the recreational river segments designated by the amendments made by section 2 of this Act and adjacent to the Lewis and Clark Reservoir, as a national recreation area. The Secretary may provide grants and technical assistance to the State of Nebraska, the Santee Sioux Indian Tribal Council, and the political subdivisions having jurisdiction over lands in these 2 counties to assist the Secretary in carrying out such study. The study under this section shall be prepared in consultation with the Santee Sioux Tribe, affected political subdivisions, and relevant State agencies. The study shall include as a minimum each of the following:

(1) A comprehensive evaluation of the public recreational opportunities and the flood plain management options which are available with respect to the river and creek corridors involved.

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(2) An evaluation of the natural, historical, paleontological, and recreational resources and values of such corridors.

(3) Recommendations for possible land acquisition within the corridor which are deemed necessary for the purpose of resource protection, scenic protection and integrity, recreational activities, or management and administration of the corridor areas.

(4) Alternative cooperative management proposals for the administration and development of the corridor areas.

(5) An analysis of the number of visitors and types of public use within the corridor areas that can be accommodated in accordance with the full protection of its resources.

(6) An analysis of the facilities deemed necessary to accommodate and provide access for such recreational uses by visitors, including the location and estimated costs of such facilities.

(b) SUBMISSION OF REPORT.—The results of such study shall be transmitted to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

SEC. 8. STUDY OF FEASIBILITY AND SUITABILITY OF ESTABLISHING NIOBRARA-BUFFALO PRAIRIE NATIONAL PARK.

16 USC 1a-5 note.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall undertake and complete a study of the feasibility and suitability of establishing a national park in the State of Nebraska to be known as the Niobrara-Buffalo Prairie National Park within 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) AREA TO BE STUDIED.—The areas studied under this section shall include the area generally depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, Proposed Niobrara-Buffalo Prairie National Park", numbered NBP-80,000, and dated March 1990. The study area shall not include any lands within the boundaries of the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge.

(c) RESOURCES.—In conducting the study under this section, the Secretary shall conduct an assessment of the natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources of such areas studied to determine whether they are of such significance as to merit inclusion in the National Park System.

(d) STUDY REGARDING MANAGEMENT.—In conducting the study under this section, the Secretary shall study the feasibility of managing the area by various methods, in consultation with appropriate Federal agencies, the Nature Conservancy, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

(e) SUBMISSION OF REPORT.—The results of the study shall be submitted to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

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16 USC 1274 note.

SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Approved May 24, 1991.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 248:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 102-51, Pt. 1 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).
SENATE REPORTS: No. 102-19 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 137 (1991):
Apr. 17, considered and passed Senate.
May 14, considered and passed House.
WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 27 (1991):
May 24, Presidential statement.

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