

Public Law 97-465
97th Congress

An Act

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to convey certain National Forest System lands, and for other purposes.

Jan. 12, 1983
[S. 705]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That for purposes of this Act—

National Forest System, land conveyance. 16 USC 521c. Definitions.

(1) the term "person" includes any State or any political subdivision or entity thereof;

(2) the term "interchange" means a land transfer in which the Secretary and another person exchange titles to lands or interests in lands of approximately equal value where the Secretary finds that such a value determination can be made without a formal appraisal and under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe; and

(3) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States.

SEC. 2. The Secretary is authorized, when the Secretary determines it to be in the public interest—

16 USC 521d.

(1) to sell, exchange, or interchange by quitclaim deed, all right, title, and interest, including the mineral estate, of the United States in and to National Forest System lands described in section 3; and

(2) to accept as consideration for the lands sold, exchanged, or interchanged other lands, interests in lands, or cash payment, or any combination of such forms of consideration, which, in the case of conveyance by sale or exchange, is at least equal in value, including the mineral estate, or, in the case of conveyance by interchange, is of approximately equal value, including the mineral estate, to the lands being conveyed by the Secretary. The Secretary shall insert in any such quitclaim deed such terms, covenants, conditions, and reservations as the Secretary deems necessary to ensure protection of the public interest, including protection of the scenic, wildlife, and recreation values of the National Forest System and provision for appropriate public access to and use of lands within the System. The preceding sentence shall not be applicable to deeds issued by the Secretary to lands outside the boundary of units of the National Forest System.

SEC. 3. The National Forest System lands which may be sold, exchanged, or interchanged under this Act are those the sale or exchange of which is not practicable under any other authority of the Secretary, which have a value as determined by the Secretary of not more than \$150,000, and which are—

16 USC 521e.

(1) parcels of forty acres or less which are interspersed with or adjacent to lands which have been transferred out of Federal ownership under the mining laws and which are determined by the Secretary, because of location or size, not to be subject to efficient administration;

(2) parcels of ten acres or less which are encroached upon by improvements occupied or used under claim or color of title by persons to whom no advance notice was given that the improvements encroached or would encroach upon such parcels, and who in good faith relied upon an erroneous survey, title search, or other land description indicating that there was not such encroachment; or

(3) road rights-of-way, reserved or acquired, which are substantially surrounded by lands not owned by the United States and which are no longer needed by the United States, subject to the first right of abutting landowners to acquire such rights-of-way.

16 USC 521f.

SEC. 4. Any person to whom lands are conveyed under this Act shall bear all reasonable costs of administration, survey, and appraisal incidental to such conveyance, as determined by the Secretary. In determining the value of any lands or interest in lands to be conveyed under this Act, the Secretary may, in those cases in which the Secretary determines it would be in the public interest, exclude from such determination the value of any improvements to the lands made by any person other than the Government. In the case of road rights-of-way conveyed under this Act, the person to whom the right-of-way is conveyed shall reimburse the United States for the value of any improvements to such right-of-way which may have been made by the United States. The Secretary may, in those cases in which the Secretary determines that it would be in the public interest, waive payment by any person of costs incidental to any conveyance authorized by this Act or reimbursement by any person for the value of improvements to rights-of-way otherwise required by this section.

Right-of-way.

Waiver.

16 USC 521g.

SEC. 5. Conveyance of any road rights-of-way under this Act shall not be construed as permitting any designation, maintenance, or use of such rights-of-way for road or other purposes except to the extent permitted by State or local law and under conditions imposed by such law.

Regulations.

16 USC 521h.

SEC. 6. The Secretary shall issue regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act, including specification of—

(1) criteria which shall be used in making the determination as to what constitutes the public interest;

(2) the definition of and the procedure for determining "approximately equal value"; and

(3) factors relating to location or size which shall be considered in connection with determining the lands to be sold, exchanged, or interchanged under clause (1) of section 3.

Restrictions.

16 USC 521i.

SEC. 7. Nothing in this Act shall authorize conveyance of Federal lands within the National Wilderness Preservation System, National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, National Trails System, or National Monuments. Nothing in this Act shall authorize sale of Federal lands, within National Recreation Areas.

16 USC 484a.

SEC. 8. (a) The Act of December 4, 1967 (81 Stat. 531), is amended by inserting before the phrase "public school district" wherever it appears, and before the phrase "public school authority" the second time it appears, the words "State, county, or municipal government or".

(b) The Act of December 4, 1967 (81 Stat. 531), is further amended by adding the following at the end thereof: "Lands may be conveyed to any State, county, or municipal government pursuant to this Act only if the lands were being utilized by such entities on the date of enactment of this sentence. Lands so conveyed may be used only for the purposes for which they were being used prior to conveyance."

16 USC 484a.

Approved January 12, 1983.

Section 1. In furtherance of the purposes of the Wilderness Act, the following lands are hereby designated as wilderness, and these are components of the National Wilderness Preservation System—

(1) certain lands in the Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia, which comprise approximately thirty-five thousand six hundred acres as generally depicted on a map entitled "Wilderness—Proposed", dated May 1982, and which shall be known as the Cranberry Wilderness. Provided, That for purposes of the Act of July 14, 1966 (80 Stat. 502) as amended, the Cranberry Wilderness may be reclassified only by Act of Congress enacted after the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) certain lands in the Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia, which comprise approximately six thousand one hundred acres as generally depicted on a map entitled "Laural Fork North Wilderness—Proposed", dated November 1981, and which shall be known as the Laurel Fork North Wilderness; and

(3) certain lands in the Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia, which comprise approximately six thousand one hundred acres as generally depicted on a map entitled "Laural Fork South Wilderness—Proposed", dated November 1981, and which shall be known as the Laurel Fork South Wilderness.

Sec. 2. As soon as practicable after the provisions of this Act take effect, the Secretary of Agriculture shall file the maps and legal descriptions of each wilderness area designated by this Act with the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry of the United States Senate, and each such map and legal description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act. Provided, however, That correction of clerical and typographical errors in such legal descriptions and maps may be made. Each such map and legal description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 705 (H.R. 3021):

- HOUSE REPORT No. 97-492, pt. 1 accompanying H.R. 3021 (Comm. on Agriculture).
- SENATE REPORTS: No. 97-332 (Comm. on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry) and No. 97-490 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
- CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 128 (1982):
 - Aug. 19, considered and passed Senate.
 - Dec. 21, considered and passed House.