

Analysis: Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act Guts the Wilderness Act

Every unit of National Wilderness Preservation System threatened

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MISSOULA, MT – A new analysis (<http://bit.ly/2vIQShz>) by Wilderness Watch calls the discussion draft of the “Sportsmen’s Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act of 2017” nothing more than a thinly disguised measure to gut the 1964 Wilderness Act and the protections afforded to every unit of America’s 110 million-acre National Wilderness Preservation System.

The analysis corresponds with a leaked memo McClatchy obtained and reported on last week (<http://bit.ly/2wGh1ay>) that found the Trump Administration has so far prevented the National Park Service from voicing its serious concerns over the National Rifle Association (NRA)-backed SHARE Act. When the Park Service shared such concerns in a memo to the Department of Interior (DOI), the DOI responded by crossing out the Park Service’s comments, and the agency was told not to go to Congress.

The SHARE Act would give hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, and state fish and wildlife agency goals top priority in Wilderness, rather than protecting the areas’ wilderness character, as has been the case for over 50 years.

The SHARE Act would allow endless, extensive habitat manipulations in Wilderness under the guise of “wildlife conservation” and for providing hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting experiences. The Act would also allow the construction of “temporary” roads in protected Wilderness areas to facilitate such uses and would allow the construction of dams, buildings, or other structures within Wildernesses.

“Taken in combination, the provisions in the SHARE Act would completely undermine the protections that wilderness designation should provide, and dramatically weaken wilderness conservation for the entire 110 million-acre National Wilderness Preservation System. These wilderness provisions in the SHARE Act must not be enacted into law,” explained Kevin Proescholdt, Conservation Director for Wilderness Watch.

The discussion draft of the SHARE Act (<http://bit.ly/2vFKaym>) was scheduled for a legislative hearing on June 14, 2017, but was canceled due to a shooting before the Congressional softball game.

The SHARE Act would also exempt road, dam, and building projects within protected Wilderness areas from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)—eliminating critical environmental analysis of potential impacts and alternatives, and public comment and involvement.

“Sadly, the SHARE Act would eviscerate the letter, spirit, and fundamental ideals expressed in the Wilderness Act,” said Wilderness Watch Executive Director George Nickas. “While the Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motorized vehicles or equipment and the building of roads and other structures, the SHARE Act essentially throws Wilderness areas wide open to motorized use by agency managers and a

nearly unlimited variety of wilderness-damaging manipulations and developments. Make no mistake—Wilderness as we know it will cease to exist if the SHARE Act becomes law.”

Wilderness Watch is America’s leading organization dedicated to defending and keeping wild the nation’s 110 million-acre National Wilderness Preservation System. Its work is guided by the visionary 1964 Wilderness Act.

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