



WILDERNESS WATCH

Keeping Wilderness Wild

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Conservation organizations strongly object to anti-Wilderness provisions in NRA-backed “Sportsmen’s Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act

Analysis: SHARE Act guts the Wilderness Act and public lands protections, every unit of National Wilderness Preservation System threatened

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MISSOULA, MT – Today, 23 conservation, Wilderness and wildlife organizations from across America voiced their strong opposition to the NRA-backed “Sportsmen’s Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act of 2017,” which they described as 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 SHARE Act (H.R. 3668) is scheduled for a legislative hearing today, September 12, 2017, and the letter sent by the 23 organizations to the Committee on Natural Resources is here: <http://bit.ly/2vRRZID>.

Wilderness Watch, America’s leading organization dedicated to defending and keeping wild the nation’s 110 million-acre National Wilderness Preservation System, also has released an in-depth analysis of the numerous anti-Wilderness provisions within the SHARE Act here: <http://bit.ly/2vIQShz>.

The analysis and opposition from conservation organizations corresponds with a leaked memo McClatchy obtained and reported on last month (<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.

By nearly unanimous vote, Congress passed the 1964 Wilderness Act in order to protect America's wildest landscapes. The law describes Wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man...retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions." Since passage of the Wilderness Act, the National Wilderness Preservation System has grown to include 110 million acres (half of which are in Alaska) in more than 750 units. The SHARE Act would eviscerate the only lands set aside to be left in their untouched state.

"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 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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