

Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage Opportunities Act Fact Sheet

OBJECTIVE: To recognize the rightful place of recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting on Federal lands; to support Executive Order 13443, which directs Federal land management agencies to facilitate the rightful place of hunting and fishing on Federal lands; and to ensure sound scientific management of wildlife and their habitat.

PROVISIONS:

The bill expressly **does not** open national parks or monuments managed by the National Park Service to recreational hunting or shooting.

The bill expressly **does not** open lands designated as wilderness to activities prevented by the Wilderness Act including the use of mechanized or motorized equipment or vehicles, timber harvesting, and mineral extraction.

The bill expressly **does not** include any land or water held in trust for the benefit of Indians or other Native Americans.

The bill establishes an “open unless closed” policy for recreational hunting, fishing and shooting on lands managed by the US Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The bill retains the discretion of Federal land management agencies to establish closures or restrictions, pursuant to all existing legal authorities, where and when the agencies determine that such closures or restrictions are appropriate or necessary.

The bill directs management of Federal public lands to facilitate the use of and access to these lands for recreational hunting, fishing and shooting with certain exceptions such as for national security and within the limitations of other Federal statutes.

The bill requires that recreational hunting, fishing and shooting be addressed in land management plans in order to protect public access and to encourage proactive management of these activities.

The bill prevents the sudden closure of lands to recreational hunting, fishing and shooting without public knowledge or input or when lacking sound scientific support.

The bill requires that written notice be given to the authorizing Congressional committees and the public and that coordination with state fish and wildlife agencies occurs before a Federal land management action closes or restricts 1,280 or more contiguous acres (or the aggregate of small closures) to recreational hunting or fishing or both.

The bill removes ambiguity about requirements imposed upon the USFS when developing land management plans by granting the agency discretion to look beyond its borders to the recreational opportunities offered by other Federal or state agencies.

The bill allows Federal agencies to lease or permit its lands for the construction of shooting ranges and to designate specific lands for recreational shooting.

The bill ensures that a greater liability is not imposed upon the Federal Government for designating areas for safe shooting than is imposed for designating trails, campgrounds, boat launches and other recreational sites.

The bill allows the use of skilled volunteers in assisting Federal land managers in controlling over populations of wildlife where hunting is otherwise prohibited.

The bill asserts the authority of the state fish and wildlife agencies to manage resident wildlife on Federal lands.