

1976, insofar as applicable to the issuance of rights-of-way over, upon, under, and through the public lands and lands in the National Forest System. Such repeal not to be construed as terminating any valid lease, permit, patent, etc., existing on Oct. 21, 1976, see section 701 of Pub. L. 94-579, set out as a note under section 1701 of Title 43, Public Lands.

§ 526. Establishment and protection of water rights

There are authorized to be appropriated for expenditure by the Forest Service such sums as may be necessary for the investigation and establishment of water rights, including the purchase thereof or of lands or interests in lands or rights-of-way for use and protection of water rights necessary or beneficial in connection with the administration and public use of the national forests.

(Sept. 21, 1944, ch. 412, title II, §213, 58 Stat. 737.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

This section was enacted as a part of the Department of Agriculture Organic Act of 1944.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

INTERIM MORATORIUM ON BYPASS FLOWS

Pub. L. 104-127, title III, §389, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1021, as amended by Pub. L. 104-180, title VII, §736, Aug. 6, 1996, 110 Stat. 1607, provided that:

“(a) MORATORIUM.—There shall be a 20-month moratorium on any Forest Service decision to require bypass flows or any other relinquishment of the unimpaired use of a decreed water right as a condition of renewal or reissuance of a land use authorization permit.

“(b) LIMITATIONS.—Subsection (a) shall not affect—

“(1) obligations or authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to protect public health and safety; and

“(2) obligations or authority under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), or applicable State law.

“(c) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

“(1) EXISTING NON-FEDERAL WATER RIGHTS.—Nothing in this section prevents or inhibits the exercise of the use and operation of existing non-Federal water rights on or above the National Forest land that require land use authorization permits from the Forest Service to access water supply facilities.

“(2) RENEWAL OR REISSUANCE OF EXPIRING LAND USE AUTHORIZATION FOR DECREED WATER RIGHTS.—Nothing in this section prevents or inhibits the renewal or reissuance of expiring land use authorizations for decreed water rights. The Forest Service may extend, as needed, any expiring land use authorization for such time as is necessary to incorporate the results of the study authorized by subsection (d).

“(d) STUDY OF WATER RIGHTS ACROSS FEDERAL LANDS.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act [Apr. 4, 1996], there shall be established a Water Rights Task Force to study the subjects described in paragraph (3).

“(2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Task Force shall be composed of 7 members appointed as follows:

“(A) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture.

“(B) 2 members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and 1 member shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

“(C) 2 members shall be appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate and 1 member shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.

“(3) SUBJECTS TO BE STUDIED.—The Task Force shall study and make recommendations on—

“(A) whether Federal water rights should be acquired for environmental protection on National Forest land;

“(B) measures necessary to protect the free exercise of non-Federal water rights requiring easements and permits from the Forest Service;

“(C) the protection of minimum instream flows for environmental and watershed management purposes on National Forest land through purchases or exchanges from willing sellers in accordance with State law;

“(D) the effects of any of the recommendations made under this paragraph on existing State laws, regulations, and customs of water usage; and

“(E) measures that would be useful in avoiding or resolving conflicts between the Forest Service's responsibilities for natural resource and environmental protection, the public interest, and the property rights and interests of water holders with special use permits for water facilities, including the study of the Federal acquisition of water rights, dispute resolution, mitigation, and compensation.

“(4) FINAL REPORT.—As soon as practicable, but not later than 14 months, after the date of enactment of this Act [Apr. 4, 1996], the Task Force shall provide the final report of the Task Force to—

“(A) the Secretary of Agriculture;

“(B) the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

“(C) the President pro tempore of the Senate;

“(D) the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives;

“(E) the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

“(F) the Chairman of the Committee on Resources [now Committee on Natural Resources] of the House of Representatives; and

“(G) the Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

“(5) AUTHORIZATION OF FUNDS.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall use funds made available for salaries and administrative expenses of the Department of Agriculture to carry out this subsection.

“(e) EXTENSION FOR DELAY.—There shall be a day-for-day extension to the 20-month moratorium required by subsection (a) and a day-for-day extension to the report required by subsection (d)(4)—

“(1) for every day of delay in implementing or establishing the Water Rights Task Force caused by a failure to nominate Task Force members by the Administration or by the Congress; or

“(2) for every day of delay caused by a failure by the Secretary of Agriculture to identify adequate resources as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out the purposes of the Task Force.”

§ 527. Use of Forest Service funds for administration of certain lands

The Forest Service may expend funds available for national forest protection and management for the administration of lands under contract for purchase or for the acquisition of which condemnation proceedings have been instituted under the Act of March 1, 1911, and the Act of June 7, 1924, and lands transferred to the Forest Service for administration.

(Sept. 21, 1944, ch. 412, title II, §211, 58 Stat. 737.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Act of March 1, 1911, referred to in text, is act Mar. 1, 1911, ch. 186, 36 Stat. 961, popularly known as the Weeks Law, which enacted former sections 513 and 514 and sections 515 to 519, 521, 552, and 563 of this title and amended sections 480 and 500 of this title. For complete