

Given these declines and their causes, any effort to address shark depredation must align with our Nation's goal to recover shark populations and consider the impact of heightened fishing pressure and climate change.

Last year, we passed the SHARKED Act in the House. However, I recognize the concern over whether this legislation goes far enough to ensure good outcomes for shark populations and isn't just a slippery slope toward increasing shark harvests.

Through a collaborative effort, we refocused this bill on changing angler behavior and managing expectations, as well as building out the scientific understanding of shark ecology and the impacts of climate change on predators and prey in the ocean. This is vital because nonlethal deterrents and simple changes in angler behavior are proven to reduce the probability of sharks taking fish by 65 percent.

NOAA admitted in the legislative hearing on this bill that depredation research is complex and requires sustained investment due to sharks' high intelligence and adaptability.

Another area of concern is that this bill doesn't include funding. Without it, NOAA will be unable to expand their work to address shark conservation and depredation.

I hope my colleagues who support this bill will also work with us to ensure robust funding for shark conservation priorities, like increased shark stock assessments.

This bill should promote better collaboration between the fishing community and shark researchers. That is a good thing. This partnership is necessary to reduce risks to both sharks and humans from depredation events and build our understanding of the importance of sharks and how to conserve them. These are goals we should all support.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. WITTMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge support for my bill, H.R. 207, the Supporting the Health of Aquatic Systems through Research Knowledge and Enhanced Dialogue Act, also known as the SHARKED Act. As a lifelong recreational fisherman, I am particularly passionate about this bill.

Picture this: A charter boat fisherman takes an excited group of anglers 90 miles off the coast in hopes of reeling in a bluefin tuna, tarpon, or other big game species. One of the individuals hooks the first fish and starts to fight to reel it in, but before the fish ever gets to the boat, sharks have bitten and eaten the fish. This phenomenon is called depredation, which occurs when sharks interfere with fishing activities. It is essentially a massive impact on the coastal recreational fishing industry, especially the charter industry.

Shark depredation is accepted as a natural part of fishing, but it has become a widespread issue in our waters and has increased rapidly in recent years.

During the House Natural Resources Committee hearing for the SHARKED Act last year, we heard from experts discussing the impact of this phenomenon.

According to the American Sportfishing Association, 52.4 million people went fishing in the United States in 2023, supporting 826,000 jobs and contributing \$129 billion to the economy.

The American Sportfishing Association also found that 87 percent of charter guides surveyed said they experienced depredations with clients, resulting in negative impacts on their business.

Anglers are losing their catch and tackle to sharks at alarming rates, and they are understandably becoming increasingly frustrated by it.

I introduced the SHARKED Act to study this issue and evaluate how we can improve sportfishing conditions for anglers while protecting sharks.

This bill establishes a fishery management task force to focus on identifying research opportunities, recommending management strategies, and developing educational materials for fishermen. The task force's membership would be appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and include representatives from the Regional Fishery Management Councils, marine fisheries commissions, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and State fish and wildlife agencies, as well as folks who enjoy recreational fishing.

This legislation will help fishermen and -women understand which species of sharks have higher rates of depredation and where you are most likely to run into that species. It will also serve as the first major step in improving communication and coordination among fisheries managers in addressing shark depredation nationwide.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 207.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I again thank my colleague, Mr. WITTMAN, for taking action to address the challenge that fishing communities across the United States currently face.

I have had the opportunity to do some recreational fishing in the western and eastern Gulf. I have had the opportunity to go out on research vessels and even down in the Florida Keys and on the Atlantic Coast. There is one thing in common, and it is you can be certain somebody is going to be reeling in a fish and a shark is going to take everything but pretty much the lips off of the hook.

People who fish more than I do and who are around this will tell you that it has gotten much more common over the years. Improving coordination between fisheries managers, State agencies, and other experts to solve the challenge of shark depredation is an approach that respects the bottom-up approach that has allowed the United States to be the gold standard in fisheries management.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 207.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

LAKE WINNIBIGOSHISH LAND EXCHANGE ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 197) to provide for a land exchange in the Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 197

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Lake Winnibigoshish Land Exchange Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) BWLT.—The term "BWLT" means Big Winnie Land and Timber, LLC, a Minnesota Limited Liability Corporation.

(2) MAP.—The term "Map" means the map entitled "Heig Land Exchange" and dated December 14, 2023.

(3) FEDERAL LAND.—The term "Federal land" means the approximately 17.5 acres of Federal land in Itasca County, Minnesota, generally depicted as the "Federal Parcel" on the Map.

(4) NON-FEDERAL LAND.—The term "non-Federal land" means the approximately 36.7 acres of non-Federal land in Itasca County, Minnesota, generally depicted as the "Non-Federal Parcel" on the Map.

(5) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

SEC. 3. EXCHANGE OF LAND.

(a) EXCHANGE AUTHORIZED.—Subject to the provisions of this Act, if BWLT offers to convey the non-Federal land to the United States, the Secretary shall, not later than 1 year after the date on which such offer is made—

(1) accept the offer;

(2) convey to BWLT all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the Federal land, excepting and reserving an easement for road access to National Forest System land west of the Federal Parcel; and

(3) accept from BWLT all right, title, and interest of BWLT in and to the non-Federal land.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The exchange under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) conditioned on title approval for the non-Federal land by the Secretary in accordance with subsection (e);

(2) conditioned on a cash equalization payment made by BWLT to the United States in accordance with subsection (c) if, under the appraisals conducted in accordance with this Act, it is determined that the value of the Federal land exceeds the value of the non-Federal land;

(3) conditioned on the satisfactory completion of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment by BWLT, provided to the Secretary, in advance of the acceptance of the non-Federal parcel;

(4) subject to valid existing rights; and

(5) subject to any other terms and conditions the Secretary determines appropriate.

(c) EQUAL VALUE AND CASH EQUALIZATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the exchange under subsection (a) shall be for equal value or the values shall be equalized by a cash payment.

(2) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the appraised value of the non-Federal land to be conveyed to the United States exceeds the appraised value of the Federal land, a cash equalization payment by the United States to BWLT is hereby waived and the amount of such waived payment shall be considered a donation by BWLT to the United States for all purposes of law.

(d) APPRAISALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The value of the land to be exchanged under this Act shall be determined by appraisals conducted by an independent and qualified appraiser mutually agreed to by the Secretary and BWLT.

(2) APPRAISAL STANDARDS.—The Secretary shall complete appraisals of the land to be exchanged under this Act in accordance with—

(A) the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions; and

(B) the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.

(e) FORMAT.—Title to the non-Federal land to be conveyed to the United States under this Act shall be found sufficient by the Secretary pursuant to section 3111 of title 40, United States Code.

(f) MANAGEMENT OF ACQUIRED LAND.—The non-Federal land acquired by the United States under subsection (a) shall be—

(1) added to, and managed as part of, the Chippewa National Forest; and

(2) managed in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to National Forest System lands.

(g) MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall finalize the Map and legal descriptions of all land to be conveyed under this Act.

(2) CONTROLLING DOCUMENT.—In the case of a discrepancy between the Map and a legal description, the Map shall control.

(3) CORRECTIONS.—The Secretary and BWLT, by mutual agreement, may correct any minor errors in the Map or in the legal descriptions, including with respect to the boundaries of the Federal land and the non-Federal land.

(4) MAP ON FILE.—The Map and legal descriptions shall be on file and available for public inspection in appropriate offices of the Forest Service.

(h) CLOSING COSTS.—As a condition for the exchange under subsection (a), BWLT shall pay all closing costs associated with the exchange, including for—

(1) title insurance and title search;

(2) any applicable inspection fees, escrow fees, attorneys fees, and recording fees; and

(3) any environmental analysis or resource survey required under Federal law, regula-

tion, or policy, including a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the non-Federal land.

(i) SURVEY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The exact acreages and legal descriptions of the Federal and non-Federal land to be exchanged under subsection (a) shall be determined by surveys satisfactory to the Secretary.

(2) COSTS OF SURVEY.—BWLT shall bear all costs associated with the surveys under paragraph (1).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 197, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 197, the Lake Winnibigoshish Land Exchange Act of 2025, led by Representative STAUBER.

This commonsense legislation authorizes the U.S. Forest Service to enter into a land exchange with the Bowen Lodge, a family-operated resort on the shores of Lake Winnibigoshish in northern Minnesota.

Exchanging parcels between the Chippewa National Forest and Bowen Lodge will create a win-win scenario. The lodge will gain permanent access to the lake, and the Forest Service will be able to reconfigure part of its unwieldy checkerboard pattern of land ownership. This change will provide excellent fishing and recreation opportunities for the local community and improve management efficiencies for the Federal Government.

Representative STAUBER has done an excellent job of leading this bill that would help this small business improve its operation for years to come. This bill would improve outdoor recreation opportunities for its constituents and for all who have the pleasure of visiting and recreating in northern Minnesota. He has long been a strong advocate for responsible public land management and access to outdoor recreation, and this legislation is an excellent reflection of that commitment.

Last Congress, this bill passed the House unanimously by voice vote. I urge my colleagues to do the same today and support this important piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, I support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I support this bill, which would authorize the Forest Service to exchange a parcel of the Chippewa National Forest for a parcel of land currently owned by the Big Winnie Land and Timber company in Minnesota.

We note that the Forest Service land in question is already used commercially through a permit at the site of Bowen Lodge, a fishing and hunting resort that operated a marina on the shores of Lake Winnie, a place where Mr. STAUBER has never invited me to go fishing. I am sad to say, even though it sounds pretty wonderful and I might be able to catch the first musky in my life. I will continue to wait for that invitation.

In the meantime, the land exchange in this bill would help simplify the operation of the resort and marina for continued visitor and commercial activity. In turn, the Forest Service would gain a parcel of land directly adjacent to the Chippewa National Forest and the shoreline of Lake Winnie.

Integrating this parcel into the Forest Service will provide for better management of undisturbed sites, critical wetlands, and wildlife habitat that are currently adjacent to Federal lands. That makes good sense.

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To quote my Republican colleague, this is a win-win near Lake Winnie, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, the gentleman from Minnesota has invited me to Minnesota to fish before. It is a lovely time of year to fish in Minnesota if you like fishing through a little hole in the ice, but I am sure it would be great on Lake Winnie.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER), who is the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. STAUBER. Madam Speaker, to the ranking member from California, it is 37 degrees below zero in Minnesota with the wind chill. Come on over.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of my bill, H.R. 197, the Lake Winnibigoshish Land Exchange Act of 2025.

Lake Winnibigoshish, or Lake Winnie, as it is also known, is located within the boundaries of the Chippewa National Forest and is home to Bowen Lodge, a premier, family-owned fishing lodge. Bowen Lodge has been in operation and welcoming guests since 1925.

For the past four decades, Bill and Gail Heig and their family have operated Bowen Lodge, serving as great stewards of Lake Winnie and providing incredible fishing and vacation memories for Minnesotans and other out-of-towners over these many years.

Currently, Bowen Lodge has a 20-year agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to lease 17½ acres of shoreline along the lake, where they operate their marina. Under the Heigs' stewardship, Lake Winnie has remained accessible to citizens of Itasca County and the many people who visit.

Notably, the Heigs purchased extra acreage in 2021 after an out-of-State mega resort developer sought to purchase a parcel of land, which would have changed the face of Lake Winnie forever. Now Bowen Lodge is seeking to convey that extra acreage to the Chippewa National Forest.

It is in the best interest of the public that the Forest Service take stewardship of this land rather than out-of-State developers who may not prioritize public access for our local community. Additionally, this land will make it easier for the Forest Service to access and responsibly maintain their other acreage in the area.

The bill before us today would facilitate the land exchange between Bowen Lodge and the Forest Service: 17 acres of shoreline to Bowen Lodge, so they can continue to operate their marina in exchange for 37 acres of nearby land to the Forest Service, which would then be added to the Chippewa National Forest.

This exchange would better align boundaries, put the right acreage under the right management, and ensure Minnesotans have the ability to boat, fish, and enjoy beautiful Lake Winnie. Thanks to the Heigs' quick thinking and strong advocacy, our way of life will be preserved.

I am proud that this land exchange is supported by the local community in Itasca County, including the local county board of supervisors who testified in support of the bill before the Natural Resources Committee last Congress, as well as the Mississippi Headwaters Board and other local environmental organizations. It is also supported by the U.S. Forest Service and leadership of the Chippewa National Forest Service.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. STAUBER. The House of Representatives passed this bill unanimously last September, but the Senate, unfortunately, never took it up. It is my hope that after this House passes the bill today, the Senate will quickly take it up and send this good piece of legislation to President Trump for his signature.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time.

In closing, Madam Speaker, this is a straightforward bill that benefits the people of northern Minnesota and our public lands.

Once again, I applaud Representative STAUBER for his work on the legislation. I urge its passage today. I hope the Senate will take up this legislation quickly, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 197.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ACCURATELY COUNTING RISK ELIMINATION SOLUTIONS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 204) to require that the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior submit accurate reports regarding hazardous fuels reduction activities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 204

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Accurately Counting Risk Elimination Solutions Act" or the "ACRES Act".

SEC. 2. ACCURATE HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION REPORTS.

(a) INCLUSION OF HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION REPORT IN MATERIALS SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with the first fiscal year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary concerned shall include in the materials submitted in support of the President's budget pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, a report on the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during the preceding fiscal year.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—For purposes of the report required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall—

(A) in determining the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during the period covered by the report—

(i) record acres of Federal land on which hazardous fuels reduction activities were completed during such period; and

(ii) record each acre described in clause (i) once in the report, regardless of whether multiple hazardous fuels reduction activities were carried out on such acre during such period; and

(B) with respect to the acres of Federal land recorded in the report, include information on—

(i) which such acres are located in the wildland-urban interface;

(ii) the level of wildfire risk (high, moderate, or low) on the first and last day of the period covered by the report;

(iii) the types of hazardous fuels activities completed for such acres, delineating between whether such activities were conducted—

(I) in a wildfire managed for resource benefits; or

(II) through a planned project;

(iv) the cost per acre of hazardous fuels activities carried out during the period covered by the report;

(v) the region or system unit in which the acres are located; and

(vi) the effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire.

(3) TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary concerned shall make each report submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available on the website of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, as applicable.

(b) ACCURATE DATA COLLECTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall implement standardized procedures for tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The standardized procedures required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) regular, standardized data reviews of the accuracy and timely input of data used to track hazardous fuels reduction activities;

(B) verification methods that validate whether such data accurately correlates to the hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned;

(C) an analysis of the short- and long-term effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire; and

(D) for hazardous fuels reduction activities that occur partially within the wildland-urban interface, methods to distinguish which acres are located within the wildland-urban interface and which acres are located outside the wildland-urban interface.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 2 weeks after implementing the standardized procedures required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(A) such standardized procedures; and

(B) program and policy recommendations to Congress to address any limitations in tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities under this subsection.

(c) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a study on the implementation of this Act, including any limitations with respect to—

(A) reporting hazardous fuels reduction activities under subsection (a); or

(B) tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities under subsection (b); and

(2) submit to Congress a report that describes the results of the study under paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

(1) HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION ACTIVITY.—The term "hazardous fuels reduction activity"—

(A) means any vegetation management activity to reduce the risk of wildfire, including mechanical treatments and prescribed burning; and

(B) does not include the awarding of contracts to conduct hazardous fuels reduction activities.

(2) FEDERAL LANDS.—The term "Federal lands" means lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture.

(3) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term "Secretary concerned" means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System lands; and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands and units of the National Park System.

(4) WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—The term "wildland-urban interface" has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Healthy