

**American Fisheries Society • American Fly Fishing Trade Association
American Sportfishing Association • Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies • BASS/ESPN Outdoors
Bear Trust International • Berkley Conservation Institute • Boone & Crockett Club
Catch-A-Dream Foundation • Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation
Conservation Force • Dallas Safari Club • Houston Safari Club
International Hunter Education Association • Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation • National Assembly of Sportsmen’s Caucuses
National Rifle Association • National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Trappers Association • National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Bear Foundation • Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
Pheasants Forever • Pope & Young Club • Public Lands Foundation • Pure
Fishing Quail Forever • Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation • Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International • Shikar Safari Club International
Shimano American Corp. • Texas Wildlife Association
United States Sportsmen’s Alliance • Whittails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation • Wildlife Forever • Wildlife Management Institute**

November 5, 2009

Hon. Nick Rahall II, Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Doc Hastings, Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall and Ranking Member Hastings,

The organizations identified on this letter represent millions of hunters and anglers and other outdoor recreationalists that are writing to express our strong support for H.R.3749, the “*Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act*”. This legislation will protect recreational hunting, fishing and shooting on land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service.

Numerous reports in recent years have demonstrated what sportsmen already know, that historic access to public land is being closed or constrained because of development along the boundary lines, greater diversity of recreation uses, and lack of planning to address these issues. Inadequate access to public lands is cited as a primary reason why hunters stop hunting.

The “Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act” will help to preserve these precious public resources for the sportsmen whose dollars have stewarded the land for generations.

Because Federal agencies are guided by land management plans, this bill directs agencies charged with multiple-use mandates to provide for and promote sportsmen’s use and access of public lands in their land management plans. It would require that planning evaluate the effects of management alternatives on sportsmen’s activities and recognizes the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council and the Sporting Conservation Council as policy advisors on issues relevant to the wildlife conservation and sportsmen’s communities. Lastly, the bill assures that the states’ authority to manage fish and wildlife on Federal public lands is preserved and that the states have the exclusive authority to require licenses or permits of sportsmen.

While the bill does not open new lands to hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting, it does greatly enhance the ability of Federal land managers to provide for this traditional use of public lands in safe areas and to plan recreational use that balances the needs and interests of a diverse recreating public.

It is time to recognize the heritage of hunting, fishing, and shooting on our public lands and to protect and enhance sportsmen’s access to these resources. We respectfully request that your committee consider holding a hearing on this legislation at the earliest possible opportunity and look forward to using all our collective resources to ensure its quick passage.

Sincerely,

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