

The New Mexico organizations listed below strongly support the HUNT Act (S. 1554) ‘Hunt Unrestricted on National Treasures Act,’ as introduced by Senator Heinrich in September 2013.

Senator Heinrich, a diehard public lands hunter himself, first introduced this legislation in the House in 2012 with overwhelming sportsmen support. Outdoor Life said: “If any bill deserves passage in this Congress, the HUNT Act certainly does.” A Santa Fe New Mexican editorial called the HUNT Act “the kind of common-sense legislation that lawmakers in both parties should support.” We couldn’t agree more.

The HUNT Act contains three important provisions that would greatly benefit the sportsmen and women of New Mexico and across the country for generations to come:

- ❖ Federal land management agencies must annually document parcels over 640 acres without public access, or where it is severely limited. They must also determine which of those lands “have significant potential for use for hunting, fishing and other recreational purposes” and how to make them accessible.
- ❖ A small but important percentage of Land and Water Conservation Fund spending – no less than 1.5 percent – will be available to reestablish or secure access. It cannot be understated how critical this funding will be to opening access. Approximately four million acres of landlocked public lands exist in the western states alone. Options exist, like purchasing permanent easements or even small tracts of land from willing sellers, but no funding exists. Creating public access to public lands for recreation will be a tremendously impactful use of off-shore oil and gas leasing revenue and a fantastic way to support the local economies that rely on that access.
- ❖ Federal land management agencies must share the access routes to public lands on public websites. A comprehensive database documenting which roads are public not only helps sportsmen legally access our public lands, but it will be a powerful deterrent to inadvertent or deliberate cutting off of access in the future. No such database exists at this time.

The sportsmen and women of New Mexico need reliable access to the lands on which we hunt, fish and camp so we can feed our families and pass on our traditions to our children and grandchildren. Hunting and fishing are more than just “sport;” they are the oldest of our core cultural land use values with a 10,000-year tradition.

Outfitters, guides, bait shops and many other local businesses rely on people using our public lands. The Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus reports the 304,000 New Mexico sportsmen and women spend \$579 million annually on hunting and fishing. Each year, we support \$258 million in salaries and wages, contribute \$58 million to state and local taxes and support 7,695 jobs in New Mexico alone. Nationwide, outdoor recreation is a \$646 billion industry and supports 6.1 million jobs (Outdoor Industry Association).

Yet hunters, anglers and the general public have been shut out of more and more public land in recent years. It often starts simply because there has been limited access to a parcel in the first place, and then something quietly eliminates access completely. A county commission vacates a road easement or a new landowner locks a gate. In most cases, sportsmen are left with no options – until the HUNT Act.

The HUNT Act is a win-win-win. There are no losers. Under the HUNT Act, there will be willing sellers, public access, increased opportunities for traditional land use, more recreation spending and more rural job opportunities. We encourage the United States Congress to pass this bill immediately and President Obama to sign it.

Sincerely,

New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Doña Ana County Associated Sportsmen

New Mexico Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Trout Unlimited

New Mexico Quail, Inc.

Southwest Consolidated Sportsmen

El Paso del Norte German Shorthair Pointer Club

Wild Turkey Sportsman's Association

Back Country Horsemen, Lower Rio Grande Chapter

Borderland Bird Dog Club

Bosque Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Tri-County Mule Deer Chapter

Truchas Chapter of Trout Unlimited