

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2548

To designate the Camp Hutchins Wilderness and establish Special Management Areas in the Shawnee National Forest in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 30, 2025

Mr. DURBIN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To designate the Camp Hutchins Wilderness and establish Special Management Areas in the Shawnee National Forest in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Shawnee National For-
5 est Conservation Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) DESIGNATED NATURAL AREA.—The term
9 “designated natural area” means an area deter-

mined to be of exceptional ecological, botanical, geologic, scenic, or archeological value by—

(A) the Secretary; and

(B)(i) the State of Illinois; or

(ii) the Secretary of the Interior, acting

through the Director of the National Park Service.

(2) DESIGNATED RESEARCH NATURAL AREA.—

The term “designated research natural area” means an area that has been selected by the Secretary, and is managed by the Forest Service, for scientific research value.

(3) MAP.—The term “Map” means the map

prepared by the Environmental Law and Policy Center entitled “Camp Hutchins Wilderness Area and Special Management Area” and dated November 23, 2023.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means

the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

(5) SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA.—The term

“Special Management Area” means a Special Management Area established by section 4(a).

1 **SEC. 3. CAMP HUTCHINS WILDERNESS.**

2 (a) ADDITION TO THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS
3 PRESERVATION SYSTEM.—In accordance with the Wilder-
4 ness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), certain land in the
5 Shawnee National Forest in the State of Illinois managed
6 by the Forest Service, comprising approximately 750 acres
7 and generally depicted on the Map as “Camp Hutchins
8 Wilderness Area - Proposed”, is designated as wilderness
9 and as a component of the National Wilderness Preserva-
10 tion System, and shall be known as the “Camp Hutchins
11 Wilderness”.

12 (b) MANAGEMENT.—Subject to valid existing rights,
13 the Camp Hutchins Wilderness shall be administered by
14 the Secretary in accordance with the Wilderness Act (16
15 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.), except that any reference in that
16 Act to the effective date shall be considered to be a ref-
17 erence to the date of enactment of this Act.

18 (c) HIKING TRAIL.—Forest Road 211 shall be closed
19 to public vehicular traffic and shall be maintained as a
20 hiking trail, including the eastern extension of Forest
21 Road 211 formerly known as the “Hutchins Creek Spur”
22 up to the area known as “Hutchins Creek Corridor”, as
23 generally depicted on the Map.

24 (d) WITHDRAWAL.—Subject to valid existing rights,
25 all Federal land within the Camp Hutchins Wilderness,
26 including any land or interest in land that is acquired by

1 the United States within the Camp Hutchins Wilderness
2 after the date of enactment of this Act, is withdrawn
3 from—

4 (1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the
5 public land laws;

6 (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining
7 laws; and

8 (3) operation of the mineral leasing, mineral
9 materials, and geothermal leasing laws.

10 (e) MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after
12 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
13 shall file a map and legal description of the Camp
14 Hutchins Wilderness with—

15 (A) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-
16 tion, and Forestry of the Senate; and

17 (B) the Committee on Agriculture of the
18 House of Representatives.

19 (2) EFFECT.—The map and legal description
20 filed under paragraph (1) shall have the same force
21 and effect as if included in this Act, except that the
22 Secretary may correct clerical and typographical er-
23 rors in the map and legal description.

24 (3) AVAILABILITY.—The map and legal descrip-
25 tion filed under paragraph (1) shall be on file and

1 available for public inspection in the appropriate of-
2 fice of the Secretary and on the Forest Service
3 website.

4 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL MANAGEMENT**
5 **AREAS.**

6 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Subject to valid existing
7 rights, the following Special Management Areas within the
8 Shawnee National Forest in the State of Illinois are estab-
9 lished:

10 (1) CAMP HUTCHINS SPECIAL MANAGEMENT
11 AREA.—Certain Federal land managed by the Forest
12 Service, comprising approximately 2,953 acres and
13 generally depicted on the Map as “Camp Hutchins
14 Special Management Area - Proposed”, which shall
15 be known as the “Camp Hutchins Special Manage-
16 ment Area”.

17 (2) RIPPLE HOLLOW SPECIAL MANAGEMENT
18 AREA.—Certain Federal land managed by the Forest
19 Service, comprising approximately 3,445 acres and
20 generally depicted as “Ripple Hollow Special Man-
21 agement Area - Proposed” on the map prepared by
22 the Environmental Law and Policy Center entitled
23 “Ripple Hollow Special Management Area” and
24 dated November 23, 2023, which shall be known as
25 the “Ripple Hollow Special Management Area”.

1 (3) BURKE BRANCH SPECIAL MANAGEMENT
2 AREA.—Certain Federal land managed by the Forest
3 Service, comprising approximately 6,310 acres and
4 generally depicted as “Burke Branch Special Man-
5 agement Area - Proposed”, on the map prepared by
6 the Environmental Law and Policy Center entitled
7 “Burke Branch Special Management Area” and
8 dated November 23, 2023, which shall be known as
9 the “Burke Branch Special Management Area”.

10 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Special Man-
11 agement Areas are—

12 (1) to conserve, protect, and enhance the eco-
13 logical, scenic, wildlife, recreational, cultural, his-
14 toric, educational, and scientific resources of the
15 Special Management Areas for the benefit and en-
16 joyment of present and future generations;

17 (2) to promote biodiversity and control invasive
18 species; and

19 (3) to allow for the continuation of restoration
20 efforts and scientific study of the designated natural
21 areas and designated research natural areas within
22 the Special Management Areas.

1 **SEC. 5. ADMINISTRATION OF SPECIAL MANAGEMENT**
2 **AREAS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer
4 the Special Management Areas—

5 (1) in a manner that conserves, protects, and
6 enhances the purposes for which the Special Man-
7 agement Areas are established; and

8 (2) in accordance with—

9 (A) this section; and

10 (B) other applicable laws.

11 (b) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—Not later than 3 years
12 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall
13 develop a comprehensive management plan for the long-
14 term protection and management of the Special Manage-
15 ment Areas.

16 (c) USES.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall allow
18 only uses of the Special Management Areas that are
19 consistent with the purposes for which the Special
20 Management Areas are established.

21 (2) PRESCRIBED FIRE.—The Secretary may use
22 prescribed fire to sustain the ecological structure
23 and composition of the Special Management Areas
24 to sustain the biodiversity of the Special Manage-
25 ment Areas.

26 (3) MANAGEMENT TOOLS.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may use
2 herbicides, insecticides, and mechanized equip-
3 ment in the control of fire, insects, disease, and
4 invasive species, including the use of chainsaws,
5 drones, aircraft, pickup trucks, all-terrain vehi-
6 cles, and rubber and tracked vehicles to carry
7 out management of the Special Management
8 Areas approved by the Secretary.

9 (B) REQUIREMENT.—In carrying out man-
10 agement of the Special Management Areas, the
11 Secretary shall use the best available technology
12 and science.

13 (4) MOTORIZED VEHICLES.—Except in cases in
14 which motorized vehicles are needed for administra-
15 tive purposes, emergency response, or access on es-
16 tablished roads accessing trailheads, or are essential
17 to provide off-road access for ecosystem management
18 of habitat, the use of motor vehicles in the Special
19 Management Areas shall be prohibited.

20 (5) ROADS.—The Secretary shall decommission
21 and remove roads within the Special Management
22 Areas, except roads needed for management or ac-
23 cess to trailheads, as soon as practicable.

24 (6) TIMBER.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—Commercial timber
2 harvesting, except as needed for fire, insect,
3 and disease control, and for visitor and admin-
4 istrative safety, in the Special Management
5 Areas shall be prohibited.

6 (B) ACTIVITIES PERMITTED.—Thinning of
7 trees and other vegetation in the Special Man-
8 agement Areas shall be permitted for restora-
9 tion of the designated natural areas and des-
10 ignated research natural areas and to further
11 the management objectives described in this
12 section.

13 (7) INHOLDINGS.—

14 (A) IN GENERAL.—Access to private
15 inholdings in the Special Management Areas
16 shall be preserved.

17 (B) ACQUISITIONS.—The Secretary shall
18 acquire any private inholdings in the Special
19 Management Areas by purchase or exchange as
20 soon as feasible.

21 (8) HUNTING AND TRAPPING.—

22 (A) HUNTING.—Hunting shall be per-
23 mitted in the Special Management Areas as
24 permitted by the State of Illinois and in accord-

1 ance with regulations of the State of Illinois
2 and regulations of the Forest Service.

3 (B) TRAPPING.—Trapping shall not be
4 permitted in the Special Management Areas.

5 (C) ACCESS BY MOTORIZED VEHICLES.—
6 Access within the Special Management Areas by
7 hunters in motorized vehicles shall be prohib-
8 ited.

9 (9) VOLUNTEER RESTORATION AND RE-
10 SEARCH.—

11 (A) VOLUNTEERS.—The Secretary shall
12 allow organized groups of volunteers to partici-
13 pate in ecological restoration activities under
14 the guidance of Forest Service ecologists and
15 botanists within the Special Management Areas
16 through cooperative agreements.

17 (B) ACCESS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES.—
18 The Secretary shall allow access to the Special
19 Management Areas for scientific research by
20 qualified individuals and organizations, as de-
21 termined by the Secretary.

22 (10) ONGOING MANAGEMENT DECISIONS.—The
23 Supervisor of the Shawnee National Forest shall
24 have the authority, without requiring the permission
25 of the Secretary, to make management decisions

1 concerning any designated natural area or des-
2 ignated research natural area within the Special
3 Management Areas pursuant to the land and re-
4 source management plan for the Shawnee National
5 Forest.

6 (d) WITHDRAWAL.—Subject to valid existing rights,
7 all Federal land within the Special Management Areas, in-
8 cluding any land or interest in land that is acquired by
9 the United States within the Special Management Areas
10 after the date of enactment of this Act, is withdrawn
11 from—

12 (1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the
13 public land laws;

14 (2) location, entry, and patent under the mining
15 laws; and

16 (3) operation of the mineral leasing, mineral
17 materials, and geothermal leasing laws.

18 (e) MAPS AND LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after
20 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
21 shall file a map and legal description of each Special
22 Management Area with—

23 (A) the Committee on Energy and Natural
24 Resources of the Senate; and

1 (B) the Committee on Natural Resources
2 of the House of Representatives.

3 (2) EFFECT.—The maps and legal descriptions
4 filed under paragraph (1) shall have the same force
5 and effect as if included in this Act, except that the
6 Secretary may correct clerical and typographical er-
7 rors in the maps and legal descriptions.

8 (3) AVAILABILITY.—The maps and legal de-
9 scriptions filed under paragraph (1) shall be on file
10 and available for public inspection in the appropriate
11 office of the Secretary and on the Forest Service
12 website.

13 (f) PUBLIC INFORMATION.—Annually, the Secretary
14 shall make publicly available on the website of the Shaw-
15 nee National Forest information describing the progress
16 in achieving the management objectives described in this
17 section.

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