



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

October 5, 1999

H.R. 2140

A bill to improve protection and management of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the state of Georgia

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on September 22, 1999

SUMMARY

H.R. 2140 would create a system of public land corridors to link existing units of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (NRA) in Georgia. CBO estimates that up-front costs to implement H.R. 2140 over the next five or six years would be \$10 million, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Beginning in fiscal year 2000 and in each subsequent year, the federal government also would incur additional administrative costs to manage and operate new lands and facilities. Those costs would range from about \$200,000 in fiscal year 2000 to about \$1 million by 2004, for a total of about \$3 million over the first five years. Spending for start-up activities and ongoing operating costs would be subject to the appropriation of the necessary amounts. Because one provision of the bill could affect direct spending and receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply, but we expect that any such changes would be negligible. H.R. 2140 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). State and local governments might incur some costs as a result of the bill's enactment, but these costs would be voluntary.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

H.R. 2140 would expand the boundaries of the Chattahoochee River NRA by about 3,200 acres. The bill would allow the National Park Service (NPS) to accept donations of funds or real property from state or local agencies or nonprofit organizations that are involved in current efforts to protect land around the NRA. The NPS would be authorized to execute cooperative agreements with such entities in order to coordinate land acquisition, development, and other activities. Finally, H.R. 2140 would require the NPS to complete a revised general management plan for the area within three years of receiving funding for that purpose.

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that the NPS would spend about \$1 million to develop a new management plan for the NRA and establish guidelines and standards for coordinating activities at federal and nonfederal properties. Until the management plan (which would identify future development needs of the expanded NRA) has been completed, the extent of other development activities is uncertain. CBO expects that future activities would include the construction of one or more small administrative and maintenance buildings as well as new recreational facilities such as trails, parking lots, and restrooms—at an estimated cost of about \$9 million.

In addition, the bill would raise the existing authorization level for land acquisition at Chattahoochee from \$79.4 million to \$115 million. This provision would reconcile the statutory authorization level for land acquisition with what has actually been appropriated to date since 1978 and would not have any impact on federal spending.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO-CONSIDERATIONS

H.R. 2140 could affect governmental receipts from contributions by allowing the NPS to accept donated funds. CBO estimates that any amounts collected would be offset by additional spending for land acquisition. Because the bill could affect direct spending and receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. However, we expect that in most cases other government agencies and nonprofit organizations participating in this project would purchase land directly from property owners and then either donate it to the NPS or manage it themselves. As a result, we expect that any additional receipts and spending would not be significant.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE-SECTOR IMPACT

H.R. 2140 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA. State and local governments might incur some costs as a result of the bill's enactment, but these costs would be voluntary.

PREVIOUS CBO ESTIMATE

On May 27, 1999, CBO prepared a cost estimate for S. 109, a bill to improve protection and management of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in the state of Georgia. S. 109 was ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on May 19, 1999. Our estimate for S. 109 indicated that an additional \$10 million could be

appropriated for land acquisition but that we did not consider it likely. Under H.R. 2140, no such additional funds would be authorized for land acquisition.

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