

Public Law 108–279
108th Congress

An Act

July 22, 2004
[S. 1167]

To resolve boundary conflicts in Barry and Stone Counties in the State of Missouri.

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

**SECTION 1. RESOLUTION OF BOUNDARY CONFLICTS, VICINITY OF
MARK TWAIN NATIONAL FOREST, BARRY AND STONE
COUNTIES, MISSOURI.**

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “appropriate Secretary” means the Secretary of the Army or the Secretary of Agriculture.

(2) The term “boundary conflict” means the situation in which the private claim of ownership to certain lands, based on subsequent Federal land surveys, overlaps or conflicts with Federal ownership of the same lands.

(3) The term “Federal land surveys” means any land survey made by any agency or department of the Federal Government using Federal employees, or by Federal contract with State-licensed private land surveyors or corporations and businesses licensed to provide professional land surveying services in the State of Missouri for Table Rock Reservoir.

(4) The term “original land surveys” means the land surveys made by the United States General Land Office as part of the Public Land Survey System in the State of Missouri, and upon which Government land patents were issued conveying the land.

(5) The term “Public Land Survey System” means the rectangular system of original Government land surveys made by the United States General Land Office and its successor, the Bureau of Land Management, under Federal laws providing for the survey of the public lands upon which the original land patents were issued.

(6) The term “qualifying claimant” means a private owner of real property in Barry or Stone County, Missouri, who has a boundary conflict as a result of good faith and innocent reliance on subsequent Federal land surveys, and as a result of such reliance, has occupied or improved Federal lands administered by the appropriate Secretary.

(7) The term “subsequent Federal land surveys” means any Federal land surveys made after the original land surveys that are inconsistent with the Public Land Survey System.

(b) RESOLUTION OF BOUNDARY CONFLICTS.—The Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of Agriculture shall cooperatively undertake actions to rectify boundary conflicts and landownership claims against Federal lands resulting from subsequent Federal

land surveys and correctly reestablish the corners of the Public Land Survey System in Barry and Stone Counties, Missouri, and shall attempt to do so in a manner which imposes the least cost and inconvenience to affected private landowners.

(c) NOTICE OF BOUNDARY CONFLICT.—

(1) SUBMISSION AND CONTENTS.—A qualifying claimant shall notify the appropriate Secretary in writing of a claim that a boundary conflict exists with Federal land administered by the appropriate Secretary. The notice shall be accompanied by the following information, which, except as provided in subsection (e)(2)(B), shall be provided without cost to the United States:

(A) A land survey plat and legal description of the affected Federal lands, which are based upon a land survey completed and certified by a Missouri State-licensed professional land surveyor and done in conformity with the Public Land Survey System and in compliance with the applicable State and Federal land surveying laws.

(B) Information relating to the claim of ownership of the Federal lands, including supporting documentation showing that the landowner relied on a subsequent Federal land survey due to actions by the Federal Government in making or approving surveys for the Table Rock Reservoir.

(2) DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION.—To obtain relief under this section, a qualifying claimant shall submit the notice and information required by paragraph (1) within 15 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) RESOLUTION AUTHORITIES.—In addition to using existing authorities, the appropriate Secretary is authorized to take any of the following actions in order to resolve boundary conflicts with qualifying claimants involving lands under the administrative jurisdiction of the appropriate Secretary:

(1) Convey by quitclaim deed right, title, and interest in land of the United States subject to a boundary conflict consistent with the rights, title, and interest associated with the privately-owned land from which a qualifying claimant has based a claim.

(2) Confirm Federal title to, and retain in Federal management, any land subject to a boundary conflict, if the appropriate Secretary determines that there are Federal interests, including improvements, authorized uses, easements, hazardous materials, or historical and cultural resources, on the land that necessitates retention of the land or interests in land.

(3) Compensate the qualifying claimant for the value of the overlapping property for which title is confirmed and retained in Federal management pursuant to paragraph (2).

(e) CONSIDERATION AND COST.—

(1) CONVEYANCE WITHOUT CONSIDERATION.—The conveyance of land under subsection (d)(1) shall be made without consideration.

(2) COSTS.—The appropriate Secretary shall—

(A) pay administrative, personnel, and any other costs associated with the implementation of this section by his or her Department, including the costs of survey, marking, and monumenting property lines and corners; and

(B) reimburse the qualifying claimant for reasonable out-of-pocket survey costs necessary to establish a claim under this section.

(3) VALUATION.—Compensation paid to a qualifying claimant pursuant to subsection (d)(3) for land retained in Federal ownership pursuant to subsection (d)(2) shall be valued on the basis of the contributory value of the tract of land to the larger adjoining private parcel and not on the basis of the land being a separate tract. The appropriate Secretary shall not consider the value of any Federal improvements to the land. The appropriate Secretary shall be responsible for compensation provided as a result of subsequent Federal land surveys conducted or commissioned by the appropriate Secretary's Department.

(f) PREEXISTING CONDITIONS; RESERVATIONS; EXISTING RIGHTS AND USES.—

(1) PREEXISTING CONDITIONS.—The appropriate Secretary shall not compensate a qualifying claimant or any other person for any preexisting condition or reduction in value of any land subject to a boundary conflict because of any existing or outstanding permits, use authorizations, reservations, timber removal, or other land use or condition.

(2) EXISTING RESERVATIONS AND RIGHTS AND USES.—Any conveyance pursuant to subsection (d)(1) shall be subject to—

(A) reservations for existing public uses for roads, utilities, and facilities; and

(B) permits, rights-of-way, contracts and any other authorization to use the property.

(3) TREATMENT OF LAND SUBJECT TO SPECIAL USE AUTHORIZATION OR PERMIT.—For any land subject to a special use authorization or permit for access or utilities, the appropriate Secretary may convert, at the request of the holder, such authorization to a permanent easement prior to any conveyance pursuant to subsection (d)(1).

(4) FUTURE RESERVATIONS.—The appropriate Secretary may reserve rights for future public uses in a conveyance made pursuant to subsection (d)(1) if the qualifying claimant is compensated for the reservation in cash or in land of equal value.

(5) HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES.—The requirements of section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)) shall not apply to conveyances or transfers of jurisdiction pursuant to subsection (d), but the United States shall continue to be liable for the cleanup costs of any hazardous substances on the lands so conveyed or transferred if the contamination by hazardous substances is caused by actions of the United States or its agents.

(g) RELATION TO OTHER CONVEYANCE AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this section affects the Quiet Title Act (28 U.S.C. 2409a) or other applicable law, or affects the exchange and disposal authorities of the Secretary of Agriculture, including the Small Tracts Act (16 U.S.C. 521c), or the exchange and disposal authorities of the Secretary of the Army.

(h) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The appropriate Secretary may require such additional terms and conditions in connection with a conveyance under subsection (d)(1) as the Secretary considers appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Approved July 22, 2004.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1167:

SENATE REPORTS: No. 108-234 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 150 (2004):

May 19, considered and passed Senate.
July 12, considered and passed House.