

PUBLIC LAW 111-11
OMNIBUS PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT ACT of 2009
SECTION 7103
FOR BOUNDARY EXPANSION
LITTLE RIVER CANYON NATIONAL PRESERVE

SIGNIFICANCE

Public Law 111-11 – Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Section 7103 has authorized the National Park Service (NPS) to better fulfill its mission to protect and conserve Little River Canyon National Preserve (LRCNP) for the use and enjoyment of future generations. In many places, the current boundary extends only to the canyon rim or does not include the scenic drive. As a result, incompatible development on the canyon’s eastern rim or the inability for large recreational vehicles to use the scenic drive negatively impacts the visitor experience.

Public Law 111-11 – Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Section 7103 has expanded the boundaries to add approximately 1,656 acres that may be acquired by purchase from willing sellers or through donations. LRCNP currently includes 13,797 acres and the NPS roughly estimates acquisitions costs to be between \$9 million and 12 million. While no federal funding has yet been identified, over \$700,000 in private funding has already been applied in the area. Federal funding for any new acquisitions will be subject to the budget prioritization process of the NPS.

BACKGROUND

LRCNP was established as a unit in the NPS by Public Law 102-427 to protect and preserve the natural, scenic, recreational and cultural resources of the area and to provide for public enjoyment of those resources. The LRCNP is located in northeast Alabama within 110 miles of Atlanta, Birmingham, and Chattanooga.

The Preserve lies at the southern limits of the Cumberland Plateau and the canyon is one of the deepest in the eastern United States. As such, the significant biological diversity, including habitat for a unique assemblage of plants and animals, contributes to an area of some of the most rugged scenery in the Southeast. In addition, the LRCNP includes a wide assortment of archeological resources and historic sites.

NEED

The expansion moved the boundary to the western edge of the road rights-of-way. In addition to including important lands this will also allow the NPS to apply for federal highway funds in order to improve the roads to meet Federal Highway Administration safety standards. The present condition does not allow motor homes and large recreational vehicles to travel much of the scenic drive. The additional land will also improve NPS management of one of our country’s outstanding natural areas.

The expanded boundary will also allow the NPS to purchase lands from willing sellers, enhance recreational resources, protect scenery for Preserve visitors by ensuring trails no longer cross private property and the east rim is not developed thus destroying a major scenic area.