

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop, Chairman
Mark-Up Memorandum

September 29, 2017

To: All Committee on Natural Resources Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Terry Camp
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x 6-7736)

Mark-up: **H.R. 2600 (Rep. David Young)**, To provide for the conveyance to the State of Iowa of the reversionary interest held by the United States in certain land in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, and for other purposes.
October 3 & 4, 2017; 1334 Longworth House Office Building

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 2600, introduced by Representative David Young (R-IA-3), conveys to the State of Iowa the reversionary interest held by the United States in the parcel of land containing the Western Historic Trails Center (WHTC) in Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

Background

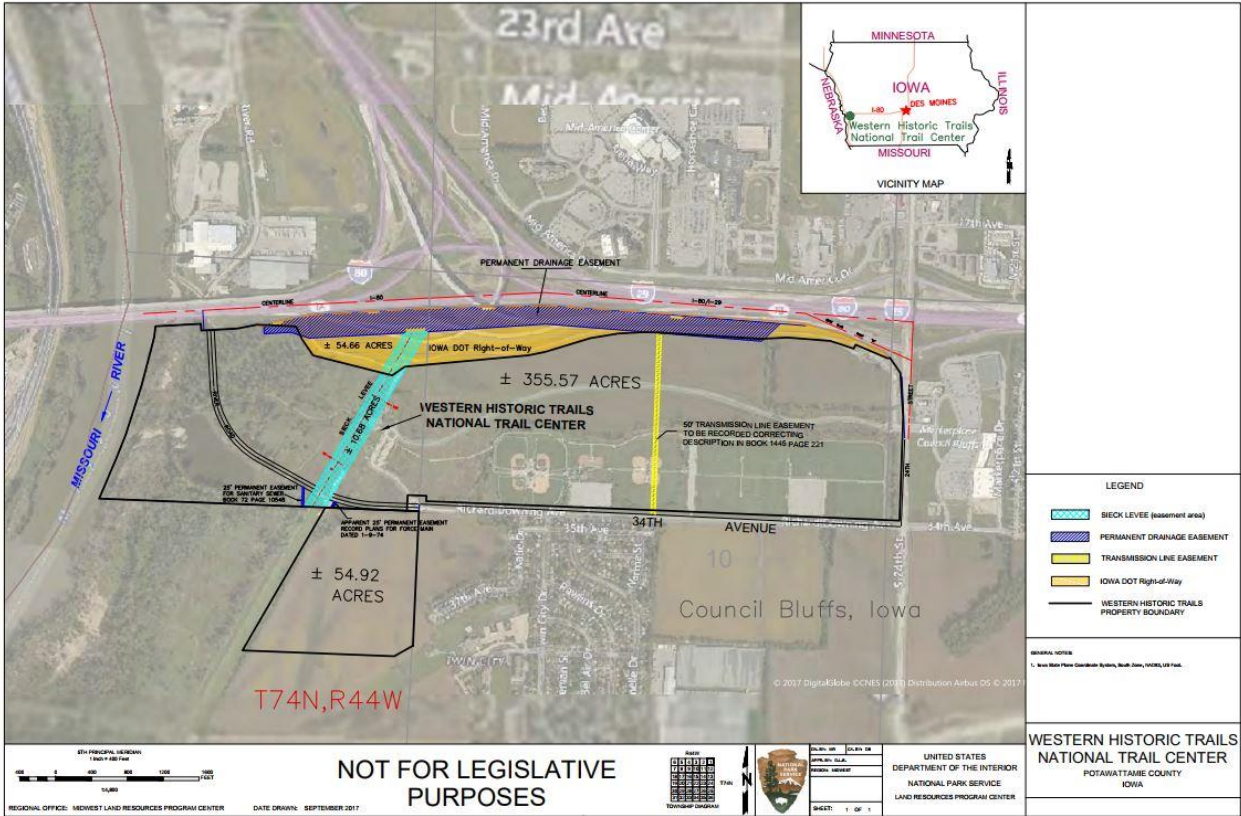
On November 29, 1989, through Public Law 101-191 (WHTC Act), Congress authorized the Secretary of the Interior to provide for the development of a trails interpretative center in the City of Council Bluffs, Iowa.¹ Several years later, in 1995, the National Western Trails Center, Inc., donated property to the federal government and the National Park Service (NPS) later constructed a trails center on the property to interpret the history of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, and the Oregon National Historic Trail.

In 1998, the federal government donated the trails center and surrounding property to the State Historical Society of Iowa. Federal ownership was transferred to the State subject to a reversionary clause if the trails center is not being used for the purposes specified in the WHTC Act. The deed also included the condition that “the State of Iowa shall make no major alterations of the structure or ground without the express written authorization of NPS.”

In 2010, the Iowa Department of Transportation acquired 54.66 acres of the property for highway development on the north side of the site. As mitigation, 54.92 acres of land was purchased for \$2.213 million and added to trails center site adjacent to the southern boundary. The reversionary clause does not pertain to this addition.

¹ P.L. 101-191, November 29, 1989, available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/senate-bill/338/text?r=1>.

Since 1998, the State of Iowa has owned and operated the trails center. Presently visitation at the center is very low, the hours of operation are limited, and maintenance is falling behind. The State of Iowa would like to remove the trails center from its responsibility and intends to transfer the property to the City of Council Bluffs for development. The NPS currently does not own or directly manage any of the land associated with the WHTC site, and does not have an interest in taking over operation of the trails center or ownership of the land.



Major Provisions

- Conveys to the State of Iowa the reversionary interest held by the United States and described in the quit claim deed dated April 13, 1998.
- Provides that all costs associated with the conveyance of the reversionary interest shall be paid by the State of Iowa.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Administration Position

The Administration position is unknown at this time.

Anticipated Amendments

Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT-01) will offer an amendment clarifying that the State of Iowa's responsibility for all costs associated with the removal of the reversionary interest is to include Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. Additionally, the amendment includes a sense of Congress that the State of Iowa should continue to provide the public with information regarding the national historic trails.