

Manson Encourages Realtors(r) to Press Congress for Reform of Endangered Species ACT

WASHINGTON, May 11, 2005 (U.S. Newswire via COMTEX) --Assistant Secretary Craig Manson from the Fish, Wildlife and Parks U.S. Department of Interior encouraged Realtors(r) to continue pressing Congress for amendments to the Endangered Species Act.

"Right now is the best window of opportunity in a long time for updating and modernizing the Endangered Species Act. The window will close rapidly if you don't act soon," said Manson, who is responsible for administration and enforcement of the ESA.

"The best conservation is done by property owners themselves," said Manson. "We have reduced critical habitat in some areas by 90 percent by cooperating with land owners and local governments." Manson said cooperative approaches should be written into the ESA and that there already is a bi-partisan consensus to make it happen. He likened the need for updating and modernizing the act to someone that bought a home in 1973 and through the years has updated and remodeled it.

Other topics of discussion included endangered species recovery methods, inclusion of economic considerations when executing the critical habitat designation process and private landowner incentives.

Manson was joined by Keiran Suckling, policy director from the Center for Biological Diversity, and Jim Sims, executive director for the Partnership for the West. The forum provided a venue for Realtors(r) to understand how the ESA affects homebuyers and sellers. Realtors(r) actively advocate for both legislative and regulatory measures to reform and improve the ESA.

The remarks came during a land use, property rights, and environment forum during the National Association of Realtors(r) Midyear Legislative Meetings & Trade Expo here that runs through May 14.

The National Association of Realtors(r), "The Voice for Real Estate," is America's largest trade association, representing more than 1 million Realtors(r) involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.