



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

November 22, 2005

### **H.R. 1183**

#### **A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to provide public access to Navassa National Wildlife Refuge and Desecheo National Wildlife Refuge**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on October 19, 2005*

H.R. 1183 would direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to allow public use of the Navassa National Wildlife Refuge and the Desecheo National Wildlife Refuge, both of which are located on islands in the Caribbean Sea. Under the legislation, the agency would provide access to the two refuges under permits that would contain provisions to protect local fish and wildlife and public health and safety.

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that the federal government would incur one-time costs of about \$10 million over the next two years to provide safe access to Navassa and Desecheo islands. About \$8 million of this amount would be used by the Department of Defense to inspect Desecheo (which was once used for military training) and remove any unexploded ordnance. (This expenditure would probably occur even in the absence of legislation, depending on future appropriation action, but not for several years.) The remaining funds would be used to construct minimal access and other visitor facilities on the two islands.

We expect that, once the islands have been deemed safe and accessible, the USFWS would use existing authority to impose recreation or special-use fees and spend the proceeds to issue permits and escort visitors to the islands. We estimate that these activities would increase offsetting receipts and resulting direct spending by less than \$500,000 a year. Enacting H.R. 1183 would not affect other direct spending or revenues. This estimate is based on information provided by the USFWS and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Finally, allowing more people to visit the Descheo refuge (which might contain unexploded ordnance even after Corps inspections) could increase the government's liability under the Federal Tort Claims Act, but CBO has no basis for predicting the likelihood that future visitors to the islands would be injured.

H.R. 1183 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.