

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 30, 2009

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Today I have signed into law H.R. 146, the "Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009." This landmark bill will protect millions of acres of Federal land as wilderness, protect more than 1,000 miles of rivers through the National Wild and Scenic River System, and designate thousands of miles of trails for the National Trails System. It also will authorize the 26 million-acre National Landscape Conservation System within the Department of the Interior.

Among other provisions, H.R. 146 designates three new units in our National Park System, enlarges the boundaries of several existing parks, and designates a number of National Heritage Areas. It creates a new national monument -- the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument -- and four new national conservation areas, and establishes the Wyoming Range Withdrawal Area. It establishes a collaborative landscape-scale restoration program with a goal of reducing the risk of wildfire and authorizes programs to study and research the effects of climate change on natural resources and other research-related activities.

Treasured places from coast to coast will benefit from H.R. 146, including Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Michigan; Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia; Oregon's Mount Hood; Idaho's Owyhee Canyons; the Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado; Zion National Park in Utah; remarkable landscapes in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California; and wilderness-quality National Forest lands in Virginia and public lands in New Mexico.

This bipartisan bill has been many years in the making, and is one of the most important pieces of natural resource legislation in decades. This legislation also makes progress for which millions of Americans have long waited on another front. The Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Act is the first piece of comprehensive legislation aimed at improving the lives of Americans living with paralysis. It creates new coordinated research activities through the National Institutes of Health that will connect the best minds and best practices from the best labs across the country, and focus their efforts through collaborative scientific research into a cure for paralysis, saving effort, money, and, most importantly, time. It will promote enhanced rehabilitation services for paralyzed Americans, helping develop better equipment and technology that allows them to live full and independent lives free from unnecessary barriers. This legislation will work to improve the quality of life for all those who live with paralysis, no matter the cause.

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Section 8203 of the Act provides that the Secretary of the Interior shall appoint certain members of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission "based on recommendations from each member of the House of Representatives, the district of which encompasses the Corridor." Because it would be an impermissible restriction on the appointment power to condition the Secretary's appointments on the recommendations of members of the House, I will construe these provisions to require the Secretary to consider such congressional recommendations, but not to be bound by them in making appointments to the Commission.

BARACK OBAMA

THE WHITE HOUSE,
March 30, 2009.

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