

News
From _____

gerry please prepare radio feed on this & have me call love @ WTVG.
CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

EMBARGO UNTIL:
JULY 14, 1988

CONTACT: JERRY BURKOT
(202) 225-3452

RAHALL ANNOUNCES NEW I-64 PROPOSALS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- In conjunction with the opening of the last link of Interstate 64 between Sam Black Church and Beckley, U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) today introduced a major new initiative aimed at fostering a variety of regional economic benefits.

"In order to take advantage of the greatest range of opportunities interstate access through the region now offers, I believe certain additional developments associated with this segment of I-64 are necessary," Rahall stated in introducing the "New River Regional Development Act."

Rahall's legislation authorizes the National Park Service to construct a visitor facility and scenic overlook in association with the Glade Creek Bridge which spans a section of the New River Gorge National River. It also directs the National Park Service to undertake planning and design activities for the northern terminus of the New River Parkway.

Due to its location, Rahall explained that the Glade Creek Bridge would be an excellent place for visitors to learn about the New River Gorge National River, state parks in the immediate vicinity such as Grandview and Little Beaver, the New River Parkway and other points of interest in Raleigh County and southern West Virginia in general. However, as presently designed there is no opportunity for travelers to stop after crossing the bridge.

"This is an oversight which needs to be corrected," he stated. "The Glade Creek Bridge is only slightly smaller than the awesome expanse of the New River Gorge Bridge on U.S. 19. This bridge has become a major tourist attraction in the region primarily because both it and the view of the gorge can be enjoyed from the National Park Service's Canyon Rim Visitor Center where travelers can relax and learn of what the park and surrounding area has to offer. The same opportunity should be made available at the Glade Creek Bridge."

MORE

343 Cannon H.O.B. Washington, D.C. 20515

The Glade Creek corridor from the bridge to the New River, where the mouth of the creek is located at a point east of Grandview State Park, contains a number of outstanding natural values. It is highly scenic, an excellent trout fishery, includes the Kates Branch wetlands and is relatively unaffected by the activities of man, making it the closest thing to a wilderness area within the boundaries of the New River Gorge National River.

Rahall also believes it is time to commence planning and design work for a northern terminus of the New River Parkway and is proposing that Route 9 between the interchange on I-64 and Grandview State Park be upgraded to parkway standards.

Federal construction funds resulting from a Rahall amendment to the last highway bill have already been earmarked for the portion of the New River Parkway which will traverse the Raleigh County side of the river from the Sandstone interchange on I-64 to a point across from Hinton. The New River Parkway Authority is also in the process of planning the southern terminus of the parkway in Mercer County so that it will connect with I-77.

"The projects proposed by this legislation are not only aimed at maximizing the range of opportunities made possible by the completion of I-64 in Raleigh County. The stage will then be set for future revitalizing developments in the area," Rahall said.

