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OCTOBER 26, 1988

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RAHALL'S W. VA. RIVERS BILL SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT REAGAN

BECKLEY, W. VA. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) announced that his bill to protect segments of the Gauley, Bluestone and Meadow Rivers was signed into law today by President Reagan.

"This is a great day for West Virginia," Rahall exclaimed upon enactment of his legislation. "The benefits of today's action, in terms of providing new opportunities for economic growth associated with the establishment of these National Park System units in the region, will be felt not only by the present generation, but by generations of West Virginians to come."

Rahall was also successful in adding a provision to his legislation which authorizes the construction of a scenic overlook and visitors center at the Glade Creek Bridge on the newly-opened section I-64. "The Glade Creek Bridge holds enormous potential as a tourist attraction in southern West Virginia, enjoying the same awesome stature as the New River Gorge Bridge on Rt. 19," Rahall pointed out. "I envision the Glade Creek Bridge attracting tourists from all over the world in the same manner as the New River Bridge has become world renowned."

Rahall cited the broad support for the bill as the key to overriding the President's own Interior Department recommendation of a veto of Rahall's bill. "Over the last week we initiated a full-court press to counter the Interior Department's veto recommendation," Rahall pointed out. "Aside from many individual West Virginians, the bill's supporters included organizations as diverse as the National Rifle Association, the Sierra Club, the United Mine Workers, various Chambers of Commerce, as well as many other recreational interests, and coal and timber interests."

"Even George Bush's Finance Chairman in West Virginia, Knox McConnell, lent his strong and effective support to our effort," Rahall added.