

News
From _____

CONGRESSMAN

Nick Rahall

WEST VIRGINIA-4th DISTRICT

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ARMY CORPS NEEDS RECREATION MANDATE RAHALL SAYS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) today introduced legislation aimed at enhancing recreation at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects. The bill would also extend to the Corps greater control over whether private hydropower facilities could be constructed at federal dams.

"Many Army Corps projects throughout West Virginia and elsewhere were originally built for flood control. While this continues to be the primary purpose of these projects, I believe the Corps could use a recreation mandate so that existing operations can better meet the needs of the people," Rahall said.

According to the congressman, the Corps has often resisted recreation related proposals at its projects because current policy does not place a high priority on recreation. The Corps has also claimed that authorized project purposes do not include all types of recreational opportunities.

"The type of recreation that I believe could be enhanced at many of these federal dams ranges from more river access points for fishermen to the construction of camping and lodging facilities to better boating opportunities," Rahall noted. "Basically, I think the people can get more bang for each taxpayer buck used to operate these federal projects."

The legislation also seeks to stem the proliferation of hydroelectric power proposals at Corps dams. Currently, the Corps is largely unable to prohibit the construction of non-federal hydropower facilities at dams it operates.

"These hydropower projects are getting out of control," said Rahall. "They are being proposed at almost every Corps dam and if constructed not only will steal coal miner jobs but can also seriously jeopardize existing dam operations."