



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 21, 1990

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WV FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAMS TO RECEIVE \$3.3 MILLION
Rahall Says Funding Comports With His Legislative Initiatives

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) today announced that West Virginia will receive \$3.3 million in federal assistance for its fish and wildlife restoration efforts. Meanwhile, Rahall said he is moving forward with a number of legislative initiatives which benefit West Virginia's sportsmen, fish and wildlife resources.

"Due to the popularity of fishing and hunting in West Virginia we are faced with an ever increasing need to enhance our fish and wildlife habitat, stock more trout and provide for better public access points for recreational purposes," Rahall said. "It is for this reason that I am working to gain legislation to construct a new federal trout hatchery in southern West Virginia, moving forward with my bill to earmark money from federal mineral leases to fish and wildlife programs and steering legislation through Congress to restore the Cranberry River's fishery."

The federal funding comes from two special accounts financed by hunters and anglers through excise taxes paid on sporting equipment. West Virginia will receive \$1,463,782 in Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Funds and \$1,798,000 in Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Funds. The Division of Natural Resources will be the grant recipient.

"The word is out among eastern anglers that West Virginia has some of the best fishing in the region and the benefits are starting to show in our local economy," Rahall said. According to Rahall, a Division of Natural Resources study found that the State is an important recreational spot for almost 800,000 anglers and hunters each year. The study maintains this translates into \$254 million in direct expenditures, the creation of over 6,200 jobs, \$79 million in earnings from these jobs and over \$27 million in state revenue.

Rahall said that in the near future the House of Representatives is expected to take up his legislation authorizing the construction of a new federal trout hatchery in southern West Virginia. The measure has already been approved by the House Interior Committee. Rahall, a ranking member of the Committee, also said that his amendment allowing the Division of Natural Resources to construct a facility on the Cranberry River to deacidify the stream, and restore its fishery resources, will be considered next week with action by the full House shortly after.

This week, the congressman conducted a hearing by his Subcommittee on Mining and Natural Resources on his legislation to dedicate a portion of money received from federal mineral leases to a new State Fish and Wildlife Assistance Fund. West Virginia would receive approximately \$1.8 million a year under the legislation for game and nongame fish and wildlife habitat management activities; threatened and endangered species conservation programs; fish stocking programs; and, fish and wildlife habitat improvements at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects and the Monongahela National Forest.