



U.S. Congressman

Nick Rahall*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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\$3.85 MILLION IN RAHALL REQUESTED PROJECTS APPROVED BY CRUCIAL HOUSE PANEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Yet another element of U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall's Southern West Virginia Coal Heritage Initiative gained a boost yesterday when a crucial House Appropriations panel approved \$150,000 to implement the Matewan Revitalization Strategy. Meanwhile, the panel also included \$2 million in land acquisition funds for the Gauley River National Recreation Area established by Rahall legislation during the last Congress and \$1.7 million to acquire a critical tract of land in the Monongahela National Forest. All three items were requested by Rahall.

"Matewan is very receptive to assistance from the National Park Service and with this funding work will be conducted to implement a conservation, revitalization and tourism strategy for the area known as the Matewan Revitalization Strategy," Rahall said. "Among the projects that will be undertaken are the establishment of a local heritage commission, formal recognition of the Hatfield and McCoy Feud, and the revitalization of the downtown area where a pitched battle known as the Matewan Massacre took place in 1920 between mineworkers led by Police Chief Sid Hatfield and agents of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency."

personal touch // Rahall said that Matewan is an essential cog in his Southern West Virginia Coal Heritage Initiative and noted that the movie "Matewan" may have helped his efforts to obtain the funding. "Last week the chairman of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, Rep. Sid Yates, came up to me and said he had just seen the movie Matewan on television. He was really impressed with our history."

With the \$2 million appropriation for the Gauley River National Recreation Area, the National Park Service will be in the position to begin land acquisition activities at the newly established park unit, Rahall said. "The New River Gorge National River is well on its way to being established complete with visitor centers, access points and hiking trails," Rahall said. "Now is the time for us to begin similar efforts at the Gauley."

Rahall also disclosed that at his request, the Appropriations bill contains \$1.7 million in land acquisition funding for the Monongahela National Forest to acquire 17,000 acres of mineral rights underlying the Cranberry backcountry. The tract is currently threatened by a potential surface mining operation and is bordered by two Wild and Scenic Rivers Act study segment candidates.

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