



U.S. Congressman

Nick Rahall*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 15, 1990CONTACT: JIM ZOIA
(202) 226-7761**FROM PARKS TO MINE RECLAMATION
CORNUCOPIA OF RAHALL PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE HOUSE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation today to provide, at the request of U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV), \$150,000 as part of his southern West Virginia Coal Heritage Initiative for the implementation of the Matewan Revitalization Strategy, \$2 million in land acquisition funds for the Gauley River National Recreation Area and \$1.7 million to acquire a critical tract of land in the Monongahela National Forest. All three items were included in the fiscal year 1991 appropriation bill for the Interior Department.

Also contained in the measure is \$2.5 million for the black lung disease research center at West Virginia University and \$1.5 million for the University's National Mine Land Reclamation Center. In addition, Rahall said that \$150 million in Abandoned Mine Reclamation funding is being earmarked for the states, \$33 million more than requested by the Bush Administration.

According to Rahall, the National Park Service is making progress in completing his southern West Virginia Coal Heritage Study which is aimed at evaluating the cultural and historical significance of structures in coal towns such as Holden, Kopperston, Itmann, Gary, Slab Fork, Coalwood and Redjacket. Matewan, however, has already signed an agreement with the National Park Service--called the Matewan Revitalization Strategy--to implement a conservation, revitalization and tourism strategy for the area. The \$150,00 in the House appropriations bill will be utilized for this purpose.

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 park unit established by Rahall sponsored legislation in 1988. Rahall envisions the money being spent to improve access to the river for fishermen and rafters.

Meanwhile, the \$1.7 million in land acquisition funding for the Monongahela National Forest requested by Rahall will be used 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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