



U.S. Congressman

Nick Rahall*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 22, 1992CONTACT: STEVE SPINA
(304) 252-5000**RAHALL SEEKS TO PRESERVE NEW RIVER CORRIDOR**
Action May Affect Proposed APCO Powerline

SHANKLINS FERRY, WV -- Flanked by local elected officials and concerned citizens, U.S. Rep. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) stood on the banks of the New River at Shanklins Ferry campground in Summers County today to set in motion a chain of events that may lead to the designation, under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, of the segment of the New River where the APCO powerline is proposed to cross.

The designation of a river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act normally entails a two-step process, starting with enactment of legislation to require an eligibility study. Based on the study's findings, Congress then considers legislation to designate the river as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Rahall said that he would be introducing legislation to cause an eligibility study to be conducted on the segment of the New River. In his remarks, he noted that under the measure the river would fall under the interim protections afforded study rivers. While these protections do not directly block transmission lines from crossing a study river segment, federal agencies normally are reluctant to take actions that would adversely affect the values for which the river is being studied. The proposed APCO line, for example, would require a federal right-of-way across this segment of the New River.

"Today, we are drawing a line in the sand. Right here. At the New River," Rahall stated. "And by drawing this line, we are saying that we are here today to maintain the rural character of this area. We hunt these woods. We fish these waters. We recreate on this land. Yet, there are those who would encroach upon these woods, these waters and this land."

He added: "We are here to say that from this point forward, no project or proposal shall proceed unless it provides solid benefits to the people, and to our communities. We are here to say that the people--not nameless, faceless bureaucrats--will have the final say in the decisions affecting our lives."

The segment of the New River that is the subject of the legislation is approximately 17 miles in length, and extends from the West Virginia-Virginia State Line to the maximum summer pool elevation of Bluestone Lake. All of the land within the segment is owned by the federal government.

The purpose of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is to preserve, in their free-flowing condition, river segments which possess outstanding scenic, recreational, fish and wildlife, historic and cultural values. In West Virginia, a segment of the Bluestone River is designated as a National Scenic River while both the Gauley River National Recreation Area and the New River Gorge National River designations include protections from the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.