



News from the  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II - Chairman

1324 Longworth House Office Building - Washington DC, 20515 - <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov>

## **The Weekly Preview**

*May 19 – 23, 2008*

### **On the House Floor:**

- On Monday, the **House of Representatives** is expected to consider under suspension of the rules the following 9 natural resources bills:
  - [H.Con.Res. 300](#) (Bordallo): Recognizing the necessity for the United States to maintain its significant leadership role in improving the health and promoting the resiliency of coral reef ecosystems, and for other purposes.
  - [S.J.Res. 17](#) (Sen. Stevens): A joint resolution directing the United States to initiate international discussions and take necessary steps with other Nations to negotiate an agreement for managing migratory and transboundary fish stocks in the Arctic Ocean.
  - [H.Con.Res. 325](#) (Stupak): Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission's Historical Preservation and Museum Program, which began on June 15, 1958, and for other purposes.
  - [H.Res. 1074](#) (Herseth Sandlin): Honoring the 60th anniversary of the commencement of the carving of the Crazy Horse Memorial.
  - [H.R. 1464](#) (Tom Udall): To assist in the conservation of rare felids and rare canids by supporting and providing financial resources for the conservation programs of nations within the range of rare felid and rare canid populations and projects of persons with demonstrated expertise in the conservation of rare felid and rare canid populations.
  - [H.R. 1771](#) (Baldwin): To assist in the conservation of cranes by supporting and providing, through projects of persons and organizations with expertise in crane conservation, financial resources for the conservation programs of countries the activities of which directly or indirectly affect cranes and the ecosystems of cranes.

- [H.R. 3323](#) (Capps): To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey a water distribution system to the Goleta Water District, and for other purposes.
- [H.R. 2649](#) (Bilbray): To make amendments to the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992.
- [H.R. 4841](#) (Bono Mack): To approve, ratify, and confirm the settlement agreement entered into to resolve claims by the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians relating to alleged interferences with the water resources of the Tribe, to authorize and direct the Secretary of the Interior to execute and perform the Settlement Agreement and related waivers, and for other purposes.

**This Week's Hearings:**

*Can't make it to our hearings or markups in person? Stay connected with our live video and audio webcasts, available at <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov>.*

- On Tuesday, the **Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands** will hold an oversight hearing on “The Future of the National Mall.” In 2003, the U.S. Congress placed a moratorium on the construction of memorials on the National Mall, stating that the Mall is a substantially complete work of civic art and that future memorials must be located in other prominent places in the city. In 2006, the National Park Service (NPS), the agency charged with management of the majority of the land and memorials housed on the Mall, began an ongoing effort to draft the *National Mall Plan* that will guide management and further improvements on the Mall over the next 50 years. With so much of America’s history, culture and national identity at stake, the Subcommittee will hold an oversight hearing to ensure that the final plan – which will affect the Mall for generations to come – truly represents the voices and best interests of the American people.

The following witnesses are scheduled to testify: Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC); Peggy O’Dell, Superintendent, National Mall and Memorial Parks, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Harriet Tregoning, Director, Office of Planning, Government of the District of Columbia; John V. Cogbill, III, Chairman, National Capital Planning Commission; Arthur B. Spitzer, Legal Director, American Civil Liberties Union of the National Capital Area; Judy Scott Feldman, PhD, President, National Coalition to Save Our Mall; and John E. “Chip” Akridge, III, Chairman, Trust for the National Mall.

Visit the Committee’s Web site to access [witness testimony](#) following the conclusion of the hearing. (*May 20, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., Room 1324 Longworth House Office Building*)

- On Wednesday, the **Committee on Natural Resources** will hold an oversight hearing on “The Danger of Deception: Do Endangered Species Have a Chance?” One year ago, Julie MacDonald, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Interior Department, resigned following the release of a scathing Inspector General report that revealed her political tinkering had manipulated scientific decisions under the federal Endangered Species program. Subsequently, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick J. Rahall (D-WV) has pressed for the Interior Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to correct course and prevent continued political meddling with scientific decision-making under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). At the hearing, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is expected to release new findings of its ongoing investigation, requested by Rahall and Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Jay Inslee (D-WA), into the agency’s self-review and its claims that it is rectifying the damage done to the endangered species program.

The following witnesses are scheduled to testify: Robin Nazarro, Director, Natural Resources and Environment Program, U.S. Government Accountability Office; R. Lyle Laverty, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the Interior, *Accompanied by: Ren Lohofener, Fish and Wildlife Service and Ed Shepard, Bureau of Land Management*; Jane Luxton, General Counsel, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Dr. Francesca T. Grifo, Ph.D., Senior Scientist and Director, Scientific Integrity Program, Union of Concerned Scientists; Scott D. Kraus, Ph.D., Vice President of Research, New England Aquarium, Dr. Jerry F. Franklin, Ph.D., College of Forest Resources, University of Washington; Scott Hoffman Black, Executive Director, The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation; David Parsons, Science Fellow, The Rewilding Institute; and Larry Irwin, National Council for Air & Stream Improvement.

Visit the Committee’s Web site to access [witness testimony](#) following the conclusion of the hearing. (*May 21, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., Room 1324 Longworth House Office Building*)

- Also on Wednesday, the **Subcommittee on Insular Affairs** and the **House Oversight and Government Reform Committee’s Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and National Archives** will hold a joint oversight hearing on “Census Data: Special Issues Related to U.S. Territories.” Annual census data provides valuable current data and statistics; however, the lack of an annual survey for the U.S. insular areas presents numerous obstacles in the territories’ efforts to make decisions about their communities and local economies. The hearing will provide an opportunity for representatives from the U.S. territories, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Interior Department’s Office of Insular Affairs to inform the Subcommittees on how this data deficiency impedes local and federal government officials, academics, and private-sector representatives from carrying out their responsibilities.

Visit the Committee's Web site to access [witness testimony](#) following the conclusion of the hearing. (May 21, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., Room 2154 Longworth House Office Building)

**\*Please note:** This joint Subcommittee hearing will be webcast live via the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee's Website: <http://oversight.house.gov/>.

- Later on Wednesday, the **Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans** will meet in open markup session to consider the following 4 bills:
  - [H.R. 2964](#) (Johnson): To amend the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 to treat nonhuman primates as prohibited wildlife species under that Act, to make corrections in the provisions relating to captive wildlife offenses under that Act, and for other purposes. (*Captive Primate Safety Act*)
  - [H.R. 5350](#) (R. Scott): To authorize the Secretary of Commerce to sell or exchange certain National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration property located in Norfolk, Virginia, and for other purposes.
  - [H.R. 5451](#) (Bordallo): To reauthorize the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, and for other purposes. (*Coastal Zone Reauthorization Act of 2008*)
  - [H.R. 5741](#) (Bordallo): To amend the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to improve the conservation of sharks. (*The Shark Conservation Act of 2008*)

Visit the Committee's Web site to view the [markup report](#) following the markup. (May 21, 2008, at 2:00 p.m., Room 1334 Longworth House Office Building)

- On Thursday, the **Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources** will hold an oversight hearing on "The United States Geological Survey's Earthquake Hazards Program - Science, Preparation, and Response." In light of the recent destruction caused by earthquakes worldwide, the Subcommittee will examine efforts by the United States Geological Survey's Earthquake Hazards Program to minimize the tragic toll earthquakes can take on human life, property, and infrastructure.

Visit the Committee's Web site to access [witness testimony](#) following the conclusion of the hearing. (May 22, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., Room 1324 Longworth House Office Building)

- Also on Thursday, the **Subcommittee on Water and Power** will meet in open markup session to consider the following 2 bills:
  - H.R. 5511 (Lamborn): To direct the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to remedy problems caused by a collapsed drainage tunnel in Leadville, Colorado, and for other purposes (*Leadville Mine Drainage Tunnel Remediation Act of 2008*)
  - H.R. 5710 (T. Udall): To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial assistance to the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water Authority for the planning, design, and construction of the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System, and for other purposes (*Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System Authorization Act*)

Visit the Committee's Web site to view the [markup report](#) following the markup. (May 22, 2008, at 11:00 a.m., Room 1334 Longworth House Office Building)

### **In Case You Missed It:**

- On May 13, 2008, the House of Representatives, in an effort to reduce gas prices at the pump across the country, passed the **"Strategic Petroleum Reserve Fill Suspension and Consumer Protection Act of 2008" (H.R. 6022)**, which includes provisions under the jurisdiction of the **Committee on Natural Resources**. The legislation will halt deposits of oil into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). The Senate cleared the bill on the same day, and the measure has been sent to the White House. Visit the Committee's Web site to read Chairman Rahall's [statement](#).
- On May 14, 2008, Chairman Rahall won passage in the House of Representatives of an important provision that would help stop the flow of illegally logged foreign timber imported into the U.S. The provision in the Farm Bill (**Food and Energy Security Act of 2008 (H.R. 2419)**) - nearly identical to the bill that was approved by the Natural Resources Committee - would amend the Lacey Act of 1981 to extend its protections to plants and trees that are illegally harvested outside of the U.S. Currently, the Lacey Act only provides protections against the illegal trade of fish and wildlife. Visit the Committee's Web site to view the [press release](#) with additional information.
- On May 15, 2008, in anticipation of the June 2008 meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in Santiago, Chile, Chairman Rahall introduced a resolution urging U.S. leadership to use all appropriate measures to put an end to commercial whaling around the globe. [H. Con. Res. 350](#), co-sponsored by Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans Chairwoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU) and seven other Members, calls on the U.S. delegation to the IWC to remain firm in its opposition to all forms of commercial whaling. Visit the Committee's Web site to view the [press release](#) with additional information on the resolution.

**Quotable Quotes:**

“At a time when crude oil is over \$120 a barrel, it makes absolutely no sense for the federal government to continue purchasing massive quantities of oil in order to stick it in a hole in the ground for safe-keeping.

“Under the current situation, the federal government is buying oil at record-high prices to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) at the rate of 70,000 barrels a day. These daily purchases create additional pressure on demand and further inflate prices at the pump. The SPR is roughly 97 percent full right now. We do not need to pay a premium to the oil companies just to top it off.”

– Chairman Nick J. Rahall (D-WV), during floor debate in the U.S. House of Representatives on the "**Strategic Petroleum Reserve Fill Suspension and Consumer Protection Act of 2008**" ([H.R. 6022](#)) on May 13, 2008.

**Calendar:**

Click on the text within the calendar to be linked directly to our Web site.

<b>Monday 5/19</b>	<b>Tuesday 5/20</b>	<b>Wednesday 5/21</b>	<b>Thursday 5/22</b>	<b>Friday 5/23</b>
	Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Oversight Hearing (10:00 AM)	Full Committee Oversight Hearing (10:00 AM)  Subcommittee on Insular Affairs Joint Oversight Hearing (10:00 AM)  Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans Markup of 4 Bills (2:00 PM)	Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources Oversight Hearing (10:00 AM)  Subcommittee on Water and Power Markup of 2 Bills (11:00 AM)	

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