

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 2788, TO DESIGNATE A
DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS NATIONAL MEMORIAL AT THE MARCH
FIELD AIR MUSEUM IN RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA.**

JANUARY 21, 2009

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 2788, a bill to designate a Distinguished Flying Cross National Memorial at the March Field Air Museum in Riverside, California.

The Department would defer to the Department of Defense for a position on H.R. 2788 since the purpose of the legislation is to further honor military personnel who have been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross at a site which is not under the jurisdiction of the Department.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to a member of the United States armed forces who distinguishes himself or herself in support of operations by “heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight.” We applaud the effort of the March Field Air Museum to create a suitable memorial to the honor, bravery, and sacrifice of members of our Armed Forces who have earned this medal.

This legislation explicitly states that this memorial is not a unit of the National Park System. As this language makes clear, the use of the title “national memorial” creates a reasonable expectation among the general public that it must have an affiliation with the National Park Service, which currently administers 27 national memorials across the country. This is not the first time this issue has arisen, nor is it likely to be the last, and the Department respectfully encourages only the most thoughtful and judicious designation of any future “national” memorials, museums, or other similar sites.

That concludes my testimony Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to respond to any questions from you and members of the committee.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, OF THE
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 4003, A BILL
TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A
SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY TO EVALUATE RESOURCES IN THE HUDSON
RIVER VALLEY IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK TO DETERMINE THE
SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING THE SITE AS A UNIT
OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

JANUARY 21, 2010

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 4003, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study on natural and cultural resources on certain lands in the Hudson River Valley of New York.

The Department supports enactment of this legislation. However, we feel that priority should be given to the 48 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that have not yet been transmitted to Congress.

New York's Hudson River Valley is one of this nation's most treasured landscapes, a place of significant historic events and natural beauty. The region has a rich Native American history, as well as a myriad of important historic sites and stories dating from the period of European contact through the modern era of our nation's evolution. It has been the subject of some of our best known literature and art, a birthplace of the

environmental movement, and the location of early industrial progress, political discourse, and transportation innovations. It is the home place of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Martin Van Buren, Robert Fulton's invention of the steamboat, and Revolutionary War events including the joint decision of Washington and Rochambeau to march from the Hudson to final victory at Yorktown, Virginia. It was on the shores of the Hudson, too, that Benedict Arnold betrayed the Continental Army offering to surrender West Point and where his contact, British Major John Andre, was arrested near Tarrytown and hung as a spy in Tappan, New York.

The natural beauty of this landscape has been captured forever by the famous Hudson River School of painters including the works of Thomas Cole, Robert Weir, Asher Durand, and Frederic E. Church. Washington Irving, in his classic tale of Rip Van Winkle, wrote, "He saw at a distance *the lordly Hudson*, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands." Naturalist and essayist John Burroughs viewing the Hudson River Valley from its highest point declared, "The works of man dwindle, and the original features of the huge globe come out. Every single object or point is dwarfed; the valley of the Hudson is only a wrinkle in the earth's surface. You discover with a feeling of surprise that the great thing is the earth itself, which stretches away on every hand so far beyond your ken."

The Hudson River Valley is characterized by a mosaic of river corridors, wetlands, forests, agricultural lands, villages, and urban and suburban communities. It has been recognized for its ecological significance where the effects of ocean tides and saltwater intrusion create a transitional ecosystem that provides habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species including rare species such as the Bicknell's sedge and Violet lespedeza, and endangered species such as the Karner blue butterfly and Indiana bat. The Hudson River Valley provides important migration stops for many species of waterfowl, including tens of thousands of geese and ducks, that winter on the river. It also provides essential habitat for anadromous fish species such as the striped bass, as well as other species such as the marsh wren and muskrat, which reside in tidal creeks and other permanently flooded habitats.

Existing units of the National Park System in the Hudson River Valley protect a few of its many historic resources and include the homes of Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Van Buren, and Frederick Vanderbilt. Saratoga National Historical Park protects a key site of the American Revolution. Congress recognized that there was more to this nationally distinctive landscape when it established the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area pursuant to Public Law 104-333. The region, too, contains natural and historic sites protected by the State of New York, its local governments and nonprofit organizations. Much of the region, however, remains subject to the pressures of urbanization, resulting in landscape destruction and historic site impact.

H.R. 4003 would provide the opportunity for the National Park Service to work with state and local organizations to determine if other critical natural and historic resources in the region merit consideration by Congress for potential unit designation. More importantly, it provides the potential for a wider public dialog on how best to protect these treasured resources at the local, state, and national levels and through privately initiated conservation initiatives. We anticipate that the study will cost between \$350,000 and \$400,000 to complete.

We note that the elements included in section 4(b)(2) would be considered in a special resource study and are not necessary to include in the bill language.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony and I would be pleased to answer any questions that members of the subcommittee may have regarding the Department's position on H.R. 4003.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, OF THE
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 4395, A BILL
TO REVISE THE BOUNDARIES OF GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY
PARK TO INCLUDE THE GETTYSBURG TRAIN STATION, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES.**

January 21, 2010

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 4395, a bill to add the historic Lincoln Train Station in the Borough of Gettysburg and 45 acres at the base of Big Round Top to Gettysburg National Military Park in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Department supports enactment of this legislation.

Gettysburg National Military Park protects major portions of the site of the largest battle waged during this nation's Civil War. Fought in the first three days of July 1863, the Battle of Gettysburg resulted in a victory for Union forces and successfully ended the second invasion of the North by Confederate forces commanded by General Robert E. Lee. Historians have referred to the battle as a major turning point in the war - the "High Water Mark of the Confederacy". It was also the Civil War's bloodiest single battle, resulting in over 51,000 soldiers killed, wounded, captured or missing.

The Soldiers' National Cemetery within the park was dedicated on November 19, 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln delivered his immortal Gettysburg Address. The cemetery contains more than 7,000 interments including over 3,500 from the Civil War.

The park currently includes nearly 6,000 acres, with 26 miles of park roads and over 1,400 monuments, markers, and memorials.

Gettysburg's Lincoln Train Station was built in 1858 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The station served as a hospital during the Battle of Gettysburg, and the wounded and the dead were transported from Gettysburg through this station in the aftermath of battle. President Abraham Lincoln arrived at this station when he visited to give the Gettysburg Address.

Gettysburg National Military Park's 1999 General Management Plan called for expanding cooperative relationships and partnerships with the Borough of Gettysburg and other sites "to ensure that resources closely linked to the park, the battle, and the non-combatant civilian involvement in the battle and its aftermath are appropriately protected and used." In particular, the plan stated that the National Park Service would initiate "cooperation agreements with willing owners, and seek the assistance of the Borough of Gettysburg and other appropriate entities to preserve, operate and manage the Wills House and Lincoln Train Station."

The Borough of Gettysburg Interpretive Plan called for the Lincoln Train Station to be used as a downtown information and orientation center for visitors – where all park visitors would arrive after coming downtown – to receive information and orientation to downtown historic attractions, including the David Wills House. This is the house where Lincoln stayed the night before delivering the Gettysburg Address. The Interpretive Plan

also called for rehabilitation of the Wills House, which was added to the park's boundary through Public Law 106-290 in October 2000, and is now a historic house museum in the borough and an official site within Gettysburg National Military Park. Through a Memorandum of Understanding, the David Wills House is operated by Main Street Gettysburg at no cost to the National Park Service.

The Lincoln Train Station is next to the downtown terminus of Freedom Transit, Gettysburg's shuttle system, which started operations in July 2009 with a grant from the Federal Transit Administration in the Department of Transportation.

In 2006, the Borough of Gettysburg completed rehabilitation of the Lincoln Train Station with funds from a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grant. Due to a lack of funds, however, the borough has been unable to operate a visitor information and orientation center there. Through formal vote of the Borough Council, the Borough of Gettysburg has asked the National Park Service to take over the ownership and operations of the train station. The anticipated acquisition cost for the completely rehabilitated train station is approximately \$772,000, subject to an appraisal by the federal government. Funding to acquire this land would be subject to the availability of appropriations and NPS priorities.

The park has a preliminary commitment from the Gettysburg Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB) to provide all staffing requirements for operations of an information and orientation center in the train station, thereby alleviating the park of staff costs.

Anticipated operating costs for the train station that will be the responsibility of the NPS

are limited to utility costs, the rest will be paid by the Gettysburg CVB. In the event that the Gettysburg CVB is unable to provide staffing and funding for operations, the NPS would seek another park partner to cover these costs and requirements.

This legislation would also add 45 acres near Big Round Top along Plum Run in Cumberland Township, Pennsylvania to the boundary of the park. The 45-acre tract of land is adjacent to the Gettysburg National Military Park and is within the Battlefield Historic District. The land is at the southern base of Big Round Top at the southern end of the Gettysburg battlefield. There were cavalry skirmishers in this area during the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1863, but the real significance is environmental. The tract has critical wetlands and wildlife habitat related to Plum Run. Wayne and Susan Hill donated it to the Gettysburg Foundation in April 2009. The Gettysburg Foundation plans to donate “fee title interest” in the parcel to the National Park Service once it is within the park boundary. It abuts land already owned by the National Park Service.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or members of the committee may have regarding the Department’s position on H.R. 4395.