

The White House,
August 26, 1992.

Note: S. 1963, approved August 26, was assigned Public Law No. 102-349.

Statement on Signing the Marsh-Billings National Historical Park Establishment Act

August 26, 1992

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 2079, the “Marsh-Billings National Historical Park Establishment Act.”

S. 2079 will establish the Marsh-Billings National Historical Park in Vermont with the purpose of interpreting the history of conservation. This site includes the boyhood home of George Perkins Marsh. In 1864 Marsh published the first book on conservation, called *Man and Nature*. He warned that not providing for the proper protection of forest cover would lead to the pollution of streams and rivers, the loss of soil, wildlife, and plants, and the ability to farm the land.

The Marsh home was later purchased by Frederick Billings, an attorney and railroad magnate who began a scientific farm on this site, and reforested the land. It has been owned for the last 60 years by Laurance and Mary Rockefeller.

This National Historical Park will include the mansion and 550 acres of hillside that were replanted by Frederick Billings. The legislation will also provide for cooperation with the historic Frederick Billings Farm and Museum, and allow the National Park Service to interpret for the public the beginnings and the evolution of the conservation movement.

Conservation principles, first articulated by Marsh and practiced by Billings, have also been primary themes of my Administration. Just as Frederick Billings replanted trees over a century ago on the 550 acres of hillside, my Administration has set a goal to plant one billion trees per year across

America.

Since 1989, I have proposed an America the Beautiful initiative which has doubled funding for national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other public lands, and tripled funding to States for outdoor recreation. Nearly 20 national park units and 60 wildlife refuges have either been created or significantly expanded. In total, over 1.5 million acres have been made available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The Nation owes a debt of gratitude to Laurance and Mary Rockefeller, who are donating their home as the first national park in Vermont. I salute the Rockefeller family’s long-standing support for the protection of America’s natural and cultural wonders and their close relationship with the National Park System. They have provided substantial support to the Virgin Islands National Park and Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. All Americans will benefit from their generosity.

I welcome the Marsh-Billings National Historical Park as the next worthy addition to the National Park System.

GEORGE BUSH

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