

When coupled with the Recovery Act, which makes an historic \$3 billion investment creating jobs that will restore and protect our landscapes and our ecosystems, preserve our national monuments, retrofit our facilities for energy efficiency and renewable energy—taken together, today’s legislation takes another step toward fulfilling Teddy Roosevelt’s vision for this land that we love. It’s a vision that sees America’s great wilderness as a place where what was, and what is, and what will be—all are the same; a place where memories are lived and relived; a place where Americans both young and young at heart can freely experience the spirit of adventure that has always been at the heart of the rugged character of America.

Now, the legislation I’m signing today also makes progress on another front for which many Americans have long waited. The Christopher and Dana Reeve’s Paralysis Act is the first piece of comprehensive legislation specifically aimed at addressing the challenges faced by Americans living with paralysis. Many folks and organizations from across the disability community worked hard to get this bill passed, and we are grateful to each of you for bringing us that much closer to providing all Americans with disabilities a full, fair, and equal opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

This act creates new coordinated research activities through the National Institutes of Health that will connect the best minds and best practices from the best labs in the country, and focus their endeavors through collaborative scientific research into the cure for paralysis, saving effort, money, and most importantly, time. It promotes enhanced rehabilitation ser-

vices for paralyzed Americans, helping develop better equipment and technology that will allow them to live full and independent lives free from unnecessary barriers. And it will work to improve the quality of life for all those who live with paralysis, no matter what the cause.

That’s the mission of the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. In the lobby of their facility in New Jersey sits Christopher’s empty wheelchair. And his son, Matthew Reeve, was once asked if the sight of it ever saddened him, and he replied no. He said, “Empty chairs, that was Dad’s goal,” he said. “We hope there will be many more of them.” Matthew is here with us today. And the legislation I’m about to sign makes solid progress toward the realization of that hope and the promise of a brighter future.

All in all, this legislation is that rare end product of what happens when Americans of all parties and places come together in common purpose to consider something more than the politics of the moment. It’s the very idea at the heart of this country: that each generation has a responsibility to secure this Nation’s promise for the next. And by signing this bill into law, that’s what we’re doing today.

So—is Matthew here, by the way? Matthew, come on up. He looks like his dad, doesn’t he? Thank you. All right. Let’s sign this bill.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of the Interior Kenneth L. Salazar, who introduced the President. H.R. 146, approved March 30, was assigned Public Law No. 111–11.

Statement on Signing the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 *March 30, 2009*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 146, the “Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009.” This landmark bill will protect millions of acres of Federal land as wilderness, protect more than 1,000 miles of rivers through the National Wild and Scenic River System, and designate thousands of miles of trails for the National Trails System. It also will authorize the 26 mil-

lion-acre National Landscape Conservation System within the Department of the Interior.

Among other provisions, H.R. 146 designates three new units in our National Park System, enlarges the boundaries of several existing parks, and designates a number of National Heritage Areas. It creates a new national monument—the Prehistoric Trackways National

Monument—and four new national conservation areas, and establishes the Wyoming Range Withdrawal Area. It establishes a collaborative landscape-scale restoration program with a goal of reducing the risk of wildfire and authorizes programs to study and research the effects of climate change on natural resources and other research-related activities.

Treasured places from coast to coast will benefit from H.R. 146, including Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Michigan; Monongahela National Forest in West Virginia; Oregon's Mount Hood; Idaho's Owyhee Canyons; the Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado; Zion National Park in Utah; remarkable landscapes in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California; and wilderness-quality National Forest lands in Virginia and public lands in New Mexico.

This bipartisan bill has been many years in the making, and is one of the most important pieces of natural resource legislation in decades. This legislation also makes progress for which millions of Americans have long waited on another front. The Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Act is the first piece of comprehensive legislation aimed at improving the lives of Americans living with paralysis. It creates new coordinated research activities through the National Institutes of Health that will connect the best minds and best practices from the best labs across the country, and focus their efforts through collaborative scientific

research into a cure for paralysis, saving effort, money, and, most importantly, time. It will promote enhanced rehabilitation services for paralyzed Americans, helping develop better equipment and technology that allows them to live full and independent lives free from unnecessary barriers. This legislation will work to improve the quality of life for all those who live with paralysis, no matter the cause.

Section 8203 of the Act provides that the Secretary of the Interior shall appoint certain members of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission "based on recommendations from each member of the House of Representatives, the district of which encompasses the Corridor." Because it would be an impermissible restriction on the appointment power to condition the Secretary's appointments on the recommendations of members of the House, I will construe these provisions to require the Secretary to consider such congressional recommendations, but not to be bound by them in making appointments to the Commission.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
March 30, 2009.

NOTE: H.R. 146, approved March 30, was assigned Public Law No. 111-11.

Remarks Following a Meeting With United States Special Envoy to Sudan Major General J. Scott Gration

March 30, 2009

The President. Hello, everybody. Obviously on a busy news day, I wanted us to make sure that we weren't losing sight of something that has been an ongoing international crisis, and that is the situation in Darfur.

As many of you know, there has been a longstanding humanitarian crisis there, prompted by displacement and genocide that has been taking place. There have been a series of negotiations around resolving this crisis

in Sudan. It has not gotten resolved, and it is now worsening.

And so I wanted to publicly affirm the importance of General Scott Gration, who has been appointed as Special Envoy to Sudan, to work on a whole host of issues that I think are of importance to the international community and should touch the conscience of all of us.

General Gration is one of my top national security advisers. He's somebody who I've