

honor a man who has dedicated so much of his own time to such a selfless service.

The National Weather Service collects and maintains a database of daily climate reports that is among the best in the world. National Weather Service uses the data from that record to help forecast climate and weather changes and issue weather warnings. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also uses the data to understand and predict climate trends. Estimates suggest that such climate predictions helped prevent up to one billion dollars in damage from the devastating effects of El Nino in California alone.

But such an extensive and accurate database cannot be created overnight. Our country relies on dedicated volunteers like Joseph who take the time to make and report their weather observations as part of the Cooperative Weather Observer program. The roots of the program reach as far back as 1644, when Reverend John Campanius Holm recorded the American Colonies' first known weather observations. Then, in 1891, the Weather Bureau tackled the challenge given them to document climate conditions in the United States. For over one hundred years, the Weather Service has called on volunteers to gather the necessary measurements on weather factors such as temperature and precipitation. With over 11,000 volunteer observers contributing over one million service hours, it is significant to note that the National Weather Service has chosen to recognize Joseph Hannigan with their most prestigious recognition, the John Campanius Holm Award. Considering Joseph's 42 years of consistent service, he is deserving of an award named after the very first volunteer weather observer in the American Colonies. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today to praise Joseph Hannigan for his dedicated service to the National Weather Service before this body of Congress and this nation. He stands out as an example of the cooperative spirit that has helped make this country great. From his efforts, combined with the work of countless others, our communities enjoy the economic, recreational, and safety benefits that an accurate and timely weather forecast affords them. I am honored to extend my gratitude to Joseph and the many other volunteers for what they have accomplished. Keep up the good work!

HONORING THE McALLEN MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL CONSTITUTION TEAM

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2003

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge an outstanding group of young scholars from my Congressional district. The McAllen Memorial High School Constitution team recently won the Texas state title at the "We The People, The Citizen and the Constitution" annual competition. Remarkably, this is the McAllen team's 10th State win in 13 years. They have also been successful nationally, finishing among the top ten finalists in 4 out of 10 appearances.

I am proud to represent a community that produces students with such a passion for learning the democratic principles and founda-

tion of our government. I congratulate the team members and their parents for this extraordinary achievement. I congratulate the team members and their parents for this extraordinary achievement. The members of the team are thirteen high school seniors; Erika Garcia, Brian Trautman, Victoria Montemayor, Allison Glass, Gregory Goldsmith, Danessa Litam, Gisela Medina, Edwin Monroy, Kelly Monroy, Jeffrey Murray, Steffy Phillip, Sabrina Tully, Brian Van Burkleo. Ms. LeAnna Morse coached the team. I wish these students success when they compete at the national competition in April, here in Washington, DC.

In closing, I would like to share with my colleagues an article that ran in the McAllen Monitor highlighting the accomplishment of these young constitutional scholars.

McALLEN CONSTITUTION TEAM WINS 10TH STATE TITLE

(By Juan Ozuna)

McALLEN.—Hamilton, Madison and Franklin would be impressed with the McAllen Memorial High School Constitution team.

The 13-member team comprised of high school seniors was named state champion in the We The People, The Citizen and the Constitution competition in Austin Jan. 4.

It is the 10th time in 13 years the group has won the competition, sponsored by the State Bar of Texas.

"They really demonstrated an ability to think on their feet," said LeAnna Morse, a government teacher and the team's coach. "I'm really proud of them."

During the competition, each team is divided into groups of three. These trios each face a panel of attorneys, educators and community leaders and make a three-minute presentation on the Constitution. They answer questions asked by the panel of judges and are awarded points for their answers.

"This was a small team, so they had to carry extra weight, and they really rose to the occasion," Morse said.

Teams usually have 15 members. To help train the group, Morse asked some friends and other community people to come in to the class to act as judges for her team.

"We'd have practices and invite attorneys and academics to judge them so they could have the full experience," Morse said. "When you practice, you always try to anticipate what questions you'll be asked in the follow-up."

Mick West, history coordinator for McAllen school district and a sponsor of the team, accompanied the students to the competition, which he said was extremely competitive.

"They did an outstanding job," he said. "It was very close. They have a great reputation."

Team member Erika Garcia said there was a lot of pressure on the students to perform well because of their reputation.

"It's good to know that we fulfilled that tradition one more year," Garcia said. "Our sponsors have prepared us very well."

Teammate Brain Trautman said he also felt the heat of the competition, calling the win "a relief."

"I'm really excited," he said. "I can't wait to go to nationals to compete."

As the winning team, the McAllen Memorial High School students will be sent to Washington, D.C., in April to compete against the top team from each state.

Though Morse's teams have seen top-10 finishes at the national level, the highest they ever placed is fourth.

Though also excited about being able to attend the national Constitution competition, Victoria Montemayor said she would be more focused on the sights.

"I just want to see the actual documents," Montemayor said. "I want to see the monuments, see all the places you see in the books."

Other students on the team include Allison Glass, Gregory Goldsmith, Danessa Litam, Gisela Medina, Edwin Monroy, Kelly Monroy, Jeffrey Murray, Steffy Phillip, Sabrina Tully and Brian van Burkleo.

REINTRODUCTION OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK WILDERNESS ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am again introducing a bill to designate as wilderness most of the lands within the Rocky Mountain National Park, in Colorado.

This legislation will provide important protection and management direction for some truly remarkable country, adding nearly 250,000 acres in the park to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The bill is essentially identical to one previously introduced by my predecessor, Representative David Skaggs, and one I introduced in the 107th Congress. Those bills in turn were based on similar measures earlier proposed, including some by former Senator Bill Armstrong and others.

Over a number of years my predecessor and I have worked with the National Park Service and others to refine the boundaries of the areas proposed for wilderness designation and consulted closely with many interested parties in Colorado, including local officials and both the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and the St. Vrain & Left Hand Ditch Water Conservancy District. These consultations provided the basis for many of the provisions of the bill I am introducing today, particularly regarding the status of existing water facilities.

Covering some 94 percent of the park, the new wilderness will include Longs Peaks and other major mountains along the Great Continental Divide, glacial cirques and snow fields, broad expanses of alpine tundra and wet meadows, old-growth forests, and hundreds of lakes and streams, all untrammelled by human structures or passage. Indeed, examples of all the natural ecosystems that make up the splendor of Rocky Mountain National Park are included in the wilderness that would be designated by this bill.

The features of these lands and waters that make Rocky Mountain National Park a true gem in our national parks system also make it an outstanding wilderness candidate.

The wilderness boundaries are carefully located to assure continued access for use of existing roadways, buildings and developed areas, privately owned land, and areas where additional facilities and roadwork will improve park management and visitor services. In addition, specific provisions are included to assure that there will be no adverse effects on continued use of existing water facilities.

This bill is based on National Park Service recommendations, prepared more than 25 years ago and presented to Congress by President Richard Nixon. It seems to me that, in that time, there has been sufficient study, consideration, and refinement of those recommendations so that Congress can proceed

with this legislation. I believe that this bill constitutes a fair and complete proposal, sufficiently providing for the legitimate needs of the public at large and all interested groups, and deserves to be enacted in this form.

It took more than a decade before the Colorado delegation and the Congress were finally able, in 1993, to pass a statewide national forest wilderness bill. Since then, action has been completed on bills designating wilderness in the Spanish Peaks area of the San Isabel National Forest as well as in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, the Gunnison Gorge, the Black Ridge portion of the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area, and the James Peak area of the Arapaho, Roosevelt National Forests.

We now need to continue making progress regarding wilderness designations for deserving lands, including other public lands in our state that are managed by the Bureau of Land Management. And the time is ripe for finally resolving the status of the lands within Rocky Mountain National Park that are dealt with in the bill I am introducing today.

All Coloradans know that the question of possible impacts on water rights can be a primary point of contention in Congressional debates over designating wilderness areas. So, it's very important to understand that the question of water rights for Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness is entirely different from many considered before, and is far simpler.

To begin with, it has long been recognized under the laws of the United States and Colorado, including a decision of the Colorado Supreme Court, that Rocky Mountain National Park already has extensive federal reserved water rights arising from the creation of the national park itself.

This is not, so far as I have been able to find out, a controversial decision, because there is a widespread consensus that there should be no new water projects developed within Rocky Mountain National Park. And, since the park sits astride the continental divide, there's no higher land around from which streams flow into the park, so there is no possibility of any upstream diversions. And it's important to emphasize that in any event water rights associated with wilderness would amount only to guarantees that water will continue to flow through and out of the park as it always has. This preserves the natural environment of the park, but it doesn't affect downstream water use.

The bottom line is that once water leaves the park, it will continue to be available for diversion and use under Colorado law regardless of whether or not lands within the park are designated as wilderness.

These legal and practical realities are reflected in my bill—as in my predecessor's—by inclusion of a finding that because the park already has these extensive reserved rights to water, there is no need for any additional reservation of such right, and an explicit disclaimer that the bill affects any such reservation.

Some may ask, why should we designate wilderness in a national park? Isn't park protection the same as wilderness, or at least as good? The answer is that the wilderness designation will give an important additional level of protection to most of the park.

Our national park system was created, in part, to recognize and preserve prime examples of outstanding landscape. At Rocky

Mountain National Park in particular, good Park Service management over the past 83 years has kept most of the park in a natural condition. And all the lands that are covered by this bill are currently being managed, in essence, to protect their wilderness character. Formal wilderness designation will no longer leave this question to the discretion of the Park Service, but will make it clear that within the designated areas there will never be roads, visitor facilities, or other manmade features that interfere with the spectacular natural beauty and wildness of the mountains.

This kind of protection is especially important for a park like Rocky Mountain, which is relatively small by western standards. As nearby land development and alteration has accelerated in recent years, the pristine nature of the park's backcountry becomes an increasingly rare feature of Colorado's landscape.

Further, Rocky Mountain National Park's popularity demands definitive and permanent protection for wild areas against possible pressures for development with the park. While only about one tenth the size of Yellowstone National Park, Rocky Mountain sees nearly the same number of visitors each year as does our first national park.

At the same time, designating these carefully selected portions of Rocky Mountain as wilderness will make other areas, now restricted under interim wilderness protection management, available for overdue improvements to park roads and visitor facilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, this bill will protect some of our nation's finest wild lands. It will protect existing rights. It will not limit any existing opportunity for new water development. And it will affirm our commitment in Colorado to preserving the very features that make our State such a remarkable place to live. So, I think the bill deserves prompt enactment.

I am attaching a fact sheet that outlines the main provisions of this bill:

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK WILDERNESS
ACT

Rocky Mountain National Park

Rocky Mountain National Park, one of the nation's most visited parks, possesses some of the most pristine and striking alpine ecosystems and natural landscapes in the continental United States. This park straddles the Continental Divide along Colorado's northern Front Range. It contains high altitude lakes, herds of bighorn sheep and elk, glacial cirques and snow fields, broad expanses of alpine tundra, old-growth forests and thundering rivers. It also contains Longs Peak, one of Colorado's 54 fourteen thousand-foot peaks.

The Bill

The bill is based on one introduced by Rep. UDALL in the 106th and 107th Congresses and similar legislation proposed by former Congressman David Skaggs and others previously. It would:

designate about 249,562 acres within Rocky Mountain National Park, or about 94 percent of the Park, as wilderness, including Longs Peak—the areas included is based on the recommendations prepared over 25 years ago by President Nixon with some revisions in boundaries to reflect acquisitions and other changes since that recommendation was submitted

designate about 1,000-acres as potential wilderness until non-conforming structures are removed

provide that if non-federal inholdings within the wilderness boundaries are acquired by the United States, they will become part of the wilderness and managed accordingly

The bill would NOT:

create a new federal reserved water right; instead, it includes a finding that the Park's existing federal reserved water rights, as decided by the Colorado courts, are sufficient

include certain lands in the Park as wilderness, including Trail Ridge and other roads used for motorized travel, water storage and conveyance structures, buildings, developed areas of the Park, some private inholdings

Existing Water Facilities

Boundaries for the wilderness are drawn to exclude existing storage and conveyance structures assuring continued use of the Grand River Ditch and its right-of-way, the east and west portals of the Adams Tunnel and gauging stations of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, Long Draw Reservoir, and lands owned by the St. Vrain & Left Hand Water Conservancy District—including Copeland Reservoir.

The bill includes provisions to make clear that its enactment will not impose new restrictions on already allowed activities for the operation, maintenance, repair, or reconstruction of the Adams Tunnel, which diverts water under Rocky Mountain National Park (including lands that would be designated by the bill) or other Colorado-Big Thompson Project facilities, and that additional activities for these purposes will be allowed should they be necessary to respond to emergencies and subject to reasonable restrictions.

RECOGNITION OF J. MICHAEL
DORSEY

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 5, 2003

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, we rise to thank and recognize J. Michael Dorsey for his outstanding service and contributions to the House community during his tenure beginning January 1, 1995.

Because of his distinguished legal career, Mike was asked to serve as the first Administrative Counsel in the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer when the new House organization was created in 1995. An ambitious agenda to change the way the House operated was proposed, and Mike was instrumental in accomplishing many of those goals.

A solid leader, Mike demonstrated the ability to effectively juggle many competing priorities. In addition to keeping the CAO legally and ethically pure, he also served as interim Associate Administrator for the Office of Procurement and Human Resources. He initiated and contributed to business process improvements, provided legal guidance to House staff, developed policies, and applied his expertise in the areas of contracting, negotiation, and legal disputes.

Most recently, Mike's professionalism, patriotism, and steadfastness served the House well under historic and trying times. He met the challenges of September 11, 2001, the subsequent anthrax evacuation of House offices, and on-going mail process activities with patience, excellence, and reasoned judgment.

Mike is a team player, known for his integrity, fairness, principles, dedication, and solid steady demeanor. He has made a difference—he has made the House a better place. As he leaves us on February 14, he will continue to serve our nation in areas of critical