

therefore illegal. Late last month, however, a U.S. appeals court in Richmond reversed the lowercourt ruling that would have ended the practice of filling rivers and streams with waste rock and dirt from mountaintop removal coal mining operations.

There are far-reaching consequences of the Appellate Court's decision. The Administration's new definition of "fill material" is an attempt to legalize the dumping of countless tons of mountaintop removal coal mining waste—a practice that has already burned and destroyed 1,000 miles of Appalachian streams. The new rule also expressly allows hardrock mining waste, construction and demolition debris, and other types of harmful wastes to be dumped into rivers and streams across the country. Given the possible presence of contaminants such as heavy metals, asbestos, or harmful organic compounds in some of these wastes, the implementation of the new definition of "fill material" in the Corps' regulations could have disastrous impacts even beyond the harm caused by burying streams and other waterways. Congress meant for the Clean Water Act to protect our nation's water resources; the Administrative rule change endangers those resources.

The dangerous precedent set by the Administration's rule change undermines the Clean Water Act. This is why I have proposed the Clean Water Protection Act. This legislation would establish a definition for fill material in the Clean Water Act, such that no wastes could be used to bury our streams and wetlands. Creating a statutory definition of "fill material" that expressly excludes waste materials will end the need for further court proceedings and will clarify environmental law consistent with the purpose of the Clean Water Act—to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters.

Clean air and water are not partisan issues; they are issues of vital importance to all Americans. We cannot let the Clean Water Act fade into history as simply a "romantic ideal", but rather we must ensure the protection of our waters, so that our grandchildren have streams to play in and clean water to drink.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to protect the quality and magnificent beauty of our nation's streams and wetlands.

COMMENDING ISRAEL ON THEIR ELECTIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 11, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution extending this body's congratulations to Israel on their recent elections. I stand with my colleagues and commend Israel as it continues to conduct democracy in a region filled with dictatorship and totalitarian regimes.

On January 28, 2003, nearly four million Israelis went to the polls to participate in the country's 15th national election since becoming a state in 1948. The election was Israel's 5th in the last decade, and comes at an extremely critical juncture in the country's short

history. An ongoing conflict with the Palestinians, a looming U.S. war against Iraq, the global war on terrorism, and a struggling Israeli economy all played pivotal roles in the campaign. But when all was said and done, Israelis reelected Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and established a near majority for the Likud Party in the Israeli Knesset. Prime Minister Sharon's victory was especially significant, as it was the first time in 25 years that Israelis reelected a sitting Prime Minister.

As the sole democracy in the Middle East, Israel is the most reliable ally of the United States in the region. I come to the floor today and further express my commitment to a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. Israel has stood by the U.S. in our war on terrorism, and we shall stand with Israel as it continues down the daunting road toward peace and security. Terrorism never has been, and never will be, an ingredient to peace in the Middle East, and the U.S. must stand by Israel in its efforts to protect its borders and its citizens.

Mr. Speaker, each of us has his or her own unique way of expressing our support for Israel and the relationship that the U.S. enjoys with the small Middle Eastern country. Coming to the floor today in support of this resolution is just one way Members can show their support. Traveling to Israel is another. I make my commitment today to visit Israel sometime during the 108th Congress to show my support for the Jewish state, and I urge my colleagues to make similar commitments.

Israel is a place rich with history. It is filled with beauty and its people are filled with kindness and generosity. Members of Congress can make no stronger statement of their support for Israel than to travel there and experience first hand the issues facing Israeli leaders attempting to make peace. I am looking forward to the trip that I am co-hosting over the Memorial Day recess with black and Jewish Members, and I do hope that my colleagues will make similar statements of their support. Only next time, we make them in the streets of a peaceful Jerusalem.

CELEBRATING AFRICAN AMERICAN MONTH

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2003

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus and all the black members of Congress that have served this Nation. As America observes African American History Month, I would be remiss not to remember the giants of this institution who made it possible for me to stand before you today. In the 212 years of Congressional History, there have been only 108 black Members of Congress: 104 elected to the House and 4 to the Senate.

In the great State of Florida there have been five black Members of Congress and I have the distinctive honor to serve as one of them.

I want to commend your attention to the first black Member of Congress elected from the State of Florida, Josiah Thomas Walls.

Congressman Josiah Thomas Walls was the only black representative from the State of Florida before reconstruction. He was born,

probably to slavery, in or near Winchester, Virginia, on December 30, 1842. As a child, Josiah Walls moved to Darksville in what is now West Virginia. Josiah Walls briefly attended the county normal school in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and may have received additional education. As a Congressman, Josiah Walls described his impressions into the Confederate army and his capture by Northern forces at the siege of Yorktown, Virginia, in May 1862. By July 1863 he had entered the Third Infantry Regiment, United States Colored Troops at Philadelphia, becoming a corporal in October. Josiah Walls moved with his regiment to Florida in February 1864. After his discharge in October 1865 he worked at a sawmill on the Suwannee River and later taught at Archer in Alachua County.

In 1867, Josiah Walls was elected to represent Alachua County at the 1868 Florida Constitutional Convention. The county convention of March 1868 also nominated Josiah Walls for the state assembly. He was elected, taking his seat in June. Later that same year he was elected to the state senate from the Thirteenth District and took his seat the following January. Josiah Walls participated in several national conventions held to discuss problems facing blacks. At the Southern States Convention of Colored Men in 1871 he proposed an amendment to a resolution of support for President Ulysses S. Grant, which called on the Republicans to nominate John Mercer Langston for Vice President in 1872.

In August 1870, Florida Republicans nominated Walls for the state's lone seat in the House of Representatives. Walls appeared to win a narrow election victory and presented his credentials to the Congress on March 4, 1871. He accepted assignments to the Committee on Militia, the Committee on Mileage, and the Committee on Expenditures in the Navy Department.

Congressman Walls put forth several proposals and spoke on a variety of subjects. Since he feared public education would receive little attention if it were administered by southern states, he supported a measure to establish a national educational fund financed with money from public land sales. He introduced bills for the relief of private pensioners and Seminole War veterans. He strongly favored expenditures for internal improvements in Florida and supported efforts to grant belligerent status to rebels fighting in Cuba for independence from Spain, which still permitted slavery to exist on the island.

After a disputed election and defeat for renomination to the House, Josiah Walls took an indefinite leave of absence from public service.

Upon his return to Alachua County, Josiah Walls owned and operated a successful tomato and lettuce farm, sawmill and orange groves. He also remained interested in political developments. He slipped into ill health and lost his fortune when a February 1895 freeze ruined his crops. Shortly thereafter he was placed in charge of the farm at Florida Normal College (now Florida A&M University). He died in Tallahassee on May 15, 1905.

As a great writer once penned, "God will not let us fall . . . For our work is good, We hope to plant a nation, Where none before hath stood." Congressman Josiah Walls planted a nation for other African Americans to follow.

Today, I honor him and ask all my colleagues to join me in remembering this politician and great leader from the great State of Florida.

RESPONSIBLE OFF-ROAD VEHICLE
ENFORCEMENT AND RESPONSE
("ROVER") ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 12, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am again introducing a bill to improve the ability of the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to respond to a serious problem affecting federal lands in Colorado and other states.

Throughout the west, and especially in Colorado, increased growth and development has resulted in an increase in recreational use of our public lands. These recreational uses have, in some cases, stressed the capacity of the public land agencies to adequately control and manage such use. As a result, areas of our public lands are being damaged.

One of the uses that cause the greatest impacts are recreational off-road vehicles. The results can include: damage to wildlife habitat; increased run-off and sediment pollution in rivers and streams; damage to sensitive high-altitude tundra, desert soils, and wetlands; creation of ruts and other visual impacts on the landscape; loss of quiet and secluded areas of the public lands; and adverse effects on wildlife.

Recreational off-road vehicle use on our public lands should be allowed to continue, but it must be managed to minimize or avoid these problems, by appropriate restrictions and putting some sensitive areas off-limits to vehicle use.

Most vehicle users are responsible—they stay on designated roads and trails, they are respectful of the landscape and they endeavor to tread lightly. However, there are a number of such users who do not obey the rules. Given the nature of this use (large, powerful motorized vehicles that are able to penetrate deeper and deeper into previously secluded areas), even a relatively few who violate management requirements can create serious damage to public land resources.

Yet, in some cases, recreational off-road vehicle users ignore these closures and management requirements. Often times, when these activities occur, the federal public land agencies do not have the authority to charge fines commensurate with the damage that results. For example, under BLM's basic law, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, fines for violations of regulations—including regulations governing ORV uses—are limited to \$1,000. That figure has remained unchanged for a quarter of a century, and does not reflect the fact that in many cases the damage from violations will cost thousands more to repair.

The bill I am introducing today would provide for increased fines for such violations—to \$10,000 or the costs of restoring damaged lands, whichever would be greater. The bill is similar to one that I introduced in the 107th Congress.

The need for this legislation was demonstrated by incidents in several states, including some in Colorado.

For example, in the summer of 2000 two recreational off-road vehicle users ignored closure signs while four-wheel driving on Bureau of Land Management land high above Silverton, Colorado. As a result, they got stuck for five days on a 70 percent slope at 12,500 feet along the flanks of Houghton Mountain.

At first, they abandoned their vehicles. Then, they returned with other vehicles to pull their vehicles out of the mud and off the mountain. The result was significant damage to the high alpine tundra, a delicate ecosystem that may take thousands of years to recover. As noted in a Denver Post story about this incident, "alpine plant life has evolved to withstand freezing temperatures, nearly year-round frost, drought, high winds and intense solar radiation, but it's helpless against big tires."

Despite the extent of the damage, the violators were only fined \$600 apiece—hardly adequate to restore the area, or to deter others.

Another example was an event in the mountains near Boulder, Colorado, that became popularly known as the "mudfest."

Two Denver radio personalities announced that they were going to take their off-road four-wheel drive vehicles for a weekend's outing on an area of private property along an existing access road used by recreational off-road vehicle users. Their on-air announcement resulted in hundreds of people showing up and driving their vehicles in a sensitive wetland area, an area that is prime habitat of the endangered boreal toad. As a result, seven acres of wetland were destroyed and another 18 acres were seriously damaged. Estimates of the costs to repair the damage ranged from \$66,000 to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Most of the "mudfest" damage occurred on private property. However, to get to those lands the off-road vehicle users had to cross a portion of the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest—but the Forest Service only assessed a \$50 fine to the two radio disc jockeys for not securing a special use permit to cross the lands.

Again, this fine is not commensurate to the seriousness of the violation or the damage that ensued, or stands as much of a deterrent for future similar behavior.

These are but two examples. Regrettably, there have been many more such examples not only in Colorado but also throughout the west. These examples underscore the nature of the problem that this bill would address. If we are to deter such activity and recover the damaged lands, we need to increase the authorities of the federal public land agencies.

My bill would do just that. Specifically, it would amend the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act and relevant laws governing the Forest Service to authorize these agencies to assess greater fines on recreational off-road vehicles for violations of management, use and protection requirements. The bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to assess up to \$10,000 in fines, or 12 months in jail, or both, for violations of road and trail closures and other management regulations by recreational off-road vehicles. The bill also would authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, in lieu of a specific dollar fine, to assess fines equal to the costs required to rehabilitate federal public lands from damage caused by recreational off-road vehicle violations.

In addition, the bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to apply any funds acquired from recreational off-road vehicle violations to the area that was damaged or affected by such violations, and to increase public awareness of the need for proper use of vehicles on federal lands.

This would give these agencies additional resources to recover damaged lands and areas that may be exposed to repeated violations.

The bill does not put any lands "off limits" to recreational off-road vehicle use. In fact, it does not affect any specific lands in any way. The bill also does not provide for increased fines for other activities that can damage federal lands. There may or may not be a need for legislation along those lines, but in the meantime I am seeking only to address this one problem.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I met with Chief Bosworth regarding several matters related to management of the National Forests. During our conversation, he said that he considered problems associated with off-road vehicles one of the greatest problems facing the Forest Service.

I agree with the Chief—in fact, I think improper use of recreational vehicles is a problem of growing seriousness throughout the west. My intention with this bill is to help address this problem so that all recreational users of our public lands can have a rewarding, safe and enjoyable experience. Everyone's experience is diminished when a few bad actors spoil the resources and the beauty of our lands. I think this bill can help provide the BLM and the Forest Service with better tools to respond by allowing appropriate recreational use of our public lands while also protecting the resources and values of these lands that belong to all the American people.

For the information of our colleagues, I am attaching a fact sheet about the bill.

RESPONSIBLE OFF-ROAD VEHICLE
ENFORCEMENT AND RESPONSE ("ROVER") ACT

BACKGROUND: In Colorado and throughout the west increased population growth has brought increased recreational use of federal lands. This has made it harder for land-managing agencies to adequately control and manage such use.

Recreational and other use of off-road vehicles (ORVs) can present serious problems. This use should be allowed to continue, but must be managed and controlled to minimize or avoid adverse effects. That involves closing-off some sensitive areas and other regulations.

Improper use of vehicles can result in serious damage to the national forests and the public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This can involve damage to wildlife habitat; increased run-off and sediment pollution in rivers and streams; damage to sensitive high-altitude tundra, desert soils, and wetlands; creation of ruts and other visual impacts to the landscape; loss of quiet areas due to the deeper penetration of off-road vehicles into previously secluded areas of the public lands; and impacts to wildlife from noise and effects on migration corridors.

Currently, the Forest Service and BLM do not always have clear authority to assess fines commensurate with the costs of enforcement and the damage that often results. For example, under the law governing BLM lands, federal officials can only impose up to \$1,000 in fines while the damage that results could cost thousands more to address. The