

Two hundred and twenty-five years ago, the Second Continental Congress decided to use the image of the American bald eagle on the Great Seal of the United States. Since that time, the image of this majestic bird has graced American art, our culture, currency and stamps. It has been the subject of more than 2,500 books, making the bald eagle the most extensively studied bird in North America.

While there were nearly 500,000 on this continent prior to European settlement, this species was particularly devastated by various chemical compounds that caused widespread reproductive failure. In response, the Congress enacted the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the bird was listed on our Endangered Species Act.

From its all-time low of 417 nesting pairs in the continental United States in 1963, extraordinary conservation efforts have saved the bald eagle, and we have witnessed a significant population increase. Today, there are 9,789 breeding pairs, not including the more than 30,000 bald eagles living in Alaska.

By any objective standard, recovery of the bald eagle has been remarkable, but sadly, it is one of only a handful of species that have been recovered under the Endangered Species Act. While it is likely that the Secretary of the Interior will soon make a decision to remove the bald eagle from the Federal list of threatened and endangered species, there is no question that the bald eagle will continue to inspire millions of Americans because it symbolizes the fundamental values of this country of courage, freedom and patriotic spirit.

Under the terms of House Resolution 341, the people of the United States are encouraged to observe American Eagle Day on June 20 and to provide educational information on the value of conserving our Nation's wildlife resources.

I urge an "aye" vote and want to compliment the author of this resolution, freshman Congressman DAVID DAVIS OF TENNESSEE, for his effective leadership in proposing this celebration of American Eagle Day.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I yield so such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID DAVIS), who is the author of the bill.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues on the House Resources Committee for bringing this legislation that I've introduced, along with my fellow Tennessee Members, JIMMY DUNCAN and JOHN TANNER, to the floor of the House today supporting the goals and ideals of American Eagle Day.

Almost 225 years ago, on June 20, 1782, the Second Continental Congress designated the bald eagle as the national symbol of the United States. Since that time, the bald eagle has become a fixture on the seals and marks

of the Federal Government and on our stamps, currency and coinage.

And while the bald eagle has always been such a popular fixture in the hearts and minds of so many Americans, it is difficult to believe that we were very close to forever losing the symbol of our great country.

In 1963, the number of nesting pairs of eagles in the 48 contiguous States had dwindled to a figure of just over 400. As the habitat for the bald eagle solely exists in North America, these figures were extremely alarming and led to the bald eagle being listed as an endangered species for the first time in 1967.

Today, I'm pleased to note that, as a result of the Federal protection laws and through the diligent efforts of so many private conservationists, the bald eagle has made an incredible recovery.

□ 1430

In 1995, the bald eagle was removed from the endangered list to the threatened list, and it could very soon be moved permanently off of these lists as soon as Federal guidelines can be finalized that will forever protect the birds and their habitats.

I have been extremely interested in this issue, not only because of the importance of this as a matter of national concern but also because of my firsthand experience in dealing with a group located in the heart of the First Congressional District of Tennessee that has been working for the last 22 years to save the bald eagle.

The American Eagle Foundation is located in Pigeon Ford, Tennessee, at the base of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This nonprofit group has worked to establish recovery programs to protect the eagle and actively cares for many nonreleasable birds to ensure they live healthy lives.

In addition, they operate the largest bald eagle breeding facility in the world, and they have released hundreds of eaglets into the wild with the support of local, State and Federal officials.

Through the efforts of the American Eagle Foundation and the grassroots efforts of children nationwide, I am pleased to offer this legislation for this consideration. Spaced conveniently between Flag Day on June 14 and Independence Day on July 4, July 20 will give Americans another day in which they can celebrate their patriotism by honoring the unique symbol of our heritage and folklore.

I again thank my colleagues for bringing this legislation to the floor of the House and encourage all of my colleagues on the House to join me in supporting this bill.

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in recognizing American Eagle Day to honor the birds that have symbolized our country's freedom and democracy for centuries. H. Res. 341 encourages all Americans to acknowledge American Eagle Day on June 20, 2007, which marks the 225th

anniversary of the bald eagle's designation as our national symbol.

The bald eagle habitats in Tennessee have been important in the recovery and restoration of this majestic species. I want to particularly thank the American Eagle Foundation and its president Al Cecere for their hard work to protect our American bald eagles. I have had the honor of visiting in my office with Al and Challenger, the world-famous American bald eagle that appears at high-profile events like the Super Bowl to represent the freedoms we enjoy in this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you and our colleagues will join me in supporting H. Res. 341 to celebrate June 20 as American Eagle Day.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 341.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SUPPORT OF CONGRESS FOR THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL HURRICANE MUSEUM AND SCIENCE CENTER IN SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 54) expressing the support of Congress for the creation of a National Hurricane Museum and Science Center in Southwest Louisiana.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 54

Whereas the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road District Board of Commissioners has begun to create and develop a National Hurricane Museum and Science Center in the southwest Louisiana area;

Whereas protecting, preserving, and showcasing the intrinsic qualities that make Louisiana a one-of-a-kind experience is the mission of the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road;

Whereas the horrific experience and the devastation long-term effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will play a major role in the history of the United States;

Whereas a science center of this caliber will educate and motivate young and old in the fields of meteorology, environmental science, sociology, conservation, economics, history, communications, and engineering;

Whereas it is only appropriate that the effects of hurricanes and the rebuilding efforts be captured in a comprehensive center such as a National Hurricane Museum and Science Center to interpret the effects of hurricanes in and outside of Louisiana; and

Whereas it is critical that the history of past hurricanes be preserved so that all people in the United States can learn from this history: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress supports and encourages the creation of a National

Hurricane Museum and Science Center in southwest Louisiana.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 days with which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to begin by commending Representative BOUSTANY of Louisiana for introducing H. Con. Res. 54, supporting and encouraging the creation of a National Hurricane Museum and Science Center in southwest Louisiana.

House Concurrent Resolution 54 expresses Congress' support of the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road District Board of Commissioners in creating and developing a National Hurricane Museum and Science Center in the southwest Louisiana area. Such a center will educate visitors about the devastating effects and rebuilding efforts surrounding the region's recent hurricanes and will preserve history so that future generations may learn from it. We support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 54 and yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Concurrent Resolution 54 has been adequately explained by the majority. I would like to commend Congressman BOUSTANY for his work on this resolution to create the National Hurricane Museum and Science Center.

I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY).

Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank my colleague from Utah and the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands for their comments on this, and I appreciate the committee in allowing this to come to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution. Hurricanes Rita and Katrina forever changed the lives of gulf coast residents. It was not until the 2005 storms that most Americans really began to fully comprehend the potential size, strength and impact of these devastating natural disasters.

We are nowhere near where we need to be as far as educating the public and raising awareness about hurricane preparedness.

Last week marked the beginning of the 2007 hurricane season. Yet despite

intense media coverage surrounding Katrina and Rita, a recent poll of coastal residents conducted by the Associated Press revealed that an astounding 88 percent had not taken any steps to protect their homes against future storms. Sixty-one percent had no hurricane survival kits on hand.

We need to do more to remind the public about the devastation caused by major storms on the level of Katrina, Rita, Andrew and Ivan, as well as teach them about the science behind these phenomena and what we can do to better protect lives and property leading up to a potential storm.

This resolution expresses the support of Congress for the creation of a National Hurricane Museum and Science Center in southwest Louisiana. The goal of this comprehensive center is to interpret the effects of hurricanes on our land, people, culture and government to preserve artifacts and personal histories of those who have suffered and died because of these events, to conduct research and showcase improvements in meteorology, technology, communications and building systems, and also to offer a creative learning experience in the disciplines of math, science, history, geography and social sciences as they relate to catastrophic natural disasters.

The Center will partner with the National Weather Service, the media and other public and private organizations to provide timely and reliable information as it relates to severe weather events and their aftermath.

The Creole Nature Trail All-American Road began working on this project before the 2005 storms. In September, the project was awarded a \$1.3 million Department of Transportation Scenic Byways grant, the largest ever awarded under the Louisiana Scenic Byways program.

Just last week, the board conducted two public meetings in southwest Louisiana to seek community input on the top four sites being considered for the museum and science center. A final site selection is expected to be announced later this month, honoring the 50th anniversary of Hurricane Audrey, a storm that was devastating in my congressional district and took many lives years ago.

The National Hurricane Museum and Science Center will not only serve as a historical center to study the effects that hurricanes have on our coast, it will be a living memorial to attract scholars, students and tourists to the region, a region that's still struggling to recover after the 2005 storms.

Southwest Louisiana is constantly learning how to protect itself from future disasters, and this project will help assist our efforts and our neighbors along the gulf coast and throughout the country in that important effort.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE. I want to thank the gentleman from Utah for yielding.

Across the Sabine River from southwest Louisiana is southeast Texas, and the citizens of southeast Texas are still reeling from the beating that they got from Hurricane Rita in 2005. The hurricane devastated rice farmers who were struggling even before the wind and rain destroyed most of their crops.

It hit the oil refineries in my congressional district and across the gulf coast, which account for one-third of the Nation's domestic oil production, and it brought our fuel supply to a screeching halt. Gasoline prices soared, and citizens can no longer afford to heat and even cool their homes.

Amidst the chaos of Hurricane Rita and its aftermath, lawlessness preyed upon the real victims. Some of those who weathered the storm took advantage of FEMA's incompetence in its attempt to distribute money to those in need. The cheaters took FEMA debit cards and spent them on gentlemen's clubs and brand-new cars. The real victims languished homeless and helpless, waiting for the Federal Government to do something.

The folks in my congressional district can still feel the impact of the hurricane 2 years later. People are still trying to just survive; and, as Mr. BOUSTANY has said, another hurricane season is now upon us. We cannot forget how a few short hours in southwest Louisiana and southeast Texas caused so much destruction. We cannot forget in historical terms Hurricane Katrina or Rita, and we must remember they are not rare events for the gulf coast.

In 1900, an unnamed hurricane was the deadliest natural disaster in our Nation's history. It killed between 10- and 12,000 people in Galveston, Texas. It destroyed most of the buildings on the island, some 3,600. With remarkable determination, the survivors of the great storm of 1900 raised the whole City of Galveston, Texas, 12 feet to protect it from future disasters.

□ 1440

We cannot forget the victims of the past, and we must remember how the victims of Katrina and Rita are still fighting to recover their homes, their towns and their livelihoods, and we must be better prepared in the future.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to rise in support of this resolution offered by my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Louisiana.

The National Hurricane Museum and Science Center in Southwest Louisiana will honor these victims and those of previous hurricanes, preserve their history. It will tell the stories of all the hurricanes of the past, but also encourage new solutions for natural disasters of the future. So I'd like to commend Dr. BOUSTANY for offering this important resolution. It's a long time in coming.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 54, which supports the creation of a National Hurricane Museum and Science Center in Southwest Louisiana. The creation of a National Hurricane Museum and Science Center in southwest Louisiana will serve as a historical reminder for all Americans as well as the rest of the world of the importance of disaster preparedness.

We must not forget the depths of the devastation and despair of Hurricane Katrina that resulted from the lack of proactive disaster planning and preparedness. Hurricane Katrina was the costliest and one of the deadliest hurricanes in the history of the United States. It was the sixth-strongest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded and the third-strongest hurricane on record that made landfall in the United States. Katrina formed on August 23 during the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season and caused devastation along much of the north-central Gulf Coast of the United States. Most notable in media coverage were the catastrophic effects on the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, and in coastal Mississippi. Due to its sheer size, Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast as far as 100 miles from the storm's epicenter.

Mr. Speaker, the images of the detriment and devastation remain deeply etched in my mind and much of the remnants of the tragedy still remain in those communities today. The storm surge caused severe and catastrophic damage along the Gulf coast, devastating the cities of Bay St. Louis, Waveland, Biloxi/Gulfport in Mississippi, Mobile, Alabama, and Slidell, Louisiana and other towns in Louisiana. Levees separating Lake Pontchartrain and several canals from New Orleans were breached a few days after Hurricane Katrina had subsided, subsequently flooding 80% of the city and many areas of neighboring parishes for weeks. In addition, severe wind damage was reported well inland.

Although we continue to mourn the loss of the thousands of victims who perished in Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, we must still push forward to gain knowledge and insight about these disastrous hurricanes and their effects on the public. The Hurricane Center has the potential to provide a great source of educational service to the American public as concerns about the rapidly changing climate in hurricane-prone regions rise.

The Hurricane Center will not only educate but also motivate the young and the old in the fields of meteorology, environmental science, sociology, conservation, economics, history, communications, and engineering. In addition, the Hurricane Center can benefit everyone by providing resources that inform the public on preparing, surviving and recovering from natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina. Hopefully, this will enable us to avoid such needless and devastating results as those from Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath.

Examining technology, engineering, and preservation of natural barriers all can help to reduce the impact of hurricanes. It is only appropriate that the effects of hurricanes and the rebuilding efforts be captured in a comprehensive center such as a National Hurricane Museum and Science Center to interpret the effects of hurricanes in and outside of Louisiana. For these reasons, I strongly support H. Con. Res. 54 and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the creation of a Museum and Science Center that will serve to remind and

educate Americans about the importance of hurricane disaster preparedness.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 54.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 390) recognizing the importance of the Ouachita National Forest on its 100th anniversary.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 390

Whereas on December 18, 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt created by proclamation the Arkansas National Forest on reserved public domain lands south of the Arkansas River;

Whereas on April 29, 1926, President Calvin Coolidge issued an Executive Order to change the name of the Arkansas National Forest to the Ouachita National Forest to reflect both the name of the mountains embraced by the national forest and the name of the principal river which drains the national forest;

Whereas Ouachita is the French spelling of a Native American word meaning "good hunting ground";

Whereas the Ouachita National Forest today encompasses approximately 1.8 million acres in Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma and offers a variety of recreation areas, scenic areas, wilderness areas, historic resources, and timber and other forest products to the Nation; and

Whereas the Ouachita National Forest is the largest and oldest national forest in the southern region of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That on the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Ouachita National Forest, the House of Representatives recognizes the important contributions of the Ouachita National Forest to the success of the United States in conserving the environment and ensuring that our natural resources remain sources of pride for our citizens, our communities, and our Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) and the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CANNON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise

and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 390 was introduced by my colleague, the gentleman from Arkansas, Representative Mike Ross.

The bill would express recognition by the House of Representatives of the importance of the Ouachita National Forest on its centennial.

The Ouachita is the largest and the oldest national forest in the southern region of the United States.

On December 18, 1907 President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed the establishment of what he called Arkansas National Forest. Nineteen years later, by Executive order, President Calvin Coolidge changed the name of the forest to the Ouachita National Forest, reflecting the name of both the local mountains and the main river running through the forest.

The forest encompasses six wilderness areas, seven scenic areas and 11 shooting ranges, as well as 35 recreational areas, including the 26,445-acre Winding Stair National Recreation Area.

Mr. Speaker, Ouachita is a noteworthy unit of our National Forest System, and it is appropriate that we take this action today to celebrate the forest's centennial.

I want to commend and congratulate my colleague, Representative ROSS, for his commitment and leadership on this matter. We support the passage of House Resolution 390 and urge its adoption by the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CANNON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 390, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Resolution 390 has been adequately explained by the majority, and I urge its adoption.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the sponsor of the bill, the gentleman from Arkansas, MIKE ROSS.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 390, a resolution honoring and recognizing the importance of Ouachita National Forest on its 100th anniversary. I am very fortunate to represent a good part of the Ouachita National Forest within the Fourth Congressional District of Arkansas.

I'm also pleased that the entire Arkansas Congressional Delegation, Congressmen JOHN BOOZMAN, VIC SNYDER and MARION BERRY have joined me in supporting and cosponsoring this bipartisan bill honoring one of our Nation's true national treasures.

This marks the 100th birthday or anniversary, if you will, of one the largest and oldest national forests in the