

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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Hastings Hopes ‘White House Conference on America’s Great Outdoors’ Will Yield Responsible Approach to Public’s Lands

“America’s great outdoors must be open and accessible for public enjoyment and to improve Americans’ lives and wellbeing.”

WASHINGTON D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings (WA-04) released the following statement in advance of the White House Conference on America’s Great Outdoors, scheduled to take place on Friday, April 16, 2010:

“Caring for America’s public and private lands is our responsibility and we must ensure they are available for future generations. America’s great outdoors must be open and accessible for public enjoyment and to improve Americans’ lives and wellbeing.”

“Conservation should be focused upon ensuring that wholesome, family-oriented recreational opportunities are fostered on the public’s lands, just as we should responsibly manage and conserve these lands for the economic benefit of Americans today and in the future. We need to care for our existing public lands by keeping them in good repair and providing welcoming facilities to ensure visitors’ experiences are positive and enjoyable.”

“We must remember that some public lands were set aside specifically for preservation, while others were kept open for many uses that include those that build our economy and create jobs. Proper conservation means taking a balanced approach. The word ‘conservation’ should not be wielded as a broad, overriding excuse to restrict or prohibit Americans’ access to their public lands for pleasure, sport, jobs or better quality of life.”

“The agenda for the conference recognizes the distinction between public lands and privately-owned property. America’s farmers, ranchers and those living in rural communities have long been the most dedicated conservationists in our nation. They not only care for and respect their own lands and those surrounding their communities, but a great many depend upon these lands for their livelihoods. The government must respect this long-standing good stewardship in rural areas by not placing stifling restrictions and limitations on farming, ranching and private property that result in lost jobs and diminished communities.”

“I’m hopeful it is upon such principles that a conversation on ensuring a balanced approach to our lands and conservation can happen, and that this conference is an opportunity for this conversation to begin.”

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