



To: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members
From: Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Republican Staff;
Terry Camp (Terry.Camp@mail.house.gov) and Chandler Guy
(Chandler.Guy@mail.house.gov)
Date: May 24, 2021
Subject: Legislative Hearing on Four NPS Bills

The Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands will hold a legislative hearing on four bills: H.R. 1664 (Rep. Veasey), Medal of Honor Commemorative Work; H.R. 1931 (Rep. Matsui), Japanese Confinement Education Grants; H.R. 2278 (Rep. Connolly), September 11th National Memorial Trail; and H.R. 2444 (Rep. González-Colón), Fort San Gerónimo National Affiliated Area on **Thursday, May 27, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. (EDT)** via Cisco WebEx.

Member offices are requested to notify Terry Camp **no later than Monday, May 24, at 4:30 p.m. (EDT)**, if their Member intends to participate in person in the hearing room or remotely from his/her laptop from another location. Submissions for the hearing record must be submitted through the Committee's electronic repository at HNRCDocs@mail.house.gov. Please contact David DeMarco (David.DeMarco@mail.house.gov) or Everett Winnick (EverettWinnick@mail.house.gov) should any technical difficulties arise.

I. KEY MESSAGES

- Despite Congress providing the National Park Service (NPS) and other federal land management agencies with \$9.5 billion over the next five years to reduce maintenance backlogs, the NPS will continue to face enormous amounts of deferred maintenance for years to come.
- Each of the bills on this hearing rely on the work of private, State, and local entities to preserve and commemorate our past.
- Establishing national affiliated areas is a cost-effective way to preserve important historic and cultural sites without placing them under federal ownership or management.

II. WITNESSES

Panel I

- **Representative Marc Veasey**, Texas, 33rd District
- **Representative Doris Matsui**, California, 6th District
- **Representative Gerald Connolly**, Virginia, 11th District
- **Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González-Colón**, Puerto Rico At-Large

Panel II:

- **Ms. Joy Beasley**, Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science, National Park Service

Panel III

- **Mr. Juan Vera-Vega**, State Underwater Archeologist, Council of Underwater Archeology, Institute of Puerto Rican Culture [*Republican Witness*]
- **Lieutenant Colonel William Swenson**, Director, National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation
- **Mr. Floyd Mori**, Former National Executive Director of the Japanese American Citizens League
- **Mr. David Brickley**, Founder and President Emeritus of the September 11th National Memorial Trail Alliance

III. BACKGROUND

[H.R. 1664 \(Veasey\)](#)

The Medal of Honor is our nation's highest medal for valor in combat awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces. The medal was first authorized in 1861 for U.S. Navy Sailors and Marines, and the following year for U.S. Army Soldiers.¹ Since then, more than 3,400 Medals of Honor have been awarded to members of all Department of Defense services and the Coast Guard.² Medals of Honor are awarded sparingly, and only bestowed upon the bravest of the brave. Their courage and valor in combat must be well documented.³

H.R. 1664 would authorize the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work, such as a monument or memorial, on federal land in the District of Columbia or its environs to recognize Medal of Honor recipients. The bill requires the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to follow the standard legal framework established by the Commemorative Works Act for the placement of commemorative works on federal land in the District of Columbia. Further it prohibits the use of federal funds for the commemorative work, and requires the Foundation to follow a process to ensure that

¹ History of the Medal of Honor, Medal of Honor - United States Army (2020), <https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/history.html> (last visited May 17, 2021).

² Id.

³ Id.

the Memorial is appropriately designed, constructed, and located, and that sufficient funds are provided to the NPS for maintenance. Under the Commemorative Works Act, all authorized commemorative works are provided a seven-year period to complete the work unless the group has a construction permit or an extension is granted by Congress or by the Secretary of the Interior. **Staff contact: Terry Camp (x67736).**

H.R. 1931 (Matsui)

In February 1942, just two months following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 (later enforced through P.L. 77-503) forcibly removing tens of thousands of Japanese Americans, including nearly 70,000 American citizens, from the West Coast to ten relocation centers further inland during World War II.⁴ These Japanese Americans were imprisoned without trial, forced to relocate to some of the most desolate places in the country with what little personal belongings they could carry.⁵ Relocation center sites included Tule Lake, California; Minidoka, Idaho; Manzanar, California; Topaz, Utah; Jerome, Arkansas; Heart Mountain, Wyoming; Poston, Arizona; Gila River Reservation, Arizona; Granada, Colorado; and Rohwer, Arkansas.⁶ In the internment camps, four or five families, with their sparse collections of clothing and possessions, lived in shared tar-papered army-style barracks for nearly three years or more until the end of the war.⁷

In recent decades, Congress and several Presidential Administrations have preserved the remnants of Japanese confinement sites through various means, including through NPS designation, National Historic Landmark and National Register of Historic Places designations, and grants to outside organizations to preserve non-federally owned sites. Public Law 109-441 established the Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant program, which authorized up to \$38 million for the entire life of the grant program to protect, restore, and acquire historic sites.

H.R. 1931 would establish a new competitive grant program to award grants to Japanese American history museums to educate individuals in the United States on the historical importance of Japanese American confinement during World War II. The grant program includes priority consideration criteria, which seems to have the goal of funneling money toward a single museum, possibly the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California.⁸ Additionally, the bill permanently reauthorizes the JACS grant program within the NPS and authorizes \$38 million to be appropriated each year in perpetuity. Republicans have concerns with permanently authorizing the JACS grant program as well as with the dramatic increase in the authorization amount. The original law provided \$38 million for the entire life of the program, as opposed to the \$38 million annually as written in this proposed legislation. **Staff contact: Terry Camp (x67736)**

⁴ Japanese-American Internment During World War II, National Archives and Records Administration (2020), <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/japanese-relocation> (last visited May 17, 2021).

⁵ Id.

⁶ Id.

⁷ Id.

⁸ <https://www.janm.org/>

[H.R. 2278 \(Connolly\)](#)

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Several memorials have been established nationwide to honor the victims and first responders who perished in the attacks. This includes the National 9/11 Pentagon memorial in Virginia, the Flight 93 National Memorial in Pennsylvania, and the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York. In 2002, the September 11th National Patriot Trail Alliance formed with the purpose of creating a trail to connect the three primary memorial sites. The group first received assistance from the NPS in 2012 via the Rivers, Trail and Conservation Assistance Program.⁹ Since then, the group has received support in the form of assistance or donations from federal, State and local governments, and private entities to complete the trail.¹⁰

H.R. 2278 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to designate a memorial trail approximately 1,300 miles in length to link the three existing memorials. The tour route will intersect Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. and be administered by the NPS. Roughly fifty percent of the trail is developed roadway, meaning those portions will be shared with vehicles.¹¹ ***Staff contact: Terry Camp (x67736).***

[H.R. 2444 \(González-Colón\)](#)

Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón is a small, two-level, stone masonry fort located at the easternmost point of the islet of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Part of the massive fortification system built by Spanish military engineers between the 16th and 19th centuries to protect San Juan from foreign invasions, Fort San Gerónimo became a centerpiece of the city's first line of defense and played a crucial role in the 1797 Battle of San Juan.¹² The British siege on San Juan in 1797 was the last attack on Puerto Rico by a major European power, underscoring Fort San Gerónimo's historic significance and key strategic role. The fort was rebuilt in 1799, largely to its original design, and continued to be used as a Spanish military post in the 19th century.¹³ After Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory in 1898, the U.S. Navy used Fort San Gerónimo as a military post until 1921. Following the U.S. Navy's usage, the fort was transferred into private ownership, and was eventually acquired by Puerto Rico in 1949.¹⁴ Today, Fort San Gerónimo is owned and managed by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, a State government agency in Puerto Rico. The site is the sole

⁹ David Brickley, History of the 9/11 National Memorial Trail 9/11 TRAIL, <https://www.911trail.org/our-history.html> (last visited May 17, 2021).

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ Uriah Kiser, Connolly pushes effort to federalize 9/11 memorial trail Potomac Local News (2021), <https://potomaclocal.com/2021/03/31/connolly-pushes-effort-to-federalize-9-11-memorial-trail/> (last visited May 17, 2021).

¹² Special Resource Study / Boundary Study Fort San Gerónimo and Other Related Resources (2020), <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=522&projectID=32695&documentID=102615> (last visited May 17, 2021).

¹³ Id. at 34.

¹⁴ Id.

surviving fortification on the Island and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

H.R. 2444 would establish Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón as an affiliated area of the National Park System. Affiliated areas are sites that are managed and owned by nonfederal entities but for which the NPS provides technical or financial assistance under the terms of a formal agreement. In 2020, the NPS published a special resource study that found that Fort San Gerónimo is nationally significant, met suitability criteria, and had strong public support to enhance the interpretation and preservation of the site. Given this, the NPS concluded that there was potential for Fort San Gerónimo to be considered as an affiliated area in the future.¹⁵ Designating Fort San Gerónimo as an affiliated area this year is particularly timely as the City of San Juan is commemorating the 500th anniversary of its founding. *Staff contact: Terry Camp (x67736).*

IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & ANALYSIS

[H.R. 1664 \(Veasey\)](#)

- Authorizes the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs to honor the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless service, and sacrifice displayed by Medal of Honor recipients.
- Requires compliance with the standards of the Commemorative Works Act.
- Prohibits federal funds from being used to pay any expense related to the establishment of the commemorative work.
- Makes clear that the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation shall be solely responsible for acceptance of contributions for, and payment of the expenses of, establishing the commemorative work.

[H.R. 1931 \(Matsui\)](#)

- Establishes a new competitive grant program that provides \$2 million annually from FY22 - FY26 to award a grant to a Japanese American museum for education and interpretation relating to the Japanese American confinement in World War II.
- Requires grant awardees to submit a report to the Secretary of the Interior and Congress that specifies the amount of grant funds obligated, any purposes for which the funds were obligated, and any other information that the Secretary of the Interior may require.
- Amends current law to permanently authorize the JACS grant program at \$38 million per year.

[H.R. 2278 \(Connolly\)](#)

- Designates 1,300 miles as the September 11th National Memorial Trail Route (Trail) as a unit of the National Park System.
- Directs the Secretary of the Interior to provide educational materials about the Trail.

¹⁵ Id.

- Directs the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate with other federal agencies, State and local governments, and nonprofit organizations.
- Directs the Secretary of the Interior to adopt an official symbol to mark the Trail as well as guidelines for how the symbol may be used.
- Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior, with the consent of the landowner, to designate properties, facilities, and programs as an official stop along the Trail relating to the attacks of September 11th.
- Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements and memorandums of understanding, and provide both technical and financial assistance, to governments and private entities.

H.R. 2444 (González-Colón)

- Establishes Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón as an affiliated area of the National Park System with the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture serving as the management entity.
- Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide technical assistance and enter into cooperative agreements with the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture for the purpose of providing financial assistance for the marketing, marking, interpretation, and preservation of the affiliated area.
- Clarifies that the Secretary of the Interior is not authorized to acquire property at the affiliated area or to assume overall financial responsibility for the operation, maintenance, or management of the affiliated area.
- Requires the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, to develop a management plan for the affiliated area and to submit the plan for review by Congress within three years of funds being made available.
- Clarifies that the designation will not affect land use rights of private property owners adjacent to the site and that no buffer zones are created through the designation as an affiliated area.

V. COST

None of the bills on this hearing have received a Congressional Budget Office cost analysis.

VI. ADMINISTRATION POSITION

The Administration's position on each of these bills is unknown at this time.

VII. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)

H.R. 1931 (Matsui) [Ramseyer](#)