

STATEMENT OF PEGGY O'DELL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS ON H.R. 2490, A BILL TO AMEND THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A STUDY OF THE CASCADIA MARINE TRAIL

December 2, 2011

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and present the Department of the Interior view's on H.R. 2490, a bill to amend the National Trails System Act to provide for a study of the Cascadia Marine Trail.

The Department supports H.R. 2490 with one amendment. However, we feel that priority should be given to the 37 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that have not yet been transmitted to Congress.

H.R. 2490 would amend Section 5(c) of the National Trails System Act by directing the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to conduct a study of the Cascadia Marine Trail for consideration for inclusion in the National Trails System. As a part of the study, the Secretary would be required to coordinate with State and local governments and private entities in the preparation of the study of the Cascadia Marine Trail and to look at nearby sites of recreational, scenic, or historic significance that are not connected by the Cascadia Marine Trail. We estimate the cost of this study to be approximately \$400,000.

The Cascadia Marine Trail is a non-motorized water route within the Puget Sound in the State of Washington. The trail is approximately 2,500 miles long with 55 small campsites placed on public lands. The trail begins near San Juan Island National Historical Park and passes through many coves and waterways south to Olympia, Washington. The Cascadia Marine Trail has been used for over five thousand years by Native Americans, early explorers and today's wind and hand-propelled watercraft enthusiasts. The Puget Sound is the second largest estuary in the continental United States and is home to populations of seals, bald eagles, orca whales and nearly 4 million humans living in the surrounding watershed area.

The Cascadia Marine Trail has a long and significant history in the state of Washington with its designation as a National Recreation Trail in 1994; as a National Millennium Trail in 1999; and as an American Canoe Association Recommended Water Trail in 2005.

A study produced by the National Park Service would not only look at the national significance and eligibility of the trail, but also its feasibility and suitability as a unit of the National Trails System. We envision the Cascadia Marine Trail study to focus on exploring recreational opportunities, defining historical aspects of the trail, and establishing methods for a working relationship with partners in order to identify facilities on adjacent lands that would contribute to the purposes of the trail.

We recommend one amendment. The bill language states that the NPS may study connections to nearby sites of recreational, scenic or historic significance that are not connected by the Trail. We believe those sites should be evaluated as part of this study. Therefore, we propose the bill be amended on page 2, line 8, by striking “may” and inserting “shall.”

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.

**STATEMENT OF PEGGY O'DELL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE
HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, CONCERNING H.R. 2504, TO
ESTABLISH COLTSVILLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK IN THE STATE OF
CONNECTICUT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

DECEMBER 2, 2011

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior regarding H.R. 2504, a bill to establish Coltsville National Historical Park in Hartford, Connecticut, and for other purposes.

The Department supports enactment of H.R. 2504.

H.R. 2504 would authorize the establishment of a new unit of the National Park System at Coltsville in Hartford, Connecticut. The bill would provide for several conditions to be met before the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) may establish the park:

1. Donations of land or interests in land within the boundary of the park have been accepted;
2. A written agreement donating at least 10,000 square feet of space in the East Armory;
3. A written agreement ensuring future uses of land within the historic district are compatible with the park; and
4. Financial resources of the owners of private and public property within the boundary park are reviewed to ensure viability.

The legislation also authorizes agreements with other organizations for access to Colt-related artifacts to be displayed at the park and cooperative agreements with owners of properties within the historic district for interpretation, restoration, rehabilitation and technical assistance for preservation. It provides that any federal financial assistance would be matched on a one-to-one basis by non-federal funds.

H.R. 2504 also provides for the establishment of a commission to advise the Secretary on the development and implementation of a general management plan for the unit. The advisory commission would terminate ten years after the date of enactment of the legislation unless extended for another ten years by the Secretary.

The Secretary designated Coltsville Historic District a National Historic Landmark on July 22, 2008. The manufacturing complex and associated resources constitute the site of nationally important contributions to manufacturing technology by Samuel Colt and the industrial enterprise he founded in 1855 – Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company. It includes, among other resources, the armories where firearms and other products were made, the home of Samuel and Elizabeth Colt, Colt Park, and housing used by factory workers.

Samuel Colt is most renowned for developing a revolver design which revolutionized personal firearms. The Colt Peacemaker, a six-shot revolver, became known as “the gun that won the West.” Colt was a major innovator in the “American System” of precision manufacturing, replacing the practice of individually crafting each component of a product with the use of interchangeable parts. After his death in 1862, his wife Elizabeth owned and directed the manufacturing complex for 39 years, becoming a major entrepreneur in an age when women rarely occupied positions of importance in manufacturing.

During both World War I and World War II, the Colt Firearms Company was one of the nation’s leading small arms producers and made vital contributions to U.S. war efforts. The company applied its interchangeable-parts techniques to a wide variety of consumer products and the Colt complex became an “incubator” facility for other inventors and entrepreneurs. Coltsville is also noteworthy as a fully integrated industrial community that includes manufacturing facilities, employee housing, community buildings, and landscape features that were built largely under the personal direction of Samuel and Elizabeth Colt. Colt, whose labor practices were advanced for their time, attracted highly skilled laborers to his manufacturing enterprise.

Pursuant to Public Law 108-94, the Coltsville Study Act of 2003, the National Park Service (NPS) conducted a special resource study of the resources associated with the Coltsville Historic District. Based on Coltsville’s National Historic Landmark designation in 2008, the study concluded that Coltsville meets the national significance criterion. An analysis of comparability to other units of the national park system and resources protected by others demonstrated that Coltsville is suitable for designation as a unit of the national park system. The study was unable, however, to conclude that Coltsville was feasible to administer at that time due to the lengthy duration of financial issues surrounding the site. In concert with the lack of feasibility, the study was also unable to determine the need for NPS management, or specifically what the NPS would manage.

H.R. 2504 addresses concerns the Department expressed concerning financial issues and questions involving ownership and financing of the Coltsville properties. The special resource study did not conclude that the site absolutely failed to meet feasibility criteria or require NPS management, but rather that it did not meet the feasibility criterion with the circumstances present at the time of the study and that it was impossible to determine, at that time, the need for NPS management of the site. In both cases, the uncertainty of public access and financial viability of the developer of the privately owned portion of the site were at issue.

Since the time of the study, much progress has occurred at Coltsville that holds significant promise for the future of the site and preservation of the resources. During a recent visit to the Coltsville property, the Secretary noted the progress made in the area since the study was completed, while stating that, “Coltsville again promises to be an economic engine, producing jobs and spurring growth in the Hartford area.” Significant re-development has already begun. Several of the buildings have been rehabilitated and are occupied as educational facilities, residential housing, and businesses. Negotiations are underway between the developer and the city on an agreement for the East Armory building, which would serve as the focal point for park visitors. We have been advised the plan has designated benchmarks for the project as well as projected funding for the development.

Under H.R. 2504, the park unit could not be established until the Secretary is satisfied that adequate public access to the site and its financial viability are assured. The authority to review the financial resources of public and private property owners associated with the project is unprecedented in similar park establishment legislation. We believe that these conditions will assure the park is established only when the development is moving forward and the public will have the ability to learn about the manufacturing process that took place at the site. A 2008 Visitor Experience Study developed a range of visitor service alternatives identifying potential operating costs for a very minimal operation estimated at \$720,000 to a more robust operation of \$9.3 million. If a park were established, a comprehensive planning process would assess the actual needs for visitor services and staffing, further defining the park's operational budget. In addition, there could be significant Federal costs in providing financial assistance to restore or rehabilitate the properties, as authorized in Section 4(c)(1). All funding would be subject to NPS priorities and the availability of appropriations.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I would be glad to answer any questions that you or other members of the subcommittee may have.

**Statement for the Record,
Bureau of Land Management
Department of the Interior**

**House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**

H.R. 2745, To Amend the Mesquite Lands Act of 1986

December 2, 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 2745, which amends the Mesquite Lands Act of 1986 in order to renew the exclusive right of the City of Mesquite, Nevada, to purchase certain public lands for development, and allows for proceeds from land sales to be used to implement a habitat conservation plan for the Virgin River and any associated groundwater monitoring plan. The Department of the Interior supports the goals of the bill, however, we believe we can achieve the purposes of the bill administratively, such as through sales under the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) or the issuance of an airport lease.

Background

The Mesquite Lands Act of 1986 (PL 99-548) as amended by PL 104-208, PL 106-113 and PL 107-282, has provided the City of Mesquite, a community located in eastern Clark County, Nevada, between Las Vegas and St. George, Utah, the exclusive right to purchase lands to its west for a replacement airport and related development. To date, the city has acquired approximately 7,700 acres of public lands from the BLM. These authorities expired on November 29, 2011.

In addition to identifying lands for sale, the Mesquite Lands Act, as amended, provides that a portion of the proceeds from the sale of certain parcels be deposited in an account established under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA). It also provides that these funds would be available to pay for, among other things, the BLM's costs to convey land to the City of Mesquite and the development of a multispecies habitat conservation plan for the Virgin River, also in Clark County. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the BLM, has begun work on the plans for the Virgin River. These authorities also expired on November 29, 2011.

H.R.2745

H.R. 2745 renews until November 29, 2020, the City of Mesquite's exclusive right to purchase parcels of public lands identified in the PL 106-113 amendment to the Mesquite Lands Act, which are near lands already acquired by the City. It also allows for the proceeds from previous land sales to Mesquite to be used to implement a multispecies habitat conservation plan for the Virgin River in Clark County and any associated groundwater monitoring plan. It also extends the withdrawal of the lands from all forms of location, entry and appropriation under the public

land laws, including mining laws, and from operation of mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights.

The BLM supports the bill and its goal of providing for the economic development needs of Mesquite, Nevada. Some of the lands that may be acquired through enactment of the bill have been identified for a proposed replacement airport and related development. The legislation will provide additional time for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to complete an environmental evaluation under the National Environmental Policy Act for the replacement airport and to identify mitigation measures, if necessary. The BLM is working with the FAA and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office to develop appropriate measures to mitigate potential impacts to the Old Spanish National Historic Trail as a result of the proposed replacement airport. The additional time provided by this legislation will aid this effort.

Conclusion

That concludes our prepared testimony in support of H.R. 2745. We would be glad to answer your questions.

STATEMENT OF PEGGY O'DELL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES CONCERNING H.R. 3222, A BILL TO DESIGNATE CERTAIN NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM LAND IN OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK AS WILDERNESS OR POTENTIAL WILDERNESS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

December 2, 2011

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 3222, a bill to designate certain National Park System land in Olympic National Park as wilderness or potential wilderness, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 3222. The legislation would designate approximately 4,100 acres of land currently within the boundary of Olympic National Park as additions to the existing Olympic Wilderness. It would also designate approximately 11 acres as potential wilderness.

On October 5, 2011, the Committee on Natural Resources reported H.R. 1162, a bill to provide the Quileute Indian Tribe tsunami and flood protection, with an amendment that deleted the wilderness designation section of the legislation. The wilderness designation proposed by H.R. 3222 is the same wilderness designation that was originally found in H.R. 1162. While the Department is very supportive of the need for providing the Quileute Tribe with land to relocate its housing, offices, and school outside of the tsunami and flood zones, the deletion of the wilderness provisions of the carefully balanced agreement in H.R. 1162 was unfortunate.

On September 15, 2011, the Department expressed its support for H.R. 1162 at a Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands hearing. We noted that the Olympic National Park lands to be transferred to the Tribe are 275 acres of elevated "uplands", of which approximately 220 acres are designated as wilderness, and are located in the park but adjacent to the current reservation's southern boundary. The lands would be transferred in trust to the United States for the benefit of the Quileute Tribe and the boundaries of the reservation and the park would be changed to accommodate the transfer. This transferred upland tract would allow for relocation of tribal buildings outside of the tsunami and flood zones. However, this loss of prime wilderness land was to have been offset by the designation of other lands as wilderness in an agreement among all involved parties including the tribe.

H.R. 3222 would designate approximately 4,100 acres along Lake Crescent as wilderness. The wilderness boundary along the lake would be set back a sufficient distance to allow management of the historic World War I Spruce Railroad grade as the Olympic Discovery Trail, and to allow for operation and maintenance of the existing county road. Another parcel of approximately 11 acres in Boulder Creek would be designated as potential wilderness. When conditions in the Boulder Creek Addition are no longer incompatible with the Wilderness Act, and notification of such has been published in the *Federal Register*, the potential wilderness will become designated wilderness. The Department agrees that tsunami and flood protection for the Quileute tribe is an

important goal, as is resolution of its long-standing boundary concerns. Wilderness protection is also an important goal. This bill, together with H.R. 1162, represents an appropriate way to accomplish these objectives.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you or the other members of the subcommittee may have.