

Musconetcong Wild and Scenic Rivers Hearing

Good morning, I'd like to thank Chairman Pombo and Chairman Pearce for making this hearing possible. The Musconetcong River is a special area of the fifth district of New Jersey. Flowing out of the Highlands region and into the Delaware River, the 42 mile run of the Musconetcong encompasses a beautiful and fragile portion of our state, well-worth all my efforts to protect it.

For centuries, people have enjoyed the river and lived off the fertile surrounding lands. Along the course of the river can be found both Paleo-Indian archaeological sites and historic villages featured in the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, people enjoy the Musconetcong for its hiking, canoeing, and fishing. Over 20 streams along the river support wild trout populations. Residents can also enjoy the wonderful scenic views and witness plants and animals that are now rare in New Jersey.

The genesis for this legislation was a community effort to preserve the river. New Jersey is already the most densely populated state in the union and growing exurbs continue to decrease the remaining wild spaces. While this legislation would not freeze development, it would work to preserve the existing character of the river, a character of rural beauty and recreational enjoyment.

I was proud to introduce this legislation and I would like to thank Rep. Frelinghuysen, Rep. Ferguson, and all the members of the New Jersey delegation for their support and assistance.

I would now like to introduce Susan Dickey, Chairwoman of the Musconetcong Advisory Committee, a study team formed to guide the Wild and Scenic designation study process and to develop a River Management Plan. For 14 years, Susan has worked to form and lead a coalition of municipal officials, landowners and local organizations to secure the Wild and Scenic designation for the Musconetcong river.

She is dedicated to preserving the beauty of the Musconetcong and has dedicated countless hours to this most worthy cause.