

# Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman  
Hearing Memorandum

June 18, 2018

To: All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

From: Majority Committee Staff— Terry Camp and Holly Baker  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on **H.R. 4599 (Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton)**, To redesignate Rock Creek Park in the District of Columbia as Rock Creek National Park.  
**June 21, 2018, 10:00 AM; 1324 Longworth House Office Building**

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## **H.R. 4599, “Rock Creek National Park Act of 2017”**

### **Summary of the Bill**

H.R. 4599, introduced by Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC-At Large), redesignates Rock Creek Park in the District of Columbia as Rock Creek National Park.

### **Witnesses**

*The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton*  
Member of Congress, D.C. At-Large

### **Background**

Rock Creek Park, in the District of Columbia, is one of the largest natural urban parks in the country. The 1,754-acre wooded preserve contains a range of historic and recreational features. Popular visitor destinations include Peirce Mill, the Nature Center and Planetarium, the equestrian center, and numerous hiking trails.<sup>1</sup>

Rock Creek Park was designated in 1890 and “set apart as a public park or pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States,” borrowing language from the Yellowstone Act of 1972—America’s first national park.<sup>2</sup> The park was originally under the joint control of the District of Columbia and the Chief of Engineer of the U.S. Army. It was transferred to the National Park Service in 1933.<sup>3</sup> Rock Creek Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

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<sup>1</sup> National Park Service. Rock Creek Park. “Plan Your Visit.” <https://www.nps.gov/rocr/planyourvisit/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> “An act authorizing the establishing of a public park in the District of Columbia.” 51<sup>st</sup> Congress, Session I, Chapter 1001. 1890. <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/51st-congress/session-1/c51s1ch1001.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Mackintosh, Barry. 1985. “Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History”. History Division, National Park Service.

H.R. 4599 redesignates Rock Creek Park as a National Park and states that any references in law, map, regulations, documents, paper or other records of the United States to Rock Creek Park be considered a reference to the Rock Creek National Park.

Redesignation of Rock Creek Park as a national park would make it the 61st national park in the United States. Although there is no statutory definition of a national park, they are typically considered the “crown jewels” of the park system. National Parks are generally large, diverse areas with outstanding natural features and ecological resources.

### **Cost**

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

### **Administration Position**

The Administration’s position is currently unknown.

### **Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)**