

**Extension of Remarks**  
**By Rep. Frank Wolf**  
**Introduction of The Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area Act**  
**Friday, January 5, 2006**

MR. WOLF. Mr. Speaker. Today I am introducing legislation to create The Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area. Senator Warner will be introducing companion legislation in the Senate.

We remember the words of Abraham Lincoln in his *Gettysburg Address*:

*"We cannot dedicate - we cannot consecrate - we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it far above our poor power to add or detract."*

The Journey Through Hallowed Ground winds its way along U.S. Route 15 from Jefferson's home of Monticello, in Charlottesville, Virginia to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Starting as a trail used by the Susquehannock and Iroquois, America's early history can literally be traced along this corridor. Jefferson's Monticello, Madison's Montpelier, Monroe's Oak Hill and Ashlawn Highland, Zachary Taylor's homes, Eisenhower's Cottage, Teddy Roosevelt's Cabin, John Marshall's home, General George Marshall's home, and Camp David are situated along this route also dotted with numerous Civil War battlefields and sites from the underground railroad.

Designation of this historic route as a National Heritage Area will create a partnership between the federal, state, and local governments as well as local civic organizations to commemorate, conserve and promote the history and resources along the Route 15 corridor between Gettysburg and Monticello. It will help link national parks to historical sites, package tourism opportunities, and provide financial and technical support for sites in the corridor.

This historic corridor includes a significant part of the 10<sup>th</sup> District of Virginia, which I am proud to represent. I echo the sentiments of author and historian David McCullough when he said that **A**[t]his is the ground of our Founding Fathers. These are the landscapes that speak volumes—small towns, churches, fields, mountains, creeks and rivers with names such as Bull Run and Rappahannock. They are the real thing, and what shame we will bring upon ourselves if we destroy them.®

This bill is modeled after the legislation Senator Warner and I introduced which created the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District in the Shenandoah Valley in 1996. Through that legislation, the Civil War battlefield sites in the Valley are being preserved. As with that bill, local, state and federal officials, working along with landowners and business leaders will be able to better promote the history of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground attracting tourism and an appreciation for the unique history of this area.

I would like to thank the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership which has been

working to forge partnerships that span the four states that fall within the proposed boundaries of the heritage area. This group has laid the groundwork in identifying the significant historical properties within such a concentrated area along U.S. Route 15. Dozens of towns and counties along the corridor have offered letters of support as have local civic groups. The Virginia General Assembly also has approved a resolution of support.

This legislation has been painstakingly drafted to ensure that the rights of private property owners within the district will not be usurped. In fact, designation as a heritage area increases the rights of property owners giving them an opportunity to learn more about the significance of their own property and allowing them to market their property as historically significant. Landowners should have the right to choose preservation and protection along with the right to choose to build town homes, malls and highways.

The legislation clearly states: "Nothing in this Act shall be construed to modify the authority of Federal, State, or local governments to regulate land use." Additionally, the only new federal funds accessible to The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership will be for the management of the heritage area.

The bill also specifically prohibits the use of eminent domain and the ability of the management entity to regulate land use. The Government Accountability Office, the nonpartisan research service for the legislative branch, has investigated the effect of a heritage area designation on land use decisions. Its 2004 report states: "Heritage area officials, Park Service headquarters and regional staff, and representatives of national property rights groups that we contacted were unable to provide us with any examples of a heritage area directly affecting--positively or negatively--private property values or use."

This legislation is a local effort to recognize the history and beauty of this region. The organizers are local landowners who have the vision to appreciate that they live among the nation's most precious resources and history. The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership conducted a poll of the residents in the heritage area and found that 81 percent of those polled expressed support for the initiative.

To understand the importance of this initiative, I refer to the words of Thomas Jefferson in his Notes of the State of Virginia:

You stand on a very high point of land. On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain a hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Potomac, in quest of a passage also. In the moment of their junction, they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea. The first glance of this scene hurries our senses into the opinion that this earth has been created in time, that the mountains were formed first, that the rivers began to flow afterwards, that in this place, particularly, they have been dammed up by the Blue Ridge of mountains, and have formed an ocean which filled the whole valley; that continuing to rise they have at length broken over this spot, and have torn the

mountains down from its summit to its base. The piles of rocks on each hand, but particularly on the Shenandoah, the evident marks of their disruption and avulsion from their beds by the most powerful agents of nature, corroborate the impression. But the distant finishing, which nature has given to the picture, is of a very different character. It is a true contrast to the foreground. It is as placid and delightful as that is wild and tremendous. For the mountain being cloven asunder, she presents to your eye, through the cleft, a small catch of smooth, blue horizon, at an infinite distance in the plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass through the breach and participate in the calm below.

The landscape Jefferson depicts has been inspirational to American leaders for hundreds of years. From Susquehannock Indian trading routes and to Revolutionary War battles; from the homes of the founding fathers to the first brave pioneers to make a home beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains; from the Civil War battles which threatened to divide the union to the underground railroad, our nation was forged along this route. From Blue Ridge Mountains to the west and the fertile Piedmont to the east of the corridor the route in many ways exhibits the birth and development of our nation's economy, social movements and political landscape. Perhaps even more significant than the battlefields that cluster along the route are the documents penned in the homes along the corridor. The Declaration of Independence, the Monroe Doctrine and the Marshall Plan have influenced not only this nation, but the entire world.

Every American citizen should take a trip along this route so that they know not only from where our nation has come, but also to where we are going. We cannot stand as a nation unless we know what this nation stands for.

As we come upon the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year of America's birthplace at Jamestown, I urge my colleagues to join with me in supporting this legislation.