

Water Resources Development Act of 2000. The congressionally mandated September 2008 National Academy of Sciences report on Everglades restoration called progress on Mod Waters “dismal.” The report emphasized that Mod Waters is critical to restoration, especially for Everglades Park, and urged the Federal Government to take action to move the project along. This exchange does precisely that.

No funds will be needed for this inholding acquisition. Since so much work has already been done to identify the precise lands and interests in land to be exchanged and these lands have been subject to professional appraisals, we expect the park to be able to promptly complete the necessary administrative requirements to complete the exchange. Time is of the essence in order to facilitate Mod Waters and ensure that the exchange is executed so taxpayers are spared the multi-million dollar costs of purchasing the FPL corridor.

Prior to executing the land trade, the Park Service will prepare the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act document to fully understand the environmental impacts, if any. It is my hope that this exchange will provide a wide array of environmental benefits to the park. The exchange ensures that there will be no electric transmission lines constructed on the existing private right-of-way. The bill also provides the Service with the authority to relocate the Everglades Park boundary to ensure that the lands conveyed to FPL are outside of the park. It is intended that the utility corridor, if developed, not be within Everglades Park. Because many of the agreements have been worked out in advance between FPL and the park, I expect that the Park Service will move expeditiously to complete the land exchange authorized by this legislation.

In a similar vein, the Park Service must also make a determination that the lands and interests along the L 31 canal and levee on the edge of the park are “suitable” for exchange and conveyance to FPL. This “suitability” is already widely acknowledged and recognized by both the agency and the Congress as these peripheral lands are not in the heart of the park and not critical for Mod Waters and water flow restoration. Accordingly, I expect the Park Service to act in a timely manner to render the suitability finding.

I received a letter from Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary, Mike Sole, expressing his support for the land transfer. The exchange is also supported by the Department of the Interior and the Army Corps of Engineers.

I expect the Park Service and FPL to move promptly to complete the exchange. Again, the need for action on Mod Waters means that time is of the essence.

I wish to thank Chairman BINGAMAN and Ranking Member MURKOWSKI for their efforts to incorporate this impor-

tant measure in the S. 22 package. We must move expeditiously to compete Mod Waters and completion of this land exchange will help us achieve these objectives while ensuring that the taxpayers are spared the cost of purchasing a very expensive park inholding from FPL.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for a period of up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF LULAC

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to call the attention of the Senate to the 80th anniversary of the League of United Latin American Citizens, LULAC. As a pioneer of the Latino civil rights movement, LULAC has long fought to better the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of Americans of Latino descent.

Eighty years ago, three organizations in south Texas united to combat the rampant discrimination faced by Mexican Americans. After decades of disenfranchisement, the Latino community in south Texas created a movement for equality that has contributed greatly to enhancing the livelihood of Latinos throughout the United States. LULAC's successes and achievements are many—ranging from the desegregation of schools throughout the American Southwest to improving access to jobs and government programs.

Today, as America's oldest national Latino organization, LULAC boasts continued service to America's Latino population through more than 48 employment training centers, 16 regional centers, and employs its great knowledge of the needs of the Latino community by advising private, nonprofit, and public institutions. Moreover, its unique charter structure allows this organization to disseminate important information and provide worthwhile services via more than 600 councils throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The need for LULAC's services has not subsided through the years and a new generation of Latinos calls upon the institutional strength that this organization can provide. The

challenges we face as a nation can only be resolved by the inclusion of all American communities and I value the sage voice of LULAC on the strategies to empower Latino communities.

The organization's early efforts for political and social inclusion created a strong base which LULAC and other organizations now utilize to improve the quality of life for all American Latinos. I congratulate and commend the League of United Latin American Citizens for their long record of service to the Latino community and wish them continued success.

#### TRIBUTE TO BOURBON HEIGHTS NURSING HOME

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Bourbon Heights Nursing Home, which was recently recognized as the best nursing home in the State in 2008 by the Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities, KAHCF.

Recently, the Bourbon County Citizen in Paris, KY, published a story about the Bourbon Heights Nursing Home receiving this top honor.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the work of the dedicated staff and volunteers at Bourbon Heights, whose continued commitment to the community and to those they care for is extraordinary. I further ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Bourbon County Citizen, Dec. 19, 2008]

#### BOURBON HEIGHTS RECEIVES STATE AWARD

(By Paul Gibson)

The Bourbon Heights Nursing Home was the recipient of the coveted award recognizing them as the best nursing home in the state by the Kentucky Association of Health Care Facilities (KAHCF). There are 247 nursing homes in the association and each one is awarded the large trophy that signifies the top honor.

“There is an extensive application procedure,” said Glenda McKenzie, Activities Director. “And judges come at least twice during the year to personally see the facility.”

“The judges' visit is very thorough,” said Angie Forsythe, Administrator at Bourbon Heights. “They interview each department head and observe the services we provide residents.”

According to Forsythe, the judges also interview staff members, residents, and volunteers to gain better understanding of how the facility operates.

“The judges really wanted to know what makes us unique,” Forsythe said.

The judges discovered, McKenzie said, “that we are a very diverse facility offering a wide range of services to our residents.”

Currently, Bourbon Heights provides independent living in apartments, personal care, nursing care, day care and out patient rehabilitation.

“I think the judges were impressed with the way we take pride in the care we provide our residents,” Forsythe said. “We are like a family here and the staff provides a loving care for each resident.”

She added that Bourbon Heights has very little turnover in staff and that many staff

members have 20 or more years of service. "It is like a family here, the staff cares for the residents and relationships are developed that are important to the residents."

One of the most unique attributes of Bourbon Heights is the support from the community and the volunteers who are in the floors every day providing support and help to the regular staff.

"As I travel around the state attending meetings," McKenzie said. "Other Activity Directors are amazed at the level of community support that we have at Bourbon Heights."

The giant trophy in the lobby is awarded for one year and will be passed on next year to a new recipient. A trophy cup will remain at Bourbon Heights as a reminder of this year's honor of being named the best nursing home in the state.

Bourbon Heights was chartered in 1965 when it opened as a senior care center. It is a non-profit organization. The land is owned by the county and the buildings and improvements are part of the Bourbon Heights Corporation and under the direction of the board of directors that oversee the non-profit organization.

#### CONGRATULATING THE SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I wish to send my congratulations to the San Diego Chargers for the remarkable way that they turned around their 2008 season in the National Football League.

During difficult economic times, as they face hardships and uncertainty, millions of sports fans across America turn to their hometown teams for solace and inspiration.

Few teams this year faced as many hardships as the Chargers, and few teams in any year have overcome adversity with such inspiring tenacity.

Hampered by injuries to star running back LaDainian Tomlinson and other key players and suffering through a series of heartbreaking losses, the Chargers began the 2008 season with just four wins in their first 12 games. With 3 weeks to go in the regular season, they trailed the division-leading Denver Broncos by three games. Though their fans remained loyal and the team remained confident, few outside observers gave them any chance reaching the NFL playoffs.

Over the next 5 weeks, though, the Chargers made an amazing run. Beginning on December 4th, three consecutive San Diego victories and two Denver losses left the Chargers just one game back entering a December 28 showdown with the Broncos.

In the decisive game, the Chargers staged an awe-inspiring offensive display to crush the Broncos 52-21 and win the AFC Western Division championship. They became the first team in NFL history to have been 4-8 and make the playoffs and the first team ever to win their division after being three games behind the leaders with three games to play.

Six days later, on January 3, the Chargers faced a terrific Indianapolis Colts team in the playoffs. In perhaps the greatest NFL game ever played in

San Diego, the Chargers beat the Colts in overtime, 23-17.

Every playoff tournament ends sadly for every team but one. Last Sunday, on a snowy day in Pittsburgh, the mighty Steelers ended the Chargers season.

But nothing can dim the luster of the Chargers' late-season run. Their dramatic turnaround is an inspiration to sports fans everywhere.

Mr. President, I grew up in Brooklyn, in the shadow of Ebbets Field, where baseball fans endured years of frustration with the annual cry of "Wait Till Next Year." When I was in high school, our dream finally came true, and "next year" became this year.

With a talented young team that has triumphed over adversity, the San Diego Chargers can look forward to next year with pride and confidence. I salute the Charger players, coaches, staff, and ownership along with their loyal fans—for a great 2008 season.

#### WHITE MOUNTAIN LAND MANAGEMENT

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to speak briefly about the White Mountain National Forest and the U.S. Forest Service's efforts to manage these lands for the benefit of all Granite Staters. In particular, I wanted to extend my appreciation and support for the agency's commitment to implementing its 2005 management plan for the forest, including the Mill Brook timber harvesting proposal.

It goes without saying that the White Mountain National Forest is a special place for all New Hampshire residents. Drawing millions of visitors each year, these lands have long appealed to those who enjoy the outdoors, while also providing natural resources that support communities across the State. Through balanced, multiple-use management policies, I remain confident that the White Mountain National Forest will remain one of the crown jewels of the National Forest System for generations to come.

As such, I was pleased when, in 2005, the U.S. Forest Service released its new management plan for the White Mountain National Forest. Striking a delicate compromise among stakeholders, it was overwhelmingly supported in New Hampshire and established a consensus-based blueprint for how this natural resource will be managed. I applauded all of the hard work and public outreach that the Forest Service put into this plan and was pleased to coauthor legislation that implemented its wilderness recommendations. Signed into law in December 2006, the New England Wilderness Act designated nearly 35,000 acres of new wilderness in the Forest and strengthened our nation's commitment to land conservation.

The 2005 management plan also included timber harvesting, which is critical for both regional economic activity and wildlife diversity purposes. The

timber industry is one of the largest manufacturing industries in New Hampshire, supporting well paying jobs and local communities, especially in the north country. Carefully managed timber harvesting can also play an important role in maintaining habitats that are critical for certain types of wildlife.

Fully consistent with the 2005 plan and its timber harvesting guidelines, the Forest Service has proposed logging projects which have been subject to environmental review, are limited in scope, and have the support of well respected groups across the spectrum such as the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Appalachian Mountain Club, the National Audubon Society, the New Hampshire Timberland Owners, and the North Country Council. Two of these proposals, the Batchelder Brook and Than Brook Resource Management Projects, have been unsuccessfully challenged by certain environmental groups such as the Sierra Club that do not represent the view of most Granite Staters. Even though they seemed fine with the 2005 management plan when it was released, these groups now want to undo it via lawsuits and other challenges that use up taxpayer resources and stymie economic activity in New Hampshire. Fortunately, the courts have so far ruled in favor of the Forest Service and have allowed these two timber harvesting projects to proceed. With each ruling against these challenges, it has been my hope, as well as the hope of many others in our State, that all parties would now act in good faith and respect the 2005 management plan's timber harvesting guidelines.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case, and it is why I am once more speaking on the Senate floor about the White Mountain National Forest. Once again, we now have the Sierra Club and its allies trying to tie up yet another important timber harvesting proposal, the Mill Brook project. This project, which consists of around 1,000 acres, is wholly consistent with the plan's timber harvesting guidelines. It is also supported by a large number of well respected environmental groups and the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. But this is apparently not enough. Recycling some of the same legal arguments that have proven unsuccessful in the past, the Sierra Club and its friends are trying to thwart the good intentions and popular support of the 2005 plan, choosing the path of antagonism over the spirit of compromise.

Now of course, I recognize that it is within these groups' rights to file an administrative appeal and try to hold things up. And I also recognize that such tactics may appeal to their partisan supporters. That being said, I also feel that these groups' actions are meant to undermine the longstanding consensus approach that New Hampshire has taken to environmental protection and the management of the