
Paul E. Kanjorski, Member of Congress

FLOOR STATEMENT ON
THE CHERRY VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ACT (H.R. 5232)

PAUL E. KANJORSKI
OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MR. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of the bill I introduced, H.R. 5232, the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Act.

Located in the Pocono Mountains of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Cherry Valley provides habitat to more than 75 species of national or regional concern, including several plants and animals listed as either endangered or threatened. These species include the bog turtle and the bald eagle. Monroe County, however, is also one of the fastest growing counties in Pennsylvania, and this development now threatens or will soon encroach upon the habitat of these rare species.

As a result, grassroots efforts to protect these sensitive habitats have gained momentum and now have widespread support within the local community. Rarely in my career in Congress have I experienced such overwhelming local support for a legislative endeavor as I have encountered for the designation of a national wildlife refuge in Cherry Valley.

Designation of a national wildlife refuge has bipartisan support from elected officials, including all three county commissioners, two state representatives, and a state senator. It also has the support of supervisors from all of the townships located in the Cherry Valley area. Moreover, my colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. Dent, has joined me in sponsoring this legislation because he once represented parts of Cherry Valley when he served as a state senator.

Area business owners have also voiced their support for this effort. For example, the Pocono Builders Association, a building industry trade association in Monroe County, passed a resolution in support of designating a Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Moreover, a number of local landowners have already put their land into easements and other conservation arrangements to facilitate the creation of a national wildlife refuge. Voters have also approved initiatives designed to provide the revenue needed for conservation purposes. Designation of a national wildlife refuge would therefore help to coordinate these efforts and provide federal support for conservation of this important habitat.

In order to determine the appropriate land for inclusion in a potential refuge, I introduced H.R. 5232, the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Act, after consulting with my colleagues and determining the best course of action. The bill authorizes a study to be completed by the Fish and Wildlife Service to determine what specific lands are suitable for inclusion in a potential refuge.

The legislation does not authorize the creation of a national wildlife refuge at this time. The bill is intended merely to study areas for their potential for inclusion in a refuge, not to authorize the creation of another refuge. In addition, the study is designed to provide Congress with the information needed to determine if the designation of a wildlife refuge in Cherry Valley is appropriate.

Before closing, I would like to thank my colleague from New Jersey, Mr. Pallone, and my colleague from Maryland, Mr. Gilchrest, for holding a hearing on this legislation. I would also like to thank my colleague from California, Mr. Pombo, and my colleague from West Virginia, Mr. Rahall, for moving this legislation through the House Resources Committee. Their work on this bill is much appreciated.

In sum, I urge passage of this legislation and yield back the balance of my time.
