

**Subcommittee Chair Debra Haaland
NPFPL Legislative Hearing
Opening Statement
May 22, 2019**

- **Thank you all for attending this Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands' legislative hearing on fourteen public lands bills – including many that recognize and honor African American, Native American, and women's history.**
- **I would like to extend my gratitude to the bill sponsors joining us today to testify, and to the witnesses, many of whom have traveled to our nation's capital to speak to the personal and national significance of these proposals.**
- **Many of the bills before us today seek to ensure that our public lands represent the diversity of the American experience.**
- **Federal protections for these sites would honor the contributions, hardships, and history of millions of Americans across time and place.**
- **As we look ahead to Memorial Day, these bills present an opportunity to commemorate fallen heroes – from the battlefields of the American Revolution, War of 1812, and Civil War.**
- **They also memorialize the injustices of our past, such as the bitter legacies of Federal Indian**

Removal and the neglect of African-American burial grounds.

- **These bills elevate the history of the steelworkers, aviation entrepreneurs, tribal leaders, homesteaders, colonists, suffragettes, and many more who have helped shape this nation.**
- **It is especially fitting that we consider a suffrage memorial today, because yesterday marked the 100th anniversary of this Chamber's passage of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote.**
- **And this August is the 99th Anniversary of the ratification of that Constitutional amendment.**
- **We will also continue the important conservation work of this Committee by reviewing bills that protect the natural history of our country's National Scenic Trails and our unique coastal ecosystems from Maine to California.**
- **This Subcommittee now has the opportunity to advance legislation that elevates the causes, principles and voices of Americans that reflect the diverse history of America herself.**

- **I would like to thank the sponsoring Members and witnesses again for being here today. I look forward to hearing your testimony.**