

**Subcommittee Chair Joe Neguse
NPFPL Legislative Hearing
Opening Statement
February 3, 2022**

- **Thank you all for being here today for this Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands’ legislative hearing on seven bills.**
- **The slate of bills that we are considering today demonstrate the many values and uses our public lands support.**
- **The benefits of these efforts span the country, touching communities from Arizona to Ohio, while speaking to the national value of the exceptional resources they protect.**
- **From driving local economies, to preserving and protecting America’s beautiful wilderness and wildlife habitats for future generations, and enshrining and honoring our shared history, public lands benefit all Americans.**
- **I am proud we were able to include my bill, H.R. 6337, the Biking on Long-Distance Trails (BOLT) Act, for consideration today.**

- **This legislation, which I introduced along with my colleague Representative Armstrong of North Dakota, would expand outdoor recreation opportunities across the country, completing long-distance trails and enhancing federal mapping capabilities.**
- **This bill will make bike trails safer and more accessible for all Americans, while providing a boost to our nation’s outdoor recreation economy.**
- **In Colorado’s 2nd Congressional district, the home of Rocky Mountain National Park, we know the benefits of public land and recreation access.**
- **I am proud to lead this effort and hope to see other communities benefit from expanding public land recreation.**
- **I’m also pleased to have Jen Hanks, a professional mountain biker, here to testify on the benefits of this legislation, and I look forward to hearing more from her momentarily.**
- **But today’s focus goes beyond the BOLT Act.**
- **We will review a proposal from Representative Ryan to study the feasibility of adding the Buckeye Trail in Ohio to the National Trails System and will consider H.R. 6451, introduced by Representative Kirkpatrick, which would redesignate Chiricahua**

[Cheer-eh-ka-wa] National Monument as our newest national park.

- **Both proposals would expand opportunities on our public lands: the Buckeye Trail is a backbone of the state, connecting communities across Ohio, while the newly established Chiricahua National Park would provide a place of recreation, and preserve thousands of years of human history, from that of prehistoric indigenous peoples, to Chiricahua Apaches, and even the 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps.**
- **The landscapes, cultural places, and stories we choose to protect reflect our values as a nation. I am proud we are working to protect places like Chiricahua, and that we are working to tell a more complete version of the American story.**
- **Representative Watson Coleman's National Liberty Memorial and Preservation Act – a bill for which I am proud to be an original cosponsor – would extend the authorization of the National Liberty Memorial, a monument to commemorate the enslaved and free African Americans who fought in the Revolutionary War.**
- **Recognizing the bravery, distinction, and patriotism of African American soldiers during the American Revolution will ensure that future generations of Americans honor their sacrifice.**

- **We will hear from Subcommittee member Representative Obernolte on an important bill to memorialize, honor, and interpret the history of Japanese American incarceration during World War II.**
- **This legislation touches an issue I care deeply about – as the lead sponsor of the Amache National Historic Site Act, I have worked to honor the history of internment sites in Colorado, in order to recognize the individuals held there and ensure we do not forget what transpired.**
- **I look forward to working with the Gentleman on his legislation.**
- **Lastly, H.R. 6435, introduced by Representative McMorris Rodgers, would provide a small technical fix to the Secure Rural Schools authorization included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.**
- **SRS is a critical program to support schools, roads, and land restoration in my community and in districts across the West.**
- **While I was disappointed that my Republican colleagues did not support the SRS provision or any of the other important investments included in the Infrastructure bill, I look forward to working**

with all members of this Committee to move this technical fix quickly through our process.

- **With that, I'd like to recognize Ranking Member Fulcher for his opening remarks.**