

**Invitation to Member Day Hearing: House Natural
Resources Committee:
Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. (EDT)**

Good Morning,

I would like to thank Chairman Grijalva, and the fellow Arkansan on the Committee, Ranking Member Westerman for their continued hard work on conservation matters. I would also like to thank the rest of the committee for their continued work in the conservation space, and for allowing me this opportunity to discuss what I believe is of importance to our environment, including continued action on bipartisan legislation that we have all worked on previously, including the Great American Outdoors Act.

I am incredibly proud of the hard work put forth by Ranking Member Westerman and his bipartisan climate proposals. He also represents Hot Springs National Park, which is now celebrating its 100-year anniversary, as it is the earliest federally protected recreation area dating to April 1832.

I have always worked to honor our natural resources, and one way to do this, is proper recognition of conservationists who have made strides in the preservation and upkeep of our Nation's parks, rivers, and forests. One proper way to recognize this, would be when honoring the 50th anniversary of the first nationally

recognized River, by way of President Nixon: The Buffalo National River. One such suggestion is my bill H.R. 2091 – the Dr. Neil Compton Conservation Act. This legislation would ultimately only add to the Buffalo River, while keeping all historical elements intact. Dr. Compton was a preservationist, who worked to ensure Arkansas's natural spaces remained vibrant, and this bill would add his name to the existing Visitor Center at Tyler Bend.

Now, I have long been an outdoorsman and conservationist, and firmly believe in pragmatic approaches to maintain our natural parks, forests, and environment for generations to come. In Arkansas, in the

Ouachita Mountains, there is a Wilderness that takes its name from Flatside Pinnacle, a 1,550-foot rock outcropping just outside the northeast boundary. With your help and guidance in 2019, my bill, the Flatside Wilderness Enhancement Act, expanded the Wilderness and added acres named the Bethune Woods-Flatside Wilderness addition, in honor of former Representative Ed Bethune.

In addition to my Bethune Woods addition, I worked with our senior senator and we included a study of additional forest service land adjacent to Flatside, which was signed into law on February 15, 2019. After receiving this study and the U.S. Forest Services Evaluation regarding

Flatside, I am pleased to learn that other land in this area can be considered an extension of Flatside Wilderness. I look forward to working with the committee to pass legislation to consider these additional acres are preserved for future generations.

Additionally, I would like to give my thank to the committee for their work in funding civil rights grants through the National Parks Service and the Historic Preservation fund. This included Taborian Hall, which was Completed in 1918, and became a centerpiece of the African American community in central Arkansas and, during its heyday, showcased musical greats like Ray Charles, Louis Armstrong, and B.B. King. I commend the

National Park Service for allocating nearly \$500,000 to renovate and preserve this site and recognize its importance in the struggle for equality.

Finally, I would like to again thank this committee and the bipartisan work that is done here, and I sincerely appreciate the consideration given to my bill, H.R. 2091.