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MISSISSIPPI HILLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA ACT

JUNE 16, 2008.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BINGAMAN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 2254]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the Act (S. 2254) to establish the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in the State of Mississippi, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) HERITAGE AREA.—The term "Heritage Area" means the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area established by section 3(a).

(2) LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.—The term "local coordinating entity" means the local coordinating entity for Heritage Area designated by section 3(c).

(3) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—The term "management plan" means the management plan for the Heritage Area required under section 4(a)(1).

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(5) STATE.—The term "State" means the State of Mississippi.

SEC. 3. MISSISSIPPI HILLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in the State.

(b) BOUNDARIES.—

(1) AFFECTED COUNTIES.—The Heritage Area shall consist of all, or portions of, as specified by the boundary description in paragraph (2), Alcorn, Attala, Benton, Calhoun, Carroll, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, DeSoto, Grenada, Holmes, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Lowndes, Marshall, Monroe, Montgomery, Noxubee,

Oktibbeha, Panola, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Webster, Winston, and Yalobusha Counties in the State.

(2) BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION.—The Heritage Area shall have the following boundary description:

(A) traveling counterclockwise, the Heritage Area shall be bounded to the west by U.S. Highway 51 from the Tennessee State line until it intersects Interstate 55 (at Geeslin Corner approximately ½ mile due north of Highway Interchange 208);

(B) from this point, Interstate 55 shall be the western boundary until it intersects with Mississippi Highway 12 at Highway Interchange 156, the intersection of which shall be the southwest terminus of the Heritage Area;

(C) from the southwest terminus, the boundary shall—

(i) extend east along Mississippi Highway 12 until it intersects U.S. Highway 51;

(ii) follow Highway 51 south until it is intersected again by Highway 12;

(iii) extend along Highway 12 into downtown Kosciusko where it intersects Mississippi Highway 35;

(iv) follow Highway 35 south until it is intersected by Mississippi Highway 14; and

(v) extend along Highway 14 until it reaches the Alabama State line, the intersection of which shall be the southeast terminus of the Heritage Area;

(D) from the southeast terminus, the boundary of the Heritage Area shall follow the Mississippi-Alabama State line until it reaches the Mississippi-Tennessee State line, the intersection of which shall be the northeast terminus of the Heritage Area; and

(E) the boundary shall extend due west until it reaches U.S. Highway 51, the intersection of which shall be the northwest terminus of the Heritage Area.

(c) LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The local coordinating entity for the Heritage Area shall be the Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance, a nonprofit organization registered by the State, with the cooperation and support of the University of Mississippi.

(2) BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The local coordinating entity shall be governed by a Board of Directors comprised of not more than 30 members.

(B) COMPOSITION.—Members of the Board of Directors shall consist of—

(i) not more than 1 representative from each of the counties described in subsection (b)(1); and

(ii) any ex-officio members that may be appointed by the Board of Directors, as the Board of Directors determines to be necessary.

SEC. 4. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES OF LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.

(a) DUTIES OF THE LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.—To further the purposes of the Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity shall—

(1) prepare, and submit to the Secretary, in accordance with section 5, a management plan for the Heritage Area;

(2) assist units of local government, regional planning organizations, and nonprofit organizations in implementing the approved management plan by—

(A) establishing and maintaining interpretive exhibits and programs within the Heritage Area;

(B) developing recreational opportunities in the Heritage Area;

(C) increasing public awareness of, and appreciation for, natural, historical, cultural, archaeological, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area;

(D) restoring historic sites and buildings in the Heritage Area that are consistent with the themes of the Heritage Area; and

(E) carrying out any other activity that the local coordinating entity determines to be consistent with this Act;

(3) conduct meetings open to the public at least annually regarding the development and implementation of the management plan;

(4) submit an annual report to the Secretary for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this Act specifying—

(A) the accomplishments of the local coordinating entity;

(B) the expenses and income of the local coordinating entity;

(C) the amounts and sources of matching funds;

(D) the amounts leveraged with Federal funds and sources of the leveraged funds; and

(E) grants made to any other entities during the fiscal year;

(5) make available for audit for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this Act, all information pertaining to the expenditure of the funds and any matching funds;

(6) require in all agreements authorizing expenditures of Federal funds by other organizations, that the receiving organizations make available for audit all records and other information pertaining to the expenditure of the funds; and

(7) ensure that each county included in the Heritage Area is appropriately represented on any oversight advisory committee established under this Act to coordinate the Heritage Area.

(b) AUTHORITIES.—The local coordinating entity may, subject to the prior approval of the Secretary, for the purposes of preparing and implementing the management plan, use Federal funds made available under this Act to—

(1) make grants and loans to the State, political subdivisions of the State, nonprofit organizations, and other persons;

(2) enter into cooperative agreements with, or provide technical assistance to, the State, political subdivisions of the State, nonprofit organizations, and other organizations;

(3) hire and compensate staff;

(4) obtain funds or services from any source, including funds and services provided under any other Federal law or program; and

(5) contract for goods or services.

(c) PROHIBITION ON ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.—The local coordinating entity may not use Federal funds received under this Act to acquire any interest in real property.

SEC. 5. MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to develop the management plan, the local coordinating entity shall submit to the Secretary for approval a proposed management plan for the Heritage Area.

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The management plan for the Heritage Area shall—

(1) provide recommendations for the preservation, conservation, enhancement, funding, management, interpretation, development, and promotion of the cultural, historical, archaelogical, natural, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area;

(2) specify existing and potential sources of funding or economic development strategies to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the Heritage Area;

(3) include—

(A) an inventory of the natural, historical, cultural, archaeological, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area; and

(B) an analysis of how Federal, State, tribal, and local programs may best be coordinated to promote and carry out this Act;

(4) provide recommendations for educational and interpretive programs to provide information to the public on the resources of the Heritage Area; and

(5) involve residents of affected communities and tribal and local governments.

(c) TERMINATION OF FUNDING.—If the management plan is not submitted to the Secretary in accordance with this subsection, the local coordinating entity shall not qualify for additional financial assistance under this Act until the management plan is submitted to, and approved by, the Secretary.

(d) APPROVAL OF MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(1) REVIEW.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the Secretary receives the management plan, the Secretary shall approve or disapprove the management plan.

(2) CONSULTATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall consult with the Governor of the State and any tribal government in which the Heritage Area is located before approving the management plan.

(3) CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.—In determining whether to approve the management plan, the Secretary shall consider whether—

(A) the local coordinating entity represents the diverse interests of the Heritage Area, including governments, natural and historical resource protection organizations, educational institutions, businesses, community residents, and recreational organizations;

(B) the local coordinating entity has afforded adequate opportunity for public and governmental involvement (including through workshops and public meetings) in the preparation of the management plan;

(C) the resource protection and interpretation strategies described in the management plan, if implemented, would adequately protect the natural, historical, cultural, archaeological, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area;

(D) the management plan would not adversely affect any activities authorized on Federal or tribal land under applicable laws or land use plans;

(E) the Secretary has received adequate assurances from the appropriate State, tribal, and local officials whose support is needed to ensure the effective implementation of the State, tribal, and local aspects of the management plan; and

(F) the local coordinating entity has demonstrated the financial capability, in partnership with others, to carry out the management plan.

(4) ACTION FOLLOWING DISAPPROVAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary disapproves the management plan, the Secretary—

(i) shall advise the local coordinating entity in writing of the reasons for the disapproval; and

(ii) may make recommendations to the local coordinating entity for revisions to the management plan.

(B) DEADLINE.—Not later than 180 days after receiving a revised management plan, the Secretary shall approve or disapprove the revised management plan.

(5) REVIEW; AMENDMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—After approval by the Secretary of the management plan, the Alliance shall periodically—

(i) review the management plan; and

(ii) submit to the Secretary, for review and approval by the Secretary, any recommendations for revisions to the management plan.

(B) IN GENERAL.—An amendment to the management plan that substantially alters the purposes of the Heritage Area shall be reviewed by the Secretary and approved or disapproved in the same manner as the original management plan.

(C) IMPLEMENTATION.—The local coordinating entity shall not use Federal funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act to implement an amendment to the management plan until the Secretary approves the amendment.

SEC. 6. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES OF THE SECRETARY.

(a) TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—On the request of the local coordinating entity, the Secretary may provide technical and financial assistance, on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis (as determined by the Secretary), to the local coordinating entity to develop and implement the management plan.

(2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the local coordinating entity and other public or private entities to provide technical or financial assistance under paragraph (1).

(3) PRIORITY.—In assisting the Heritage Area, the Secretary shall give priority to actions that assist in—

(A) conserving the significant natural, historical, cultural, archaeological, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area; and

(B) providing educational, interpretive, and recreational opportunities consistent with the purposes of the Heritage Area.

(b) EVALUATION; REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for the Heritage Area under section 10, the Secretary shall—

(A) conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the Heritage Area; and

(B) prepare a report with recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the Heritage Area, in accordance with paragraph (3).

(2) EVALUATION.—An evaluation conducted under paragraph (1)(A) shall—

(A) assess the progress of the local coordinating entity with respect to—

(i) accomplishing the purposes of this Act for the Heritage Area; and

(ii) achieving the goals and objectives of the approved management plan for the Heritage Area;

(B) analyze the Federal, State, local, and private investments in the Heritage Area to determine the leverage and impact of the investments; and

(C) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the Heritage Area.

(3) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Based on the evaluation conducted under paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall prepare a report that includes recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the Heritage Area.

(B) REQUIRED ANALYSIS.—If the report prepared under this paragraph recommends that Federal funding for the Heritage Area be reauthorized, the report shall include an analysis of—

(i) ways in which Federal funding for the Heritage Area may be reduced or eliminated; and

(ii) the appropriate time period necessary to achieve the recommended reduction or elimination.

(C) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—On completion of a report under this paragraph, the Secretary shall submit the report to—

(i) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(ii) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 7. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act affects the authority of a Federal agency to provide technical or financial assistance under any other law.

(b) CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION.—To the maximum extent practicable, the head of any Federal agency planning to conduct activities that may have an impact on the Heritage Area is encouraged to consult and coordinate the activities with the Secretary and the local coordinating entity.

(c) OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Nothing in this Act—

(1) modifies, alters, or amends any laws (including regulations) authorizing a Federal agency to manage Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Federal agency;

(2) limits the discretion of a Federal land manager to implement an approved land use plan within the boundaries of the Heritage Area; or

(3) modifies, alters, or amends any authorized use of Federal land under the jurisdiction of a Federal agency.

SEC. 8. EFFECT.

(a) PROPERTY OWNERS AND REGULATORY PROTECTIONS.—Nothing in this Act—

(1) abridges the rights of any owner of public or private property, including the right to refrain from participating in any plan, project, program, or activity conducted within the Heritage Area;

(2) requires any property owner to—

(A) permit public access (including Federal, tribal, State, or local government access) to the property; or

(B) modify any provisions of Federal, tribal, State, or local law with regard to public access or use of private land;

(3) alters any duly adopted land use regulations, approved land use plan, or any other regulatory authority of any Federal, State, or local agency, or tribal government;

(4) conveys any land use or other regulatory authority to the local coordinating entity;

(5) authorizes or implies the reservation or appropriation of water or water rights;

(6) diminishes the authority of the State to manage fish and wildlife, including the regulation of fishing and hunting within the Heritage Area; or

(7) creates any liability, or affects any liability under any other law, of any private property owner with respect to any person injured on the private property.

(b) NO EFFECT ON INDIAN TRIBES.—Nothing in this Act—

(1) restricts an Indian tribe from protecting cultural or religious sites on tribal land; or

(2) diminishes the trust responsibilities or government-to-government obligations of the United States to any Indian tribe recognized by the Federal Government.

SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act $10,000,000, of which not more than $1,000,000 may be made available for any fiscal year.

(b) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts made available under subsection (a) shall remain available until expended.

(c) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Federal share of the total cost of any activity under this Act shall be not more than 50 percent.

(2) FORM.—The non-Federal contribution—

(A) shall be from non-Federal sources; and

(B) may be in the form of in-kind contributions of goods or services fairly valued.

SEC. 10. TERMINATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

The authority of the Secretary to provide financial assistance under this Act terminates on the date that is 15 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

PURPOSE

The purpose of S. 2254 is to designate the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in the State of Mississippi.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

The Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area encompasses 30 counties in northeastern Mississippi, the southern most foothills of the Appalachian range. The area has been strongly influenced by the intersection of the distinctive cultures of Appalachia and the Mississippi Delta. The area includes the Natchez Trace Parkway, Tupelo National Battlefield, two national forests and other significant natural areas. It is also home of Elvis Presley's "Graceland" and William Faulkner's birthplace. The heritage area also includes Rust College, which was founded before 1867, and stands as one of the five remaining historically black colleges in the United States.

The bill designates the Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance as the management entity for the heritage area. A concept plan was developed by the Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance in 2004 to preserve the unique cultural, historical, archeological, natural, and recreational resources of the area. Pursuant to S. 2254, the Alliance will develop and submit to the Secretary a formal management plan within three years from the enactment of this Act.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 2254 was introduced by Senator Cochran on October 29, 2007. Senator Wicker is a cosponsor. The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on S. 2254 on April 9, 2008.

At its business meeting on May 7, 2008, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered S. 2254 favorably reported, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on May 7, 2008, by a voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass S. 2254, if amended as described herein.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

During the consideration of S. 2254, the Committee adopted an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment removes the findings section, incorporates language consistent with other national heritage area designations reported by the Committee, and makes other clarifying and conforming changes. The amendment is described in detail in the section-by-section analysis, below.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 provides the short title, the "Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area Act".

Section 2 defines key terms used in the bill.

Section 3(a) establishes the boundaries of the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area.

Subsection (b) describes the boundaries of the heritage area.

Subsection (c) requires that the heritage area boundary map be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

Subsection (d) designates the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area Partnership as the local coordinating entity for the heritage area, and describes the composition of the Partnership's Board of Directors.

Section 4(a) requires the local coordinating entity to prepare a management plan for the heritage area. The subsection also lists the duties of the local coordinating entity.

Subsection (b) describes the authorities of the local coordinating entity.

Subsection (c) prohibits the local coordinating entity from acquiring real property using funds received under this Act.

Section 5(a) requires the local coordinating entity to submit a proposed management plan to the Secretary of the Interior not later than 3 years after the day of enactment of the Act.

Subsection (b) lists the requirements for the management plan.

Subsection (c) provides that the local coordinating entity shall not qualify for additional financial assistance until the management plan is submitted to the Secretary in accordance with this section.

Subsection (d) requires the Secretary to approve or disapprove of the management plan within 180 days after the receipt of the plan.

Section 6(a) authorizes the Secretary to provide technical and financial assistance to the local coordinating entity to develop and implement the management plan. The Secretary is also authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with the local coordinating entity and other public and private entities to provide technical and financial assistance.

Subsection (b) requires that the Secretary conduct an evaluation of the Heritage Area no later than 3 years before the date on which authority for federal funding terminates. The Secretary shall then prepare a report with required analysis and recommendations for the National Park Service, and whether federal funding should be reauthorized for the heritage area. On completion of the report, the Secretary shall submit the report to Congress.

Section 7 describes the relationship of other Federal agencies to the heritage area.

Subsection (a) clarifies that nothing in this Act affects the authority of a Federal agency to provide technical or financial assistance under any other law.

Subsection (b) authorizes the Secretary to provide technical and financial assistance to the local coordinating entity to develop and implement the management plan.

Subsection (c) encourages the head of a Federal agency planning to conduct activities that may have an impact on the heritage area to consult and coordinate the activities with the Secretary and the management entity to the maximum extent practicable.

Subsection (c) clarifies that nothing in this Act modifies authorities of Federal agencies to manage Federal land, limits the discretion of a Federal agency to implement an approved land use plan, or modifies or alters any authorized use of Federal land.

Section 8 contains several savings provisions to clarify that the designation of the national heritage area will not affect private property rights, affect governmental land use regulation, reserve or appropriate water rights, diminish the authority of the State to manage fish and wildlife, or create any liability for property owners within the heritage area.

Section 9(a) authorizes total appropriations of $10 million, with not more than $1 million authorized to be appropriated for any fiscal year.

Subsection (b) requires Federal funding to be matched on a 50:50 basis with funds from non-Federal sources.

Section 10 provides that the authority of the Secretary to provide assistance under this Act terminates 15 years after the date of enactment.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following estimate of costs of this measure has been provided by the Congressional Budget Office:

S. 2254—Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area Act of 2008

S. 2254 would establish the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area (NHA) in Mississippi and designate the Mississippi Hills Heritage Alliance, a local nonprofit organization as the management entity for the NHA. The bill would authorize the appropriation of $10 million, not to exceed $1 million annually, for financial assistance to the alliance and other eligible entities over the next 15 years.

Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 2254 would cost $5 million over the 2009–2013 period and an additional $5 million after 2013. Enacting the legislation would have no effect on direct spending or revenues.

S. 2254 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. This estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

REGULATORY IMPACT EVALUATION

In compliance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee makes the following evaluation

of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out S. 2254. The bill is not a regulatory measure in the sense of imposing Government-established standards or significant economic responsibilities on private individuals and businesses.

No personal information would be collected in administering the program. Therefore, there would be no impact on personal privacy.

Little, if any, additional paperwork would result from the enactment of S. 2254, as ordered reported.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

In accordance with paragraph 4(b) of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following identification of congressionally directed spending items contained in the bill, as reported:

Section	Provision	Member
9	Authorization of appropriations	Cochran

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The testimony provided by the National Park Service at the April 23, 2008, hearing on S. 2254 follows:

STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUSINESS SERVICES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 2254, a bill to establish the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in the State of Mississippi.

The Department cannot support S. 2254 unless the bill is amended to be a feasibility study for a Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in the State of Mississippi. The Department believes that a feasibility study should be required for every proposed national heritage area and the study should be evaluated against our interim criteria before designation. The standards for evaluating areas proposed for national designation are an essential element prior to establishing a national heritage area. A study should be prepared that demonstrates evidence of place-based resources that tell a nationally important story, which has the support and involvement of the local community.

Although the Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance has completed a "Three-Year Strategic Plan for the Mississippi Hills Heritage Area" and an impressive array of partners and potential funders has been assembled, fundamental questions have yet to be formally addressed regarding the region's eligibility for designation as a national heritage area.

The Department is willing to provide advice or assistance in the completion of a study that meets applicable standards and provides Congress with the necessary infor-

mation and assessment upon which to base its decision regarding designation in the future.

With 37 national heritage areas designated across 27 states, and more heritage area legislative proposals forthcoming, the Administration believes it is critical for Congress to enact national heritage area program legislation. This legislation would provide a much-needed framework for evaluating proposed national heritage areas, offering guidelines for successful planning and management, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all parties, and standardizing timeframes and funding for designated areas. Program legislation would also clarify the expectation that heritage areas would work toward self-sufficiency by outlining the necessary steps, including appropriate planning, to achieve that goal.

S. 2254 would establish the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area in northeast Mississippi. The area would encompass all or part of 30 counties. It would also include the Delta National Forest. The bill designates the Mississippi Hills Heritage Area Alliance as the management entity. The Alliance is a non-profit organization registered by the State of Mississippi, with the cooperation and support of the University of Mississippi. The bill provides for the development of a management plan that would inventory resources of the area, recommend conservation measures, identify sources of funding, and consider public involvement mechanisms.

The bill would authorize Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area to promote and help conserve a number of important natural and cultural resources. Included within its proposed boundaries are the sites of important Civil War battles, the birthplaces of a number of noteworthy Americans, the first public college for women in the United States, the Mississippi University for Women, and Rust College, founded in 1866, which is one of the oldest black colleges in the United States. The proposed Mississippi National Heritage Area would encompass the Natchez Trace Parkway; the Holly Springs and Tombigbee National Forests; the Sardis, Enid, and Grenada Lakes; the Strawberry Plains State Audubon Center; the Tishomingo State Park; and the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge.

Mr. Chairman, the Department is prepared to work with the subcommittee on amending S. 2254 to authorize a feasibility study for a Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area, in the State of Mississippi.

This concludes my prepared remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or any members of the Subcommittee may have.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee notes that no changes in existing law are made by the bill, S. 2254, as ordered reported.