EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

November 19, 1999

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity to speak to you about an issue of national importance. I am introducing a bill that would encourage students to participate in conservation efforts.

The bill is called the Stewardship Education, Recreation, and Volunteers for the Environment ("SERVE") Act of 1999. This legislation would provide students with the opportunity to work with federal land managing agencies and the many other organizations concerned with the wise use and management of our Nation's natural and cultural resources.

Specifically, the bill would encourage an attitude of stewardship and responsibility towards public lands by promoting the participation of individuals, organizations, and communities in developing and fostering a conservation ethic towards the lands, facilities and the natural and cultural resources. Specifically, it calls on the Federal land managing agencies to enter into cooperative agreement with academic institutions, State or local government agencies or any partnership organization. In addition, the Secretaries would be enabled to provide matching funds to match non-Federal funds, services or materials donated under the cooperative agreement.

Further, the bill encourages each Federal land management agency to cooperate with States, local school districts and other entities to (1) promote participation by students and other young people in volunteer programs of the Federal land management agencies; (2) promote a greater understanding of our Nation's natural and cultural resources, and (3) provide information and assistance to other agencies and organizations concerned with the wise use and management of our Nation's natural and cultural resources.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity to extend my own appreciation to the federal land managing agencies and the many volunteers who assist them. The point of this bill is to extend that recognition on a formal and national basis, and to build on the sound foundation that they have laid. I hope we can send it to the President for signing into law soon after we reconvene next year.