

Today these words are even more meaningful than they were in 1906.

We all remember Croatia's lengthy war for independence that made headlines worldwide in the early part of this decade. We celebrated when Croatia finally broke from the Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia in 1991, after such great loss of human life, to become its own independent country. Today, we stand with the Croatians to pay tribute to their courage and perseverance. We pay tribute to Croatia's fully functioning, democratic political structure, and its commitment to further economic development.

I also want to pay tribute to the Republic of Croatia's opening of a new Consulate General in Chicago on April 8, 1999. The three-day series of events entitled Croatia in Chicago was the largest gathering ever of the Croatian community in the U.S. and it demonstrated that the partnership between Croatia and the U.S. is constantly being strengthened. One particularly special event was a Gala Dinner organized by the Croatian community in Chicago. There were 1,400 guests in attendance and the revenues of the dinner went to benefit the children's hospitals in Croatia.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself with the remarks of Ambassador Robert Gelbard at the Croatia in Chicago event. Mr. Gelbard said "As our trade and business ties grow so must Croatia's integration into the full range of Western and Euro-Atlantic institutions." I believe we must do all we can to help Croatia achieve these goals, and we must continue to reinforce to the Croatian people that our goal is a full partnership with Croatia. Finally, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the Republic of Croatia for celebrating the ninth anniversary of its independence and for opening a new Consulate General in Chicago.

THE POTOMAC—AN ENDANGERED RIVER

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 1999

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus and District of Columbia Appropriations Subcommittee, I am deeply concerned about the environment in and around our nation's capital.

Two years ago the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus held a monthly informational briefing on fishing in the Washington, D.C. area. Following that briefing I submitted for the record an article written by Charles Verharen, a Professor at Howard University and avid local fisherman, that highlighted threats to the Potomac River fishery.

At the request of local fishermen, a study on the impact of sediment discharge on anadromous fish was initiated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Interstate Commission for the Potomac River Basin, the District of Columbia Fish and Wildlife, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The report concludes that this sediment discharge is

causing a significant adverse impact to anadromous fish during the spawning season.

I have attached another article by Charles Verharen that describes the impact of this environmental problem. In addition, I have enclosed the summary of recommendations from the Fish and Wildlife Service report to update my colleagues on the problems facing the Potomac River environment.

JOE FLETCHER'S FISH STORY

(By Charles Verharen)

Joe Fletcher is tempted to cry over his beloved river. And a recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report claims he has good reason.

Joe and his family have rented fishing boats on the Potomac at Fletcher's Boat House for three generations. One of Joe's favorite stories—not about a fisherman but a ferry passenger—shows why he's sad.

Joe's story starts in colonial times when the Potomac was one of the greatest fisheries in the world. George Washington owned highly profitable commercial fishing rights on the Potomac near Mount Vernon. The king of all fish in the Potomac was the sturgeon, ranging up to ten feet in length and weighing over four hundred pounds. Potomac caviar was a delicacy prized around the world.

In colonial Washington, the only way across the Potomac was by ferry. One time a sturgeon leaped out of the water and landed on a Georgetown passenger sitting in a small ferry's stern. The fish was so huge that it crushed the man's hip and he died from the injury several weeks later.

Joe's doubly sad when he tells this story—sad about the passenger and sad that sturgeon leap out of the Potomac no more. But now Joe's got something else to be sad about. He fears that the sturgeon's fate threatens rockfish (striped bass) and shad, abundant at Fletcher's Cove even in times when the Potomac was one of the most polluted rivers in America.

Ironically, Joe blames this new threat of extinction on pure water. The Washington Aqueduct drinking water treatment plant discharges the equivalent of up to twenty five dump-truck loads of aluminum and copper sulfates and other waste material into the Potomac above Chain Bridge every day as a by-product of its water purifying process.

Joe fears the chemicals are damaging the spawn and fry—as well as fishing. "Every time the water treatment plant dumps a big load into the river," Joe claims, "the fish just stop biting."

Joe can't imagine Washingtonians would sit still if they saw twenty five trucks parked on Key Bridge dumping waste into the Potomac. And twenty five trucks a day adds up to over nine thousand trucks a year. "How many times would nine thousand trucks go around the Beltway?", Joe wonders.

A recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report on the Washington Aqueduct confirms Joe's fears. Prepared by Fish and Wildlife's Chesapeake Bay field office and a panel of area-wide fisheries biologists, the report advocates eliminating all Washington Aqueduct waste discharges into the Potomac, one of fourteen American Heritage Rivers targeted for "environmental, economic, and social restoration projects."

Surprisingly, the panel claims shortnose sturgeon have been found in the lower and middle Potomac, and Aqueduct waste discharge points are potential spawning habitats for sturgeon. The panel's report asks the

Environmental Protection Agency to investigate the Aqueduct's potential threat to a sturgeon comeback.

The EPA gives the Washington Aqueduct a permit to discharge its waste. Long past its expiration date, the permit has been "administratively extended." The EPA won't renew the permit in its present form because the Army Corps of Engineers which operates the Washington Aqueduct isn't doing everything it can to clean up its waste.

The Corps could truck the waste to disposal sites but a citizens group that calls itself "CRUDD" (Committee for Responsible Urban Disposal at Dalecarlia, the old name for the Aqueduct) doesn't want the trucks threatening their children's safety and their Palisade neighborhood's clean air.

The waste could be pumped to Washington's Blue Plains waste water treatment plant through existing sewer lines, but the Washington Aqueduct would have to pay for using the lines and enlarging Blue Plains treatment capacity. The local governments that buy clean water from the Aqueduct don't feel that Washington area residents want to pay extra taxes to stop the Potomac pollution.

Those same customers want to save money by paying chicken farmers and other polluters upstream to stop their discharge. The EPA allows polluters to buy and sell pollution rights from one another. But that kind of exchange wouldn't save the fish.

Joe Fletcher thinks that if Washingtonians knew how dirty their clean drinking water makes the Potomac, they might want to pay a little extra so the shad and the rockfish have a chance to make a comeback. Joe even dreams about the day he might see a sturgeon breaking the water close to his boat—but not too close!

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Annapolis, MD, March 2, 1999.

Re: Washington Aqueduct Report.

MS. PATRICIA GLEASON,
U.S. EPA, Region III,
Water Protection Division,
Philadelphia, PA.

MS. GLEASON: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Interstate Commission for the Potomac River Basin, District of Columbia Fish and Wildlife, and National Marine Fisheries Service have completed a report on the sediment discharges from the Washington Aqueduct, Washington, D.C. The enclosed report concludes that significant adverse impacts to anadromous fish during the spawning season could occur from the sediment discharges. The report entitled, "Washington Aqueduct Sediment Discharges Report of Panel Recommendations" includes recommendations to the Aqueduct Administrators on how to minimize the impacts during the spawning season.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide information relevant to fish and wildlife resources. If you have any questions on this report, please contact David W. Sutherland at (410) 573-4535 or DavidXSutherland@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

ROBERT J. PENNINGTON,
ACTING SUPERVISOR,
Chesapeake Bay Field Office.

Enclosure.

WASHINGTON AQUEDUCT SEDIMENT
DISCHARGES

REPORT OF PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Fisheries Panel Summary of
Recommendations, March 1999

A panel of fisheries biologists from the District of Columbia, State of Maryland, Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, National Marine Fisheries Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was convened to provide recommendations on minimizing impacts to migratory fish from sediment discharges at the Washington Aqueduct. The fisheries panel provides these recommendations to the administrators at the Washington Aqueduct in an effort to advance the anadromous (and resident) fish restoration efforts in the Potomac River. By minimizing the adverse effects to water quality from sediment discharges at the Dalecarlia and Georgetown settling basins, fisheries resource managers have a better chance at achieving fish and habitat restoration goals for the Potomac River.

1. The goal is to eliminate sediment discharges to the Potomac River. If sediment discharges are absolutely necessary, the panel recommends eliminating the flocculent/sediment discharges from February 15 to June 15, to avoid the early and late spawning activities of migratory fish.

2. Mix the flocculent/sediments with raw river water in the settling basins to produce an effluent, that when discharged to the river, reduces the adverse impacts of concentrated sediments on migratory fish.

3. Slow the rate of flocculent/sediment discharge to the river to a minimum of 72 hours per basin. We recommend that the ratio of discharge to river flow be less than 0.1%. This will also reduce the adverse impacts to migratory fish from concentrated sediments entering the river.

4. Monitor water quality daily at the discharge sites to identify a time when water quality conditions are least sensitive to sediment discharges in the river. The water quality monitoring parameters include: pH, temperature, alkalinity, and conductivity.

5. Remove rocks from the Dalecarlia outfall to ensure controlled and measurable sediment discharge rates, and establish outfall maintenance and discharge monitoring plans to promote safe operation and predictable discharge rates.

6. Create a panel of stakeholders to assist the Washington Aqueduct with issues relating to the Potomac River ecosystem. These entities could include citizen coalition, local, state, interstate, and federal representatives.

INTRODUCTION OF MEDICARE
MODERNIZATION NO. 7: "MEDI-
CARE CLINICAL PRACTICE PAT-
TERNS ACT OF 1999"

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce the seventh bill in my Medicare modernization series: the "Medicare Clinical Practice Patterns Act of 1999." This bill would give the Secretary the authority to document pat-

terns of clinical practice in the Medicare program, determine the effectiveness of treatment, and bring medicare policy in line with that of the private sector. If implemented, the "Clinical Practice Patterns Act" would help to standardize the delivery of health services within Medicare, thereby improving the quality of care provided to Medicare beneficiaries and achieving savings for the program overall.

Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 1544, the "Patient Empowerment Act of 1999." The "Patient Empowerment Act" was the first step toward eliminating the wide variation in treatment patterns across the U.S., as identified by Dr. John Wennberg in the Dartmouth Atlas. The "Clinical Practice Patterns Act" builds on this theme by developing evidence-based clinical guidelines to assist providers in treating various illness.

Mr. Speaker, there are literally millions of doctors, nurses, and health administrators working in thousands of different hospitals, all trained at different schools in different communities, who provide care to the 39 million elderly, disabled, and ESRD patients covered by Medicare. With all of these elements interacting together, it's no wonder that we have such wide variation in treatment patterns across the United States.

Medicare is a combination of both art and science. For most treatments, there are no empirical data on clinical effectiveness that suggest one method is better than another. In these cases, providers use their "best guess" to make treatment decisions—relying on their individual knowledge, preferences, and the resources available to them. This "art" of medicine exacerbates the variation in treatment patterns, and Medicare expenditures, across the U.S.

Yet, as Wennberg notes, there is virtually no difference in health outcomes between low and high spending areas. If less expensive treatments are available, why aren't we prescribing them more readily? By collecting and distributing data on clinical effectiveness, and encouraging providers to use treatment guidelines, we may be able to minimize practice variation. We simultaneously may be able to achieve substantial savings for Medicare.

Following is a portion of an interview from the May/June 1999 issue of Health Affairs by Princeton professor Uwe Reinhardt with HHS Secretary Donna Shalala discussing how Medicare's financial problems would be greatly reduced if the variation in clinical practices were minimized:

REINHARDT. "Count on me to be a real thorn in the side of the status quo, then, because I believe that if everyone in America could consume medical care while spending at rates similar to those of Minnesota, Oregon, and Wisconsin, providing health care to the aging baby-boom generation would be a piece of cake, wouldn't it?"

SHALALA. "Absolutely, and the doctors would feel as though the system were fairer. But once the infrastructure is built and physicians get comfortable with consuming a certain level of resources, it's very difficult to work your way out unless you buy yourself out, as we have attempted to do with the downsizing of medical residency positions through HCFAs' New York demonstration."

Clinical practice guidelines are being used more and more throughout the private sector

to improve the quality of health care as well as to increase the efficiency of the health industry. This practice does not in any way diminish the art of medicine, it only improves the science behind treatment decisions.

Medicare is a natural candidate for clinical practice guidelines. With an outstanding database of information on beneficiaries across the country, and the resources of the NIH and AHCPRA at hand, Medicare could effectively implement a program to improve clinical effectiveness and achieve savings through efficiency.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF WIL-
LIAM S. HEFRON ON HIS AP-
POINTMENT TO ATTEND THE
UNITED STATES MILITARY
ACADEMY

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 8, 1999

Mr. GILLMOR: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding young man from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am happy to announce that William S. Hefron, of Amherst, Ohio, has been offered an appointment to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

Mr. Speaker, Bill as accepted his offer of appointment and will be attending West Point this fall with the incoming cadet class of 2003. Attending one of our nation's military academies is an invaluable experience that offers a world-class education and demands the very best that these young men and women have to offer. Truly, it is one of the most challenging and rewarding undertakings of their lives.

While attending Lorain Catholic High School, Bill has attained a grade point average of 4.062 on a 4.3 scale, which places him third in his class of sixty-six students. Bill's scholastic honors include the Lorain Catholic Honor Roll and National Honor Society. Bill is also taking several AP classes to further his outstanding academic achievements.

Outside of the classroom, Bill has distinguished himself as an outstanding student-athlete. On the fields of competition, Bill is a Varsity letter winner in cross country, track, football, and basketball. During his Junior season, Bill was captain of the cross country team, Most Valuable Runner, and a school record holder. In track, Bill won the 800 meters at the District Track & Field Meet, and placed fifth in Regional competition. And currently, Bill is the Secretary of the Senior Class.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I would ask my colleagues to stand and join me in paying special tribute to William S. Hefron. Our service academies offer the finest education and military training available anywhere in the world. I am sure that Bill will do very well during his career at West Point, and I wish him the very best in all of his future endeavors.