

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that she will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6 p.m. today.

DESIGNATING WILSON CREEK IN
NORTH CAROLINA AS COMPONENT
OF NATIONAL WILD AND
SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM

Mr. SHERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1749) to designate Wilson Creek in Avery and Caldwell Counties, North Carolina, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1749

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

**SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF WILSON CREEK IN
NORTH CAROLINA AS A WILD, SCENIC,
AND RECREATIONAL RIVER.**

Section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(161) WILSON CREEK, NORTH CAROLINA.—(A) The 23.3 mile segment of Wilson Creek in the State of North Carolina from its headwaters to its confluence with Johns River, to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture in the following classifications:

“(i) The 2.9 mile segment from its headwaters below Calloway Peak downstream to the confluence of Little Wilson Creek, as a scenic river.

“(ii) The 4.6 segment from Little Wilson Creek downstream to the confluence of Crusher Branch, as a wild river.

“(iii) The 15.8 segment from Crusher Branch downstream to the confluence of Johns River, as a recreational river.

“(B) The Forest Service or any other agency of the Federal Government may not undertake condemnation proceedings for the purpose of acquiring public right-of-way or access to Wilson Creek against the private property of T. Henry Wilson, Jr., or his heirs or assigns, located in Avery County, North Carolina (within the area 36°, 4 min., 21 sec. North 81°, 47 min., 37° West and 36°, 3 min., 13 sec. North and 81° 45 min. 55 sec. West), in the area of Wilson Creek designated as a wild river.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHERWOOD).

Mr. SHERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1749 was introduced by our esteemed colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr.

BALLENGER), and would designate Wilson Creek in Avery and Caldwell Counties, North Carolina, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

When the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health held a hearing on August 3, 1999, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLENGER) and the Forest Service testified in support of the bill. The bill was amended at subcommittee to make a technical correction.

Both the subcommittee and the full committee favorably reported this bill, as amended by voice vote.

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I strongly urge passage of H.R. 1749.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, first I would like to certainly commend the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLENGER), my good friend, for his sponsorship of this legislation.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1749 would designate 23.3 miles of Wilson Creek in Avery and Caldwell Counties, North Carolina, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Approximately 2.9 miles would be designated as scenic, 4.6 miles as wild, and 15.8 miles as recreational area.

The Forest Service deemed the creek, which is rich in aquatic and plant life, eligible and suitable for wild and scenic status since 1990. There is a great deal of local support in this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SHERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLENGER), the author of the bill.

Mr. BALLENGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 1749, to designate Wilson Creek in my congressional district as a Wild and Scenic River. And I want to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG) and the gentlewoman from Idaho (Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE), chairwoman of the subcommittee, for their support of this bill and their diligent efforts to get this bill to the floor.

Madam Speaker, I would like to invite any of my colleagues from Congress that get to our area, if they want to see something fabulously beautiful, look at the Wilson Creek. Wilson Creek is a free-flowing, crystal clear waterway which passes through some of the most beautiful scenery in the Nation. It provides pristine habitat for a multitude of fish species and plant life which live within the creek and along its banks.

From its headwaters below Calloway Peak on Grandfather Mountain in Avery County, to where it empties into

Johns River in Caldwell County, Wilson Creek meets and exceeds all the requirements for such an important designation.

Specifically, my bill would designate 23.3 miles of Wilson Creek as a Wild and Scenic River. And in my opinion, having this creek designated as Wild and Scenic would help maintain its natural beauty while helping to improve the quality of recreational opportunities like hunting, fishing, camping, canoeing, and other activities for thousands of people who visit it each year.

Madam Speaker, the potential designation of Wilson Creek as a Wild and Scenic River has received tremendous support from the County Commissioners of both Avery and Caldwell Counties, as well as the local residents and outdoor enthusiasts. In fact, when I met with the County Commissioner in Caldwell and Avery Counties prior to the introduction of my bill, I was presented with letters of support from local residents, positive newspaper articles and editorials, and a letter from the U.S. Forest Service which indicated a willingness to help us in this effort.

Madam Speaker, I am convinced that the designation of Wilson Creek as a Wild and Scenic River is well supported within the communities which surround it. I know CBO is trying to find some cost for it. They have not been able to. There is no expense. And I believe this is an excellent bill that would do much to preserve Wilson Creek, making it both a natural asset and a natural treasure, and I urge its passage.

Mr. BURR of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1749, designating Wilson Creek in northwest North Carolina as a wild and scenic river.

Madam Speaker, one of the hidden beauties—and there are few—of the ever changing North Carolina congressional district map is that in any given election, with the blessing of the electorate, the members of our delegation are given the honor of serving different parts of different counties for short periods of time. During my first two terms of Congress, I had the opportunity to serve parts of Caldwell County that we are honoring today.

Although the majority of the legwork here in Washington was done by my colleague Mr. BALLENGER and his staff, the reason the designation is becoming a reality is the process by which it matured. You see, Mr. Speaker, this was not a decision forced upon the people of Avery and Caldwell County by a Federal bureaucracy with little or no local input. This project has been the result of local initiative, spearheaded by county commissioners and community leaders. These officials, at every step of the way, explained the process and benefits of wild and scenic designation to the local community and landowners, enlisting the advice and counsel of the local U.S. Forest Service. The professionalism of Forest Supervisor John Ramey, District Ranger Mike Anderson and Recreation Planner Kathy Ludlow quickly put to rest any misconceptions or fears