

**Testimony of
Congressman Phil English
Before the Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
On
H.R. 1083, To amend the Act establishing the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area in
order to include Butler County, Pennsylvania, within the boundaries of that heritage area.**

July 12, 2007

Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to testify on legislation I introduced this Congress, H.R. 1083, to add Butler County, Pennsylvania, to the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area.

In 1996, the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area was established in seven counties in southwestern Pennsylvania, including the greater Pittsburgh area, and the Monongahela, Allegheny and Ohio River Valleys. Specifically, the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area covers approximately 3,000 square miles in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Washington and Westmoreland Counties. Among the major natural resources are the Ohio, Beaver, Monongahela, Youghiogheny, Allegheny, and the Kiskiminetas rivers.

For more than a century, this area was known as the Steel Making Capital of the World, and the dynamic and powerful story of Big Steel is preeminent in the region's artifacts, buildings, historic communities, industrial sites, and the living cultural traditions of its people. Butler, Pennsylvania is an area equally rich in history, but one that was not incorporated in the National Heritage Area when it was created in 1996.

Butler County was established on March 12, 1800, and named after General Richard Butler, a hero of the American Revolution.

It is the location of Moraine State Park, home to Lake Arthur, a 3,000 acre glacial lake. To add to its history, some famous inventions and discoveries came from Butler County. It was in Saxonburg, Pennsylvania, that the designer of the Brooklyn Bridge, John Roebling, invented his revolutionary wire rope.

At what is now known as Oil Creek, Butler County resident William Smith and Edwin Drake first proved that oil could be tapped from underground for consistent supply. And in 1941, the Jeep was developed in Butler County by the American Bantam Car Company.

A major component of Butler's cultural and historical fabric is its robust steel history that continues to this very day. AK Steel's Butler Works is currently located on a 1,300 acre location in Butler County and employs approximately 1,550 employees. AK Steel's Butler Works is a leading producer of flat rolled electrical and stainless steels as well as a supplier of stainless semi-finished slabs. Electrical and stainless steel melting and casting, hot and cold rolling, and finishing operations are housed in three and one half million square feet of buildings.

The location where AK Steel's Butler Works currently sits has much history of its own. The "Mill" (as locals called it) started in 1908 as The Forged Steel Wheel Company, where they produced railroad wheels. In the early 1920's the Mill became a part of Columbia Steel. The American Rolling Mill Company (Armco) purchased the Butler plant in 1927 and for 72 years was Butler Armco. AK Steel purchased Armco, including the Butler Works, in 1999, and has been in operation ever since.

The goal of the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, as a whole, is to encourage community revitalization through cultural tourism, historic preservation, conservation, educational programs and related development. Inclusion of Butler County, Pennsylvania, into the National Heritage Area will enrich the program's mission to encourage and interpret the historical resources associated with steel and steel related industries.

This legislation has received the support of the entire Pennsylvania Congressional delegation and has substantial local support. I encourage the Subcommittee to add Butler County, Pennsylvania, to the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify today in support of my bill.