

**Testimony of Congressman Marion Berry (AR-01)**  
**Legislative Hearing on HR 442, HR 761, HR 1625, HR 1835, HR 2197**  
**Before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests & Public Lands**  
**June 14, 2007**

Thank you, Chairman Grijalva and members of the Subcommittee for giving me the opportunity to testify here today. It is a pleasure to appear before you on behalf of North Central Arkansas.

On January 12, 2007, I introduced H.R. 442, which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the feasibility of designating the Wolf House as a unit of the National Park System. It should be noted that this legislation is supported by the entire Arkansas delegation.

Located in Norfork, Arkansas, the Wolf House is the oldest public structure in Arkansas and was built in 1829 as a territorial courthouse. The house was also a trading outpost and post office visited by thousands of settlers including Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, and Sam Houston who all visited and stayed at the home.

Robust trade during this time with the Shawnee and Delaware Indians prompted Jacob Wolf to move to the area in 1820 and establish his homestead. Wolf was a farmer, blacksmith, carpenter, merchant, and politician of German ancestry.

Elected to the General Assembly in 1826, Wolf subsequently passed legislation to establish the county courthouse in the town that had developed around his home. Wolf donated land to the county for the courthouse site and then secured the contract for building the structure.

The upper level of the house served as the county courtroom, and judges and lawyers traveled from across the territory to attend sessions there. The lower level housed the county clerk's office.

Families from throughout the county camped on the courthouse grounds when court was in session, socializing and competing in games.

After relocation of the county seat, Wolf's land returned to his possession. The house, however, maintained its historic place in Arkansas history as a trading outpost.

In the late 1930s, the Jacob Wolf House came under public ownership and was maintained over the years by the stewardship of local residents. A 1999 Courthouse Restoration Grant from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program provided funding to restore the structure to its appearance when it served as a territorial courthouse. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 13, 1973.

My legislation would simply authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the feasibility of designating the Wolf House as a unit of the National Park System. This house has such a rich history and deserves to be considered as a unit of the Park System.

Thank you for your time this morning.