

FLORENTINE FILMS

Ken Burns

**Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan
Statement for the Record in Support of HR3444
Pinnacles National Park Act**

During the last ten years, as we researched, filmed, and created our documentary series for PBS, *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*, we grew to appreciate the amazing diversity of the special treasures that constitute our national parks, every American's incredible inheritance. And in studying the history of the evolution of the national park idea, we learned that many of today's national parks were at one time national monuments – from the Grand Canyon to Death Valley, from Petrified Forest to Biscayne, from Congaree to most of Alaska's national parks, and so many more.

In that spirit, grounded in the tradition of recognizing the special importance of a national monument by extending its designation to that of a national park, we wish to wholeheartedly endorse HR3444 and the creation of Pinnacle National Park.

A Pinnacles National Park would preserve a unique portion of our land: not only a critical record of geological time (what John Muir would have called a "grand geological library") that helps Americans look back millions of years to understand the vast tectonic forces that shaped – and still shape – our continent, but also a rare habitat for condors, a wide array of flowers, and 400 species of bees. It would preserve a place that, over the centuries, Native Americans, early Spanish settlers, homesteaders from the East, and Basque shepherders have considered home, offering an important series of perspectives on the larger sweep of American history.

We also understand from our investigation of national park history that, while changing an area's designation from "monument" to "park" does not necessarily change its crucial attributes, it nonetheless alters its place in the American imagination. The Grand Canyon was just as wide and deep when it was a national monument as it is now as a national park, but the change enhanced its status in the eyes of the public – and in doing so increased its lure to visitors from our nation and abroad. So, too, a Pinnacle National Park, simply by its new designation, would attract and demand greater attention to the remarkable treasures the monument has to offer.

In closing, we would like to quote John Muir once more, when he was writing about the proposal to make Mount Rainier National Forest into Mount Rainier National Park: "Happy will be the men who, having the power and the love and the benevolent forecast to [create a park], will do it. They will not be forgotten. The trees and their lovers will sing their praises, and generations yet unborn will rise up and call them blessed." Please give your support to creating Pinnacles National Park. Generations yet to come will thank you for it.

