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**Omnibus Public Lands Act Passes Congress: Hikers Rejoice!**

To the 75 million Americans who hike each year, today is a day to celebrate!

The United States House of Representatives has passed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 (HR 146), a package of widely supported bills including legislation that protects trails and open space throughout our nation. American Hiking Society is joined by more than 70 hiking organizations and 80 outdoor industry companies that support many of the provisions of the Omnibus Act.

This newly approved package includes the National Landscape Conservation System Act, which gives official Congressional recognition to the 26 million acres of the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System. These lands include more than 5,000 miles of National Scenic and Historic Trails and thousands of miles of other incredible hiking opportunities.

"Not since the National Park System was created in 1916 has a single action of Congress had a greater positive impact on our ability to enjoy, take pride in and benefit from America's incredible trails and natural resources," said Gregory Miller, American Hiking Society president. "Americans should give thanks that Congress has answered our needs with such leadership. Now, we should prepare to care for the trails that our families will enjoy for generations to come."

Credit for this landmark legislation is due in part to the visionary leadership of Senators Reid (D-NV) and Bingaman (D-NM), Representative Grijalva (D-AZ), and Co-Chairs of the National Landscape Conservation System Caucus Representatives Moran (D-VA), Bono-Mack (R-CA) and Reichert (R-WA).

Also included in this wide-ranging legislation are provisions that designate the Arizona National Scenic Trail, grant several National Trails the ability to purchase critical trail lands from willing sellers, feasibility studies and adjustments for several National Trails and important Wilderness designations that will provide for thousands of miles of great hiking and protect crucial natural and cultural resources.

Founded in 1976, American Hiking Society is the only national, recreation-based nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and protecting America's hiking trails, their surrounding natural areas and the hiking experience. To learn more about American Hiking Society and its Stewardship and Advocacy programs please visit [www.AmericanHiking.org](http://www.AmericanHiking.org) or call (301) 565-6704.

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