



The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park Establishment Act Amendments Act of 2024

Introduced By:

Senator Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.); and Representative Becca Balint (VT-At Large)

Background:

Located in Woodstock, Vermont, the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park (NHP) preserves a significant historical, agricultural, and natural landscape. The park was established in 1998 and is Vermont's first and only national park.

The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP lies on the grounds of the birthplace of George Perkins Marsh, an environmentalist, lawyer, diplomat, and author of the early conservationist work *Man and Nature*, first published in 1864. Marsh's childhood home was purchased in 1869 by Frederick Billings, an environmentalist inspired by Marsh's writings. A native Vermonter, Billings advocated for the creation of what would become Glacier, Mount Rainier, Yellowstone, and Yosemite National Parks. Billings brought his vision of conservation home to Woodstock as he reforested the property's Mount Tom, maintained a sustainable dairy herd, and built a network of recreational trails.

The property's final owner, philanthropist Mary French Rockefeller, established the neighboring Billings Farm & Museum and ultimately donated the land that would become the Park to the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) in 1992. The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP commemorates the historical contributions of its namesakes, preserves Vermont's proud agricultural heritage, and conserves native forestland ecosystems. The Park also provides countless educational opportunities for visitors, protects archaeological sites, and showcases its historic architecture.

Legislation:

The *Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park Establishment Act Amendments Act* would redraw the boundaries of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP to include the adjacent King Farm property, currently owned by the Vermont Land Trust, and would authorize, but not require, the acquisition of the property by the NPS in the future.

The legislation would also expand the scope of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP's Stewardship Institute to include the breadth of its activities and programming. These changes will strengthen the partnership between the park and the King Farm and improve opportunities for education, recreation, and historic preservation.