



Forum Memo

FR: Natural Resources Committee Democratic Staff, x 5-4081

RE: Forum on Countering Extremism on America's Public Lands

On **Wednesday, June 15, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. in room 210 of the House Visitors Center**, Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva and Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson will hold a forum on anti-government extremists' escalating threats to public lands and federal land management authorities. The forum, titled *Countering Extremism on America's Public Lands*, will highlight the threats anti-government extremists pose to parks, forests, wildlife refuges, historic sites and recreation lands across America, from dangerous standoffs like the one at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge to threats and attacks on federal officials.

Invited Members of Congress

- House Natural Resources Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva
- House Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson
- House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Ranking Member Peter DeFazio
- Congressman Alan Lowenthal
- Congresswoman Niki Tsongas
- Congressman Jared Huffman
- Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee
- Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman

Invited Witnesses

- Richard Cohen, President, Southern Poverty Law Center
- J. J. MacNab, Center for Cyber and Homeland Security, The George Washington University
- Tim Blount, Executive Director, Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge
- David Jenkins, President, Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship
- Garrett Reppenhagen, Rocky Mountain Director, Vet Voice Foundation

Suggested Talking Points

- America's national forests, wildlife refuges, parks, and public lands are part of our national identity. Our public lands were created so all Americans, regardless of wealth or social status, would be able to enjoy access to the outdoors in perpetuity.
- As we have seen in Nevada and Oregon, this powerful idea – defended by generations of bipartisan leaders – is under attack from armed and extremist militant groups and their allies in Washington, D.C.
- The radical notion, promoted by many conservative lawmakers, that the federal government should transfer ownership of public lands to state governments or sell them off to private interests is

unconstitutional, fiscally irresponsible, and environmentally reckless. It's also deeply unpopular with the public.

- The land seizure movement is rooted in extreme antigovernment beliefs that reject the rule of law, put communities and hardworking public servants at risk, and fail to appreciate our national parks and public lands.
- The land seizure crusade must be seen for what it is: the latest outgrowth of radical anti-government extremism, which mainstream legislators of both political parties should avoid.

Must Read Clips

- [GOP Rep. Says 'Peaceful' Oregon Militia Takeover Is 'Civil Disobedience'](#)
- [After Bundy Clashes, House GOPers Push Bill To Kneecap Feds On Public Lands](#)
- [House unlikely to take up disapproval resolution on standoff](#)
- [Time to speak out against elected officials who share goals with Oregon militants](#)
- [Candidates Who Backed the Oregon Militia Overwhelmingly Voted Out](#)
- [New Bill Would Eliminate Law Enforcement On Public Lands, Despite Risks Of Violent Extremism](#)
- [LaVoy Finicum Supporters Threatened To Burn Qurans, Kill Police And Oregon Governor](#)
- [Primed to fight the government: A fast-growing U.S. movement armed with guns and the Constitution sees a dire threat to liberty](#)
- [The Larger, but Quieter Than Bundy, Push to Take Over Federal Land](#)
- [Defuse the West: Public-land employees are easy targets for a violent, government-hating fringe.](#)
- [A major Native American site is being looted. Will Obama risk armed confrontation to save it?](#)
- [Heated Rhetoric by Politicians Encourages Violent Extremism on National Public Lands](#)

From NRDems

- [Ranking Member Grijalva Introducing Resolution Today Disapproving of Armed Refuge Takeover in Oregon – Seeking Hill Cosponsors](#)
- [Pelosi-Hoyer-Grijalva Joint Statement on House Resolution Urging Militia Members to Surrender to Law Enforcement in Oregon](#)
- [Ranking Member Grijalva on Bundy Militia Member Arrests: “Congress Should Speak Now With One Voice, Prevent Further Violence”](#)
- [Reps. Huffman, Grijalva, DeFazio, Blumenauer, Tsongas, Peters, Dingell, Lowenthal, Van Hollen Request Federal Agencies to Brief Congress on Response to Future Threats to Public Lands](#)
- [Fairy tales about the West are fueling public lands conflict](#)

From Outside Groups

- [Tribe Condemns Refuge Occupation](#)
- [CRS Ad Calls on Key Congressman to Denounce Thuggery](#)
- [An Open Letter to the American People About the Events at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge](#)
- [Church Responds to Inquiries Regarding Oregon Armed Occupation](#)
- [Vet Voice Foundation Calls on Senator Hatch to More Forcefully Reject Violence Over Bears Ears National Monument](#)
- [Center For Western Priorities Decries Oregon Militants As 'Extremists'](#)

Reports

- [Congress Should Confront the Rise of Violent Extremism on America's Public Lands](#)

- [Going to Extremes: The anti-government extremism behind the growing movement to seize America's public lands](#)
- [Anatomy of a Standoff: The Occupiers of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters](#)
- [War in the West: The Bundy Ranch Standoff and the American Radical Right](#)

Biographies



Richard Cohen, President, Southern Poverty Law Center

A graduate of Columbia University and the University of Virginia School of Law, Richard Cohen came to the SPLC in 1986 as its legal director after practicing law in Washington, D.C., for seven years. Under his guidance, the SPLC won a series of landmark lawsuits against some of the nation's most violent white supremacist organizations. He also successfully litigated a wide variety of important civil rights actions – defending the rights of prisoners to be treated humanely, working for equal educational opportunities for all children, and bringing down the Confederate battle

flag from the Alabama State Capitol. Prior to becoming SPLC president in 2003, Cohen served as its vice president for programs, which include the Intelligence Project and Teaching Tolerance.

In 1997, the national legal magazine *The American Lawyer* selected him as one of 45 public sector lawyers “whose vision and commitment are changing lives.” In 1999, he was a finalist for the national Trial Lawyer of the Year Award for his work on *Macedonia Baptist Church v. Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan*, a lawsuit that ended with a record \$37.8 million judgment against a Klan group for its role in the burning of a South Carolina church.



J. J. MacNab, Center for Cyber and Homeland Security, The George Washington University

J.J. MacNab is one of the nation's leading experts on Sovereign Citizens, Tax Protesters, U.S. paramilitary militia groups, and related anti-government extremist organizations.

MacNab received her Bachelors in International Relations from the University of California at Berkeley. She has testified before the U.S. Senate and other governmental agencies on subjects ranging from the growth of extremists groups to the financial scams used to recruit new members to these groups.

MacNab writes a regular column on the subject of anti-government extremism at *Forbes*. She has appeared as an expert on *CBS 60 Minutes*, *CNN*, *NBC Nightly News*, *ABC World News*, *NPR*, and on numerous other television news and radio shows. In 2005 *The Wall Street Journal* published a front-page profile on her tax protest movement research. She has been featured in three documentaries on the subject of domestic terrorism in the United States and Canada.

MacNab is the author of the forthcoming book, “*The Seditonists: Inside the Explosive World of Anti-Government Extremism in America*,” scheduled to be published in late 2015 by Palgrave Macmillan. The book takes readers deep into the movement, including its racist history, recent growth, and factors that drive members towards violence.

In addition to her research and writing, MacNab works as a consultant for various federal, state, and local regulatory and law enforcement agencies. She travels around the United States and Canada, teaching at law enforcement, judicial, and legal conferences.

McNabb's work with the Program on Extremism at George Washington University explores current trends in and public policy responses to homegrown anti-government extremism.



Tim Blount, Executive Director, Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

Tim Blount has been birding since he was a youngster in Nebraska. At age 15, he and his family moved to Salem and Tim blossomed into a full-fledged birding maniac. For over 30 years he has birded every corner of Oregon and many other places throughout the Northwest.

He is an alternate member of the Oregon Birds Record Committee and has served on the OBA Board for over a year.

Tim's website, www.harneybirder.com, has been a very popular site for birders wishing to visit Malheur NWR and the surrounding county.

Tim is the Executive Director of the Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and most days can be found poking around the brush at HQ looking for the next vagrant sighting.



David Jenkins, President, Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship

David has worked for CRS, or its predecessor organization Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP), since 2005. For much of that time he served as Vice President for Government & Political Affairs for REP. He has been instrumental in numerous organizational and legislative accomplishments. David has written and spoken extensively about many of today's most pressing environmental issues, conservatism, our nation's conservation heritage and American politics. His writing has appeared in dozens of newspapers and other publications. Prior to CRS and REP, David was the American Canoe Association's Director of Conservation and Public Policy for 10 years, and before that was on the legislative staff for Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM). He holds a B.A. in Political Science from Furman University.



Garrett Reppenhagen, Rocky Mountain Director, Vet Voice Foundation

Garrett Reppenhagen is the son of a Vietnam Veteran and grandson of two World War II Veterans. He served in the U.S. Army as a Cavalry/Scout Sniper in the 1st Infantry Division. Garrett completed a deployment in Kosovo on a 9-month peace-keeping mission and a combat tour in Baquba, Iraq. Garrett gained an Honorable Discharge in May of 2005 and began working as a veterans advocate and a dedicated activist. He served as the Chairman of the Board of Iraq Veterans Against the War, worked in Washington, DC, as a lobbyist and as Vice President of Public Relations for the Nobel Prize winning Veterans For America, and as a Program Director for Veterans Green Jobs. Garrett currently lives in Denver, Colorado, and is the Rocky Mountain West Coordinator for Vet Voice Foundation.