1,000 miles south of Hawaii. Initially, it was reported that KVR. Inc. talked about using Palmyra for scientific research and hotel development of some kind. However, recent events make it evident that KVR, Inc. wants to use Palmyra for a repository of radioactive waste.

KVR, Inc. has been circulating draft legislation among the administration and Members of Congress to locate a radioactive waste site on a Pacific atoll. According to representative from KVR, Inc. Palmyra is on a short list of candidate sites being considered.

I want to state for the record that I am unequivocally against this initiative.

In order to locate the site at Palmyra the draft legislation waives compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act in regard to the preparation of the environmental impact statement and the Clean Water Act to dredging.

Siting a radioactive waste facility is a serious matter. The environmental consequences cannot be ignored. For too long the Pacific community has been used as a nuclear dumping ground. The United States tested nuclear devices in the Marshall Islands, and we are all having to deal with the enormous costs associated with these tests. More recently, the Government of France conducted a series of nuclear tests at the Moruroa and Fangatauga atolls in the South Pacific, which was opposed by over 160 nations.

Mr. Speaker, my bill is preemptive strike against proposals to designate a radioactive waste site in the Pacific. KVR, Inc. attempts to achieve a laudable goal but at an enormous cost. I want to advise my colleagues that any attempt to go forward with the KVR, Inc. proposal will be vigorously and vehemently opposed.

MASS EVICTION UNIQUE TO SMOKIES

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 20, 1996

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I thought the following recent article from the Asheville Citizen Times about the formation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park might be of great interest to some of my colleagues and many readers of the RECORD.

MASS EVICTION UNIQUE TO SMOKIES

(By Clarke Morrison)

As a birthday gift on an August day in 1970, Glenn Cardwell drove his 85-year-old father back in time to a place that had been their home.

The sight of the beautiful cove, absent the farmsteads and families that once dotted the rolling landscape, prompted a pained recollection of the forced exodus that cleared the way for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

''He said the thing he hated most was losing our neighbors,'' Cardwell said of his father, Bill, who died a few months after the visit. ''You can buy a farm anywhere, but tearing up your community does something to your spirit.''

The Cardwells lived at the mouth of Greenbriar Cove near the park's northern boundary, and so were among the last to have their land condemned by the government. They watched as friends and relations moved on.

''They went different directions where the winds of interest were blowing,'' said Cardwell, a supervisory park ranger who will retire in September. ''Some to Virginia, some to Georgia . . . Ten families went to New Mexico. My sadness was watching them leaving us. I remember a lot of them hugging my mother and father and crying.''

This mass eviction distinguishes the Smokies, home to farms and communities for more than 100 years, from all but a few national parks. For other major parks such as Yellowstone, Congress merely carved them out of lands already owned by the government. And for the most part, these were places where no one wanted to live anyway.

But land in the mountains of Western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee was owned by hundreds of small farmers and several large timber and paper companies. The Smokies was the first national park to be created totally from privately owned land.

Quite understandably, the farmers didn't want to be pushed out of the family homesteads where they had lived and tilled the soil for decades, and the companies were reluctant to abandon their timber reserves, miles of railroad tracks, systems of logging equipment and villages of employee housing.

There were an estimated 1,200 to 1,400 families that had to be moved out, said Tom Robbins, a park ranger and historian who gives programs at the Oconaluftee Visitors Center near Cherokee.

''Obviously there were hard feelings all the way around, and still are,'' he said. ''People were uprooted.

''Some people tried to look at it from a positive standpoint, particularly those who had farms that were sort of played out. But plenty of people had no desire to sell, but had no choice. It was particularly hard on some of the older people. They figured that was where they were going to die and be buried.''

SEEDS OF THE PARK

The idea of a public land preserve in the Southern Appalachians started in the late 1800s, and by the early 20th century the federal government was under pressure to make the concept a reality.

The strongest supporters were based in Asheville and Knoxville, Tenn., and the two groups were competitors over the location of the park. Finally they put aside their differences and agreed it should be in the heart of the Smokies, halfway between the two cities.

The movement was spurred in large part not by conservationists, backpackers or fishermen, but by motorists. Members of newly formed auto clubs wanted good roads through beautiful scenery on which they could drive their cars.

LEGISLATION APPROVED

In May of 1926, President Calvin Coolidge signed a bill that provided for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Virginia's Shenandoah National Park. The legislation allowed the U.S. Department of the Interior to assume responsibility for a park in the Smokies as soon as 150,000 acres of land had been bought.

But the government was not allowed to buy land for national parks, so boosters had to turn their attention to raising money. In the late 1920s the legislatures of North Carolina and Tennessee each appropriated $2 million for land purchases, while individuals and groups contributed another $1 million. But by 1928, the price of the land had doubled and the fund-raising campaign came to a halt.

Finally the needed funds were in hand when a major foundation endowed by John D. Rockefeller pledged $5 million.

However, even with the money in hand, actually acquiring the land proved a tedious task. There were some 6,600 tracts that had to be surveyed, appraised and their price haggled over. Many times, the land had to be condemned in court.

It was tough for many to leave their homes and their ways of life. Some, particularly if they were too old or sick to move, were allowed to remain under lifetime leases. Others were granted shorter leases, but they could not cut timber, hunt or trap.

The park's first superintendent arrived in 1931. Three years later North Carolina and Tennessee transferred deeds for about 300,000 acres to the federal government, and Congress authorized the development of park facilities.

Standing at the Rockefeller Monument at Newfound Gap on the North Carolina-Tennessee line in September 1940, President Franklin Roosevelt formally dedicated the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

THE PARK'S DEVELOPMENT

By then, much of the early work to develop the park had been accomplished by the Civilian Conservation Corps, an agency formed during the Depression to provide work for the legions of unemployment.

At its peak in the late '30s, the CCC had more than 4,300 young men building roads, trails, stone bridges and fire towers, the park's first campgrounds, as well as the Oconaluftee Visitor Center on the North Carolina side and the park headquarters in Tennessee.

''There wouldn't have been any early development of the park without the CCC,'' Robbins said.

Work on the park stopped in the early 1940s when America entered World War II, and the National Park Service's budget was cut drastically.

Robbins said the Smokies and the country's other parks saw no significant funding until the mid-'50s when Congress infused the agency with new money for a major, 10-year recovery program.

And the Smokies benefited. It was during that time that the observation tower on Clingmans Dome and the Sugarlands Visitor Center were constructed. Campgrounds and other facilities were renovated.

Since then, it's been a matter of maintenance. Little new has been built in the park over the past 30 years, and the old structures become more worn and in need of repair with each passing year.

WALTER MERCADO: HE MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 20, 1996

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Walter Mercado, an icon of the Nation's Latino community. For 26 years, Mr. Mercado has worked tirelessly and selflessly to bring his message of peace, hope, and love to millions of his followers throughout the world and to the Latino community, in particular. I am pleased to note that he will visit my hometown, Union City, on June 21, 1996.

Walter Mercado was born in Puerto Rico. During his youth, he had a great yearning for knowledge. He immersed himself in the arts, studying Spanish dance, ballet, painting, voice, recitation, oratory, music, and acting. Later he came to New York to study under the legendary acting teacher Sanford Meisner. He went on to become one of Puerto Rico's most celebrated and distinguished actors.