

etched stars and colored tiles and replicas of some of the many famous posters that we see today.

The park will also have the “compass rose” that was known to be very famous back at that time at the Roosevelt naval base where they would fly from one section to another and that would be their focal point. Adjacent to the compass rose is a quiet garden, a memorial to the men and women who served in the military, noting the inscription: “All Gave Some, Some Gave All.”

When we think of Rosie the Riveter, it's also been an inspiration to many of us. I see our Speaker who is sitting here now tonight, and I think of some of the things we have had where we have really valued what those women did and how they have inspired us today.

At this particular location, we will have three flags that will be flown. One will be a U.S. flag that is actually being flown today. We will have a California flag and then a local flag as well.

I call on my colleagues to take an opportunity to study and reflect and think about all the important stories that made this country so great. And we certainly couldn't leave out the Rosie the Riveters in World War II who began for many of us and why we stand here today.

□ 1730

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROSLEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes. (Ms. ROSLEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GRAYSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMPHIBIANS: CANARIES IN THE COAL MINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, it wasn't many years ago that coal miners relied on a small bird, a canary, to signal that conditions were toxic. The canary in the coal mine would become sick before the miners, who would then have a chance to either escape or to put on protective respirators.

Today, our ecosystems face dire threats. Toxic gases, chemicals and the exploitation of our natural resources have jeopardized our air, water, lands and the wildlife that inhabit our ecosystems. The telltale sign? The frog, the “canary in the coal mine” of our natural environment, is sick.

Today, nearly 33 percent of amphibian species are threatened, and estimates of species extinctions over the past several decades number in the hundreds. Losses of these species result from the usual suspects, land-use change, overexploitation and disease.

Why all the emphasis on frogs? Aside from the fact that these animals regulate their local ecosystems and control populations of insects that spread disease, they are important to our human health as well. Findings point the way toward new drugs for fighting diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS. Scientists have reportedly found chemicals that are naturally produced in the skin of various frog species that can kill the HIV virus.

But these medicinal tools are disappearing at astronomical rates. That should tell us something. A frog's skin is relatively thin and permeable to water, so frogs are directly exposed to pollutants such as coal ash and environmental radiation. In addition, their eggs are laid in ponds and other bodies of water where they absorb chemicals.

The frog, the canary in the coal mine of our natural environment, is first in line in an environmental pollution war, a war the frog is quickly losing. If we don't heed this call, much like the miners who relied on their singing canary, we are destined for illness and, ultimately, shorter, unhealthier lives.

Sadly, this degradation of human health and quality of life is already happening across the country. Colstrip, Montana, is home to the second-largest coal plant west of the Mississippi. One boxcar-full of coal is burned every 5 minutes. The burning coal creates sodium, thallium, mercury, boron, aluminum and arsenic, which is pumped out of the factory and into the air.

The chemicals that aren't pumped into the air are caught in the factory scrubbers and then dumped with coal ash into giant settling ponds. These ponds are shallow artificial lakes of concentrated toxicity which leach this poison into wells and aquifers. The sludge flows into the surrounding towns and countryside, bubbling up against foundations and floorings, cracking the floor in Colstrip's local grocery store. Ranchers in eastern Montana are now suing the plant for damages. Noxious water, they cite, is the only liquid that fills their wells and stock ponds.

James Hansen, a renowned climate scientist, says Colstrip will cause the extinction of 400 species. But Colstrip burns on. Why? Because we have no national energy plan and because there are currently no federally enforceable regulations specific to coal ash. This lack of federally enforceable safeguards

is exactly what led to the disaster in Tennessee, where a dam holding more than 1 billion of gallons of toxic coal ash failed, destroying 300 acres, dozens of homes, killed fish and other wildlife and poisoned the Emory and Clinch Rivers.

From Tennessee to Colstrip and across the Nation, the story is the same. We have no national conservation plan, no national energy policy, no regulatory reinforcement powers. And the biggest environmental disaster the country has ever faced, the Horizon Deepwater oil spill, has not propelled us any further toward passing a cap-and-trade bill through both Chambers. Senator REID said they were sidestepping a cap-and-trade bill for oil response legislation, but we haven't seen that either.

Worse, as we mark 40 years of cleaner air under the Clean Air Act, it is heart-breaking that we must now fight to protect this monument law from attack. Some in Congress are considering weakening this landmark law, seeking to bail out polluters who continue to lobby for loopholes and giveaways that put Americans' health and safety at risk.

We are poisoning our ecosystems, our animals and, yes, our frogs. We are poisoning our families, our communities, our Nation and our entire world. If we do not heed this canary song, we will only have ourselves to blame. And by the time we take notice, it may be too late.

CHAIRMAN SKELTON BIDS FAREWELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARNAHAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to express my gratitude for the honor of serving in the House of Representatives and to share a few thoughts as I prepare to leave this distinguished body. About this time 34 years ago, my wife, our three boys, and I were surrounded by scores of well-wishers organized by my friend, Bob Welling, as we boarded a train at Warrensburg, Missouri, to travel to Washington, D.C. Shortly thereafter, I was sworn into Congress. I arrived eager to tackle the problems of the day and represent the people of the Fourth Congressional District. It was a political highlight for me.

The Roman orator Cicero said that “gratitude is the greatest of all virtues,” and I'm grateful to so many people. First, I'm extremely grateful and appreciative to the residents of Missouri's Fourth Congressional District whose votes allowed me to serve as their Representative in this House for 34 years. Representing the fourth district has been a tremendous privilege.

I also want to thank my family whose support made it possible for me