stakeholders what they envisioned for a second century of national parks. A nationwide series of more than 40 listening sessions produced more than 6,000 comments that helped to shape five centennial goals. The goals and overarching vision were presented to President Bush and to the American people in May 2007 in a report, ''The Future of America's National Parks.''

Continued and better stewardship was one of the five goals.

We must be better stewards of national parks when it comes to clean water. More than one-half of our 407 national parks have waterways deemed ''impaired'' under the Clean Water Act and in need of attention. These are parks whose local domestic water supply and protected natural resources are dependent upon and often affected by the quality of surface water flowing into and through their respective designated boundaries.

As stewards, we must carry out our responsibilities with respect to clean water. I am particularly sensitive to this responsibility. One hundred thousand streams and rivers, as well as thousands of acres of wetlands, provide the freshwater that flows into the Chesapeake Bay. Restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed is managed by the Chesapeake Bay Program, in which the National Park Service serves as a Federal agency partner. In order for our restoration efforts to succeed, we must ensure clean water flows in the streams that lead into the Chesapeake Bay.

Our national parks are our legacy to the next generation; conserving them is our shared responsibility. The 2016 centennial of our parks is a prime opportunity for renewing this commitment.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE USO

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, I would like to honor the United Service Organizations, USO, and especially the USO of Illinois, as they celebrate their 75th anniversary of keeping servicemembers connected to their family, home, and country throughout their service to the Nation.

Since 1941, the USO has been the Nation's leading organization to serve our military men and women and their families. The USO has continuously adapted to the needs of our servicemembers and their families as they have provided support from the moment servicemembers join the military, through their assignments and deployments, and when they transition back to their communities.

USO centers are found throughout the world at airports and military installations, providing around-the-clock hospitality to service-members and their families. In addition to supporting servicemembers and their families at home, the USO has a tradition of bringing American entertainment and music to our troops overseas.

The USO of Illinois touches the lives of over 330,000 Active-Duty, Guard, and Reserve military servicemembers and their families throughout the State. The USO of Illinois provides over 300 programs and services throughout the year to enhance the quality of life for our servicemembers and their families, including family support events like tickets to the theatre or sporting events, programs designed for military children, prepare care packages for Illinois servicemembers deployed abroad, and providing support and appreciation at homecomings and deployments at airports. The USO of Illinois is a nonprofit organization relying on the generosity of individuals and corporations and hundreds of volunteers.

I congratulate and commend the USO and the USO of Illinois for their continued efforts to support Illinois' servicemembers, their families, and our veterans.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. KIRK. Mr. President, today I wish to discuss a serious threat my constituents face when they travel on one of the 270 trails, spread out over 700 miles, in Illinois. Unfortunately, hikers share these trails with bacteria-carrying ticks, which can infect travelers with a variety of diseases, including Lyme disease.

For those infected, Lyme disease manifests in multiple ways, including fever, fatigue, rashes, and severe pain. Current diagnostic tests are unreliable, causing many people with the condition to be misdiagnosed. Left untreated, it can lead to even more serious and debilitating illnesses.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, Lyme disease is the most commonly reported vector-borne illness in the country, with an estimated 300,000 people infected each year. The CDC also reports that the species of ticks that spread Lyme disease now live in 46 percent of the Nation's counties.

I commend Senators BLUMENTHAL and AYOTTE for introducing the Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention, Education, and Research Act, S. 1503, and I urge my colleagues to join me as a cosponsor of this critical bill. The legislation will better coordinate the Federal Government's response to tick-borne diseases by creating an advisory committee within the Department of Health and Human Services, or HHS, to be comprised of patients, physicians, researchers, and government officials who will be tasked with identifying best scientific practices to combat tick-borne diseases. The bill requires the HHS Secretary to strengthen disease surveillance and reporting, develop better diagnostic tests, create a physician-education program, and establish epidemiological research objectives for Lyme and other tick-borne illnesses.

The prevalence of Lyme and other tick-borne disease cases in recent years demands a strong and coordinated effort at the Federal level. Now is the time to pass this critical legislation.

TRIBUTE TO GROVER FUGATE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the career of one of Rhode Island's most respected ocean and coastal experts, my friend Grover Fugate.

Grover has served as executive director of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, CRMC, for nearly 30 years, protecting Rhode Island's coastal resources through research, regulation, and restoration.

One of the shining jewels of CRMC's work has been its innovative Special Area Management Plans, or SAMPs. These plans are ecosystem-based management strategies developed in collaboration with government agencies, municipalities, and other stakeholders to best manage coastal systems. During Mr. Fugate's tenure, the council has developed eight management plans, including the groundbreaking ocean SAMP, the first formally adopted ocean spatial plan in the country. The ocean SAMP guides future uses of Rhode Island's marine areas. In developing the plan, CRMC engaged a diverse group of stakeholders and laid the groundwork for cooperation among a multitude of regulatory agencies that led the way for the successful development of the Nation's first offshore wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island.

The council has also helped Rhode Island towns and residents understand the increasing effects of sea level rise and storm surge. Using the latest climate change predictions and state of the art modeling, CRMC, in cooperation with the University of Rhode Island and others, developed an online tool, STORMTOOLS, that gives anyone with an Internet connection free access to information that can be used to help decide everything from what neighborhood to buy a home in to where to site a new stormwater treatment plant. Mr. Fugate has been a key leader in establishing STORMTOOLS and educating decisionmakers about the realities of sea level rise and flooding.

In addition to his work for the Coastal Resources Management Council, Mr. Fugate serves as the State colead for the Northeast Regional Ocean Council's Ocean Planning initiative and the Northeast Regional Planning Body established under President Obama's 2010 Executive order. He also serves as adjunct faculty for the University of Rhode Island's marine affairs program and a guest lecturer of coastal and marine law at the Roger Williams University Law School.

Mr. Fugate has earned many awards for his work, including the 2010 Susan Snow-Cotter Award for Excellence in Ocean and Coastal Resource Management from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the 2010 Regional Sea Grant Outstanding Outreach Award, the 2008 Coastal America Award for Habitat Restoration, and the 2008 Rhode Island Sea Grant Lifetime Achievement Award. He has authored numerous academic journal articles on coastal and natural resources management issues.