

athletes accomplish their Olympic dreams.

My grandson, Roan, and I still talk of our visit to Concept2 when he was on his high school rowing team.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the September 2, 2016, article, "Concept2 Oars Used in Majority of Olympic Rowing Wins," from the Stowe Reporter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Stowe Reporter, September 2, 2016]

CONCEPT2 OARS USED IN MAJORITY OF OLYMPIC ROWING WINS

(By Kayla Friedrich)

With the help of Concept2 oars and sculls, 32 rowing crews—76 percent of all medal-winning crews at the Olympic regatta—were able to step onto the platform in Rio de Janeiro to receive their awards this year.

Nine of those medals were gold.

Concept2 is one of the world's most prominent manufacturers of lightweight oars. They're built by former U.S. Olympian Dick Dreissgacker and his brother Pete in Morrisville.

The company also produces an indoor rowing machine, and all of the athletes have trained on the Concept2 Indoor Rower to build their fitness to Olympic caliber.

The company produces 80 to 90 percent of the world's market of competition oars, and it sends an accredited technician—Bob Beeman of Morrisville—to the Olympics to make any equipment repairs the athletes need.

Sometimes oars are damaged in transit, practice or a race, and Beeman is able to provide replacement parts and adjustments if requested.

Thanks to his decades of work at the company, Beeman became a five-time Olympian this year, not competing, but helping teams—regardless of what country they represent.

"Everything we do is free of charge," Beeman said. "It's all part of the service when using Concept2 oars."

"Some of the athletes look at me like I'm Santa Claus. There are 70 countries in rowing, and we try to even the playing field. One team didn't have good oars to use at the Olympics, so we lent some out."

Beeman has been the on-site technician for Concept2 at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996; Sydney, Australia, in 2000; Beijing, China, in 2008; London in 2012; and now Rio.

As a result, he's known some of the athletes for many years.

"Athletes want to know that there is nothing wrong with their equipment, and they rely on me. It makes me so proud," Beeman said.

U.S. rower Gevvie Stone was at the Concept2 tent every day, not because she needed repairs, but because it gave her a place to relax. Beeman said Stone's father thanked him profusely. Stone took silver in the women's single sculls using Concept2 oars.

Beeman also was able to wear a gold medal at this year's events. The gold-medal winning team from New Zealand, Eric Murray and Hamish Bond, returned to the tent following their men's pair final. Murray took off his gold medal and placed it over Beeman's head for a photo-op.

"Just to be around this level of athlete is amazing," Beeman said. "They train daily, many of them two or three times a day at a few hours each time. They train like that not just for months, but for years."

For Beeman, Rio was the best of the five Olympics that he has been to. Everything worked well logistically, there were over 200 volunteers assisting at the rowing venue, and he had a chance to watch some of the other events, including water polo and table tennis.

"It was great to be right in the middle of it all," Beeman said.

This was also the first Olympics at which Beeman was officially recognized for his work. Even a senior adviser thanked him, and "that was a big deal," he said.

Before leaving Brazil, Beeman received a thank-you medal and a certificate from the International Olympic Committee for Concept2's support of the athletes and their equipment.

The next Summer Olympics will be in Tokyo in 2020, and Beeman looks forward to being a rowing-equipment technician for the sixth time.

"I'm also super excited to go to some of the other international regattas," Beeman said. "One is in Serbia this year, and Switzerland. The World Rowing Championships will be in Florida."

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, American historian and author Wallace Stegner called our national parks "the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst." The National Park Service turned 100 on August 25, 2016. I wish to celebrate a century of recreation, conservation, and historic preservation programs.

Congress created the agency in 1916 for the specific purpose of caring for America's special places. The National Park Service was given the responsibility not only to conserve and protect parks, but also to leave them "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The job got bigger as parks expanded in number and type. In the 1930s, military parks and national monuments were added. Then came national parkways and seashores, followed by urban parks in the 1960s. During the next decade, the National Park System nearly doubled with the addition of 47 million acres in Alaska.

I am proud of the national parks and programs in Maryland's backyard. Maryland is home to 18 national parks, which attract 6,443,376 visitors every year. This national park tourism generates \$216,700,000 in economic benefit.

I am proud of the range of parks in the State, from national battlefields such as Antietam and Monocacy in western Maryland to Assateague Island National Seashore, which offers visitors sandy beaches, salt marshes, maritime forests, and coastal bays on the edge of the continent.

I am especially proud of the recently established Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Park in Maryland's Dorchester, Caroline, and Talbot Counties. The vision for the Tubman National Historical Park is to preserve the places significant to the life of Harriet Tubman and tell her story through interpretive ac-

tivities, while continuing to discover aspects of her life and the experiences of those who traveled on the Underground Railroad through continued historical and archaeological research and discovery.

Unfortunately, few of the structures associated with the early years of Harriet Tubman's life remain standing today. The landscape of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, however, is still evocative of the time when Harriet Tubman lived there. Farm fields and loblolly pine forests dot the lowland landscape, which is also notable for its extensive network of tidal rivers and wetlands that Tubman and the people she guided to freedom used under cover of night. If she were alive today, Ms. Tubman would recognize much of the landscape that she knew intimately as she secretly led freedom-seekers of all ages to the North. This park helps connect people today to America's history while establishing an important destination for tourists to come visit, learn, and experience Maryland's Eastern Shore.

For 7 years I worked with my colleagues, Senator MIKULSKI, Senator SCHUMER, Senator GILLIBRAND, and Senator Clinton to establish the first national historical park to honor an African American woman. Harriet Tubman is an extraordinary American, and Marylanders are extremely proud to have her as a native daughter. In 2014, I was so proud to finally get our legislation enacted, and I am pleased that development and planning for this park is well underway.

Only recently has the National Park Service begun establishing units dedicated to the lives of African Americans. Places such as Booker T. Washington National Monument on the campus of Tuskegee University in Alabama, the George Washington Carver National Monument in Missouri, the National Historic Trail commemorating the march for voting rights from Selma to Montgomery, and, most recently, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial on the National Mall are all important monuments and places of historical significance that help tell the story of the African-American experience.

In a similar, overdue spirit, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture will be opening this Saturday. I attended the grand opening weekend of this extraordinary addition to the National Mall. The National Museum of African American History and Culture is the only national museum devoted exclusively to documenting African American life, history, and culture.

On August 25, 2006, the 90th anniversary of the National Park Service, then-Secretary of the Interior—and former Senator—Dirk Kempthorne launched the National Park Centennial Initiative to prepare national parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment. Since then, the National Park Service asked citizens, park partners, experts, and other

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 non-profit 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.