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For Immediate Release

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St. Michael, PA - Congressman John Murtha said today that the historic 1889 South Fork Fishing & Hunting Club clubhouse will open its doors to visitors for tours this summer. Murtha made the announcement during a proclamation-signing ceremony commemorating the transfer of the clubhouse and three other properties to the National Park Service as part of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial.

Signing the proclamation in addition to Murtha were Keith Newlin, superintendent of the memorial and the Allegheny Portage National Railroad, and Walter Costlow and Pauline Roberts of the Friends of the Johnstown Flood National Memorial.

Plans are for the clubhouse to be staffed by volunteers for guided tours three to four days a week beginning in mid-June. Schedules will be available later this spring by calling the flood memorial at 814-495-4643.

"We've worked a long time to develop a long-term strategy for the upkeep of these structures, and I'm delighted that today we're turning them over to the National Park Service, the best preservation organization in the world," Murtha said. "As part of the flood memorial, the clubhouse will complete the story of the 1889 flood, bringing the 19th century to life for visitors in ways that can't be duplicated in books."

Also transferred to the park service were the clubhouse annex and the Brown and Moorhead, or Knox, cottages, owned by the 1889 South Fork Fishing & Hunting National Historical Society. The annex and the Brown cottage have been rehabilitated as residential rental units. The Moorhead is currently unpreserved.

Murtha visited the clubhouse last summer for the ceremonial start of emergency stabilization done under a \$329,000 grant he obtained through the Saving America's Treasure program. Several years earlier, improvements were funded by a program known at the time as America's Industrial Heritage Program, which created the path of Progress National Heritage Tour Route and Westsylvania Heritage Corp.

"The National Park Service will conduct a planning effort during the summer to gather public input on the future uses of the properties," Newlin said. "One public meeting will be held to discuss the uses, and the park service will also gather input by use of the Internet. We welcome any and all comments from the public on the future uses of these properties."