

WASHINGTON-Congressman Spencer Bachus is looking to build upon the 3,500 acres he has already protected by law, by introducing a bill today that would designate additional acres to the Cahaba National Wildlife Refuge. The Secretary of the Interior would be given the authority to acquire up to 30,000 acres of lands and waters from willing property owners along the Cahaba River.

“The expanded wildlife refuge will help preserve this beautiful place for ourselves, our children, and our children’s children”, said Bachus. “The refuge will safeguard the area’s fragile beauty, but also allow managed access for the public. We want thousands of families, wildlife watchers, recreationists and students to come here each year.”

When completed, the refuge will allow for public access for hiking, canoeing and nature education to areas that are currently closed to the public because they are on private land. The refuge will include a visitors and education center where students and the general public can learn about the Cahaba’s unique environmental diversity.

The Cahaba River is home to the largest population of the shoals lily in the world. In addition, the Cahaba hosts more than 131 species of fish, more than any other river its size in North America. Sixty-four rare and imperiled species of aquatic plants and animals, including fishes, turtles, mussels, and snails live in the waters of the Cahaba. Of these, 12 species are listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

In October 2000, the original 3,500-acre Bibb County refuge was created by legislation introduced by Congressman Bachus. “That was a tremendous victory in promoting the long-term conservation of the Cahaba. This new bill will continue the effort to protect its unique combination of beauty and biodiversity for generations to come”, said Bachus.

