

By

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A wilderness studies program has been underway in the National Park Service since 1964 when the Wilderness Act directed the Service to study all roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more in the parks and other areas of the System that existed in 1964. Contrary to comments by some on the Service's apparent slow progress toward completing the studies, we are moving rapidly on our wilderness studies, and I can assure you we will complete them on time and make our wilderness recommendations to Congress before the 1974 deadline.

(Status of wilderness studies in the National Park System exhibit)

To date, Congress has created wilderness units in Petrified Forest National Park and Craters of the Moon National Monument. Congress gave the National Park Service additional funds in Fiscal Year 1971 for wilderness studies and this has been one of the principal reasons for our accelerated progress. Up to FY 1970, only ten recommendations were sent to Congress. In Fiscal Year 1971, an additional 10 were transmitted. This fiscal year our goal is 20 recommendations to be sent to Congress by June 30.

Public hearings have been held on 43 areas. The most immediate hearings are scheduled for May and June. They are on Dinosaur National Monument and Glacier and Mammoth Cave National Parks. Field studies are underway on the remaining parks covered under the 1964 directive.

Congress has added other parks to the list since 1964 - North Cascades, Canyonlands, Gulf Islands, Sleeping Bear Dunes, Voyageurs, and Buffalo National River, which has increased our study program total to 65 areas. Buffalo River was the latest added on March 1, 1972.

National Park Wilderness - (Exhibit)

The national park movement has been a focal point and fountainhead for an evolving wilderness philosophy within our country for almost a century.

Wilderness preservation has undergirded the management of our national parks since Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872.

Wilderness, and the problem of preserving it, has been on the American mind for some time. This led to the Wilderness Act.

The Wilderness Act (September 3, 1964) - (Exhibit)

Directs the Secretary of the Interior to:

"...review every roadless area of five thousand contiguous acres or more in the national parks, monuments and other units of the National Park System...and report to the President his recommendation as to the suitability or non-suitability of each such area...for preservation as wilderness..."

Development of reports concerning the suitability or non-suitability of park lands for wilderness preservation are accomplished as a part of master plan studies.

Master Plan/Wilderness Research and Field Study Work

The research is a part of the basic data compiled prior to a master plan study. It is record information in report form, supplemented by maps and photographs, on legislation, analysis of private lands, rights-of-way, mineral rights, motorboat use and facilities, grazing permits, stock driveways, agreements, research contracts, utility lines,

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inventory of backcountry facilities and structures, and the delineation and identification of all roads and the determination as to the use and disposition of every road and trail.

Field Studies

Delineation of Roadless Areas

Land Classification Plan

Delineation of Proposed Wilderness Boundaries

Preliminary Wilderness Suitability Study Report

Director's Review

Secretarial Clearance

Wilderness Act requires that a public hearing be held before any recommendation of the Secretary is submitted to the President.

Public Hearing

Public Information Packet

Public Information Display Items

Hearing Display Items

Official Record

Final Wilderness Recommendations (post hearing)

Presidential Recommendation

Congressional Legislation

Wilderness Management

Some of the elements of the Service's wilderness recommendations that have drawn opposition at the public hearings are the management zones, enclaves, retention of some backcountry structures, and not including non-federal lands, or lands subject to existing or potential adverse uses, such as grazing areas and lands subject to mineral rights. Since some of these elements may draw questions at the conclusion of my presentation, it may be well to explain the Service's position on them.

Fundamental to the National Park Service's proposed wilderness plans is that National Park wilderness is true or pure wilderness and that any structures, facilities, adverse rights, or potential adverse structure, right, or use will not be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Private lands and lands subject to mineral and other rights, are non-federal in full or part, and cannot be recommended where such lands have wilderness potential. They are indicated for elimination on the master plan land classification plan and will later be recommended for wilderness status once acquired or the adverse use removed.

In the field studies, all structures in the park's backcountry are identified. Decisions are then made on the necessity of their retention. In many cases, cabins have been removed, telephone lines taken out and replaced by radio, thereby removing the intrusion from the wilderness.

Facilities thought necessary for proper resource management are placed in enclaves of varying size. In a few instances, small areas are not included in the wilderness to accommodate placement of future structures necessary for resource management.

Some backcountry visitor use facilities are retained and enclaved. The alternative to not enclaving such backcountry developments as the High Sierra Camps in Yosemite is to leave the whole High Sierra loop area out of wilderness recommendation. Since we believe the High Sierra Camps are valid visitor use development in the Yosemite backcountry and we intend to retain them indefinitely, we have placed them in enclaves.

Our identification of backcountry structures is a closed review. These are all the structures thought necessary for now and the indefinite future. Not to identify structures and enclave them, is to permit an open-ended situation where more and more structures can be placed in the backcountry by administrative action under the guise of wilderness management needs.

There has been disagreement on placing some of these structures in enclaves as it is felt that many are acceptable in wilderness under the terms of the Wilderness Act. Our position is that the Wilderness Act does not address itself to National Park wilderness;

rather it refers to wilderness created under the Act, which is only the National Forest wilderness areas blanketed under the Act. It merely directs the National Park Service to study roadless areas and make recommendations. The Wilderness Act explicitly states that nothing in the Act shall lower the standards for the traditional management of the parks. So, we are making our studies under our wilderness policies and our thoughts on what is and what is not acceptable in wilderness.

The 1/8 mile management zones are another area of comment on our recommendations at the public hearings. We place 1/8 mile management zones between the park boundaries and proposed wilderness boundaries in which management activities related to resource protection, such as boundary patrol by vehicles, fencing, patrol cabins, and wilderness management structures related to controlling backcountry use are placed. These zones also act as "wilderness threshold" lands which are transition zones from lands outside the park boundary which may be urban in character, logged, subdivided, or otherwise altered.

Congress, of course, will make the final determination of what portions of the national parks will be placed in National Wilderness Preservation System.

We are making all haste in placing our recommendations in front of Congress. Certainly all positions will be placed before them, with thorough discussion, decision and, finally, designation of wilderness in National Parks.