

P. Pope, and the late, great Idaho Senator, William E. Borah. Early sessions of the Idaho Legislature memorialized Congress for a national park in the Sawtooths.

I introduced, during the 88th Congress, a bill calling for creation of such a park, but my major purpose was to provide a vehicle for a thorough feasibility study of the area by both the Forest and the National Park Services. This study revealed that the comparatively new concept of a national recreation area should be considered as an alternative to a park.

During the last Congress—the 89th—I introduced alternative bills, one for a park and one for a national recreation area. This subcommittee, in June of last year, conducted hearings in Idaho on both bills. During 2 days of testimony, the people of Idaho gave overwhelming support to a national recreation area.

Let me say at that point, Mr. Chairman, that Senator Jordan and I both attended those hearings. And we received excellent testimony from a large number of Idaho citizens. And afterward, we carefully sifted through that testimony and undertook to redraft the bill in the light of the fine recommendations that we received from Idaho people who are most familiar with the area. And we think the bill as it stands today represents the closest possible reflection of what seemed to be the strong consensus of Idaho people.

As a result of these hearings, I, too, Mr. Chairman, have come to believe that the recreation area is the best plan for the highest public use and management of this magnificent mountain chain and its adjoining lowlands.

Running north and south, the Sawtooth escarpment thrusts 42 snowcapped peaks to elevations of more than 10,000 feet. These tower over blue alpine lakes, rushing white water, and majestic evergreen forests.

Mr. Chairman, we have some colored slides that we would like to show the committee during the course of the hearing this morning.

Against this dramatic backdrop are two grass- and sagebrush-covered valleys where sheep, cattle, and horses graze behind log-fenced pastures. Scattered ranchhouses accentuate this authentic western setting along the winding Salmon River.

The bill the subcommittee considers today will preserve this scenic approach to the mountains by preventing unsightly commercial or other development of the valley lands through the procurement of scenic easements.

The high mountain country is presently administered as the Sawtooth Primitive Area by the U.S. Forest Service. To assure its preservation as wilderness, the bill calls for the Secretary of Agriculture to expedite its inclusion in the national wilderness system. The total recreation area would include around 350,000 acres. This would amount to less than 1 percent of the 20 million acres of national forest land within the State of Idaho. The Forest Service would continue as the administrative agency of the area.

Mr. Chairman, the influx of out-of-State visitors to the vast mountain regions of Idaho has mushroomed in recent years. Thousands come from throughout the Nation to hunt and fish or boat down our wilderness rivers. The Secretary of Agriculture has just come back from such a trip in Idaho. He reported to me earlier that he had enjoyed it immensely. Others come to camp out, marvel at the spectacular