

of acquisition can accommodate. The recreation areas authorized by the 89th Congress alone require the acquisition of lands costing approximately \$119,000,000—and this does not take into account the expense of maintaining existing units.

Under the procedures of the 1964 Wilderness Act, we can expect the authorization of some 150 areas as wilderness within the next 6 years. Many of these reclassifications will necessitate the acquisition of inholdings to round out the units and best protect their wilderness character from development or nonconforming uses.

The opportunities for wilderness preservation provided by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act are twofold. First of all, the fund provides a reservoir out of which there can be appropriations for the purchase of inholdings within classified wilderness and primitive areas, thus serving both to round out and complete the areas, and relieving administrators of vexatious problems brought about by conflicting use.

Secondly, by supplying the gap in needed accessible outdoor recreation areas and facilities throughout the Nation—a real and pressing need—the spread in use of other recreation facilities would lessen pressure on wilderness areas.

The State programs which will be financed from the fund will affect wilderness in many ways. States and local governments can use matching moneys to help acquire non-Federal land and water areas with wilderness or near-wilderness values.

Thus the threat of overuse of wilderness will hopefully be absorbed through the establishment of new recreation areas which are designed to bear intense visitor use, leaving the wilderness unspoiled for the backpacker, hiker, student, scientist, or nature lover who seeks the experience of a wild, undeveloped area where the delicate ecology of nature still exists undisturbed.

With these problems in mind, we commend this committee for its consideration of S. 1401, to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act to provide for the growing expense of land acquisition and the scarcity of funds available for this vitally important purpose. The amendments proposed in this legislation would provide additional revenues for acquiring lands which have been authorized by Congress, and would allow the agencies to purchase these lands in advance of appropriations. At the present rate of price escalation, considerable savings would result through closure of the large gap between authorization and appropriation.

An added benefit of advance purchase of authorized acquisitions would be the immediate protection that would be afforded lands which might otherwise be left vulnerable to some development until appropriations were made for purchase.

The Wilderness Society heartily endorses the proposed amendment to section 2 of title 1 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 to add a new subsection (d) which would increase revenues going into the fund for a period of 5 years; and the addition of new section 8, to allow the Secretary of the Interior, during fiscal years 1968 and 1969, to purchase lands that have been authorized for acquisition by Congress in advance of appropriations.

The society is concerned, however, with the provision in section 2(a) which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to “lease back” or “sell back” property acquired for the national park system. This