

Underlying all of the proposed San Gabriel Wilderness is a granitic formation which has been cut to form deep, steep-walled canyons. Elevations range from 2,150 feet on the banks of the west fork of the San Gabriel River to 8,000 feet on Waterman Mountain; a greater portion of the area lies above 5,000 feet. This mountainous area has temperatures ranging from an approximate low of 20 degrees to a high of 100 degrees. Precipitation averages 32 inches a year and primarily occurs between November and March. During this period snow occurs at elevations above 4,000 feet but does not last long because the periods of freezing weather are short. As in the proposed San Rafael Wilderness Area, the proposed San Gabriel Wilderness is most attractive for use in winter and spring, owing to the very hot and dry summer and fall. During the summer and fall the danger of fire is great, the vegetation being explosively flammable, the temperature high, and the humidity low.

The San Gabriel Wilderness is covered primarily with dense chaparral, with some low-grade, noncommercial timber covering approximately one-quarter of the area. While the area abounds in small wildlife, the higher elevations and peaks are part of the natural range of the big horn sheep. Some black bear and innumerable deer reside in the area. Both Devil Canyon and Bear Canyon, located within the proposed wilderness, furnish good fishing for native rainbow trout.

Since fire is a constant threat during the summer and fall months, certain fire control measures are necessary. While closure of the area during critical months is often required, the threat of lightning fires dictates that firefighting forces must be provided good access over trails from the well-maintained peripheral roads and by helicopters which will land on small, hand-constructed clearings within the area. In addition, aerial fire detection activities will be increased and some fire-proofing will be done in spots where visitors tend to rest, eat, or camp.

It is encouraging that the proposal which I introduce today has the support of all relevant Federal and State administrative and resources agencies. My proposal is also enthusiastically supported by a very great number of fine national and local conservation groups, including: The Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, the Southern California Chapter of Nature Conservancy, the California State Division of the Isaac Walton League of America, the Southern Council of Conservation Clubs, many area chapters of the Audubon Society, the Southern California Section of the Society of American Foresters, many local counsels of the Boy Scouts of America, the Desomount Club, the National Parks Association, the California Council of Landscape Architects, as well as many other fine conservation, garden, and riding clubs.

Mr. President, I am honored to propose this fine addition to our ever-growing wilderness preservation system. As I said when I introduced S. 889:

"The preservation of significant areas of land in our country in their natural state is mandatory. These areas provide present and future generations examples of the workings of nature unimpeded by human invasion. The areas are just as they would be if man had never come upon the earth. As the availability of such areas is reduced by the advance of man, the value of retaining them is amplified."

I today echo my belief in those words, and encourage my colleagues to join me in urging the rapid consideration and passage of this most worthy measure.

I ask that the bill be appropriately referred.

The Acting President pro tempore. The bill will be received and appropriately referred.

The bill (S. 2531) to designate the San Gabriel Wilderness, Angeles National Forest, in the State of California, introduced by Mr. Kuchel, was received, read twice by its title, and referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

Senator CHURCH. I want to thank you, Senator Kuchel, for your remarks. I wonder if there is any other member of the committee who would like to be heard at this time on this bill or any one of the bills on the agenda?

We would be happy to accommodate Members, if any are present.

Senator Hansen, do you have any comment you would like to make?

Senator HANSEN. I don't have any comment, thank you, Mr. Chairman, with reference to the bill that the Senator has discussed. I would like to say that I have introduced the Washakie Wilderness bill. This proposal recommends that 189,024 acres of the Stratified Primitive Area in the Shoshone National Forest, State of Wyoming, and 7,366 contiguous acres designated as wilderness by act of Congress and be added to the national wilderness preservation system.