

The proposals before you today are three of these on which our review has been completed. As required by the Wilderness Act Secretary Freeman reviewed these three proposals and forwarded his recommendations to the President. President Johnson submitted them to you. His recommendations are embodied in S. 2751, S. 2531, and S. 2630.

Our progress thus far would not have been possible without the fine cooperation and assistance in the review process by the Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines in the Department of Interior. We are grateful for this. Strong public interest expressed at the field hearings and the large amount of citizen testimony also assisted us in developing our final recommendations.

Before discussing the three Wilderness Proposals before you today, I would like to describe to you some of the principles we consider in determining suitability or unsuitability of an area of land for wilderness.

The first step is to test primitive area and contiguous lands against the criteria for wilderness set forth in subsection 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. We recognize that these criteria are subjective, but when taken together they do provide a good basis for testing the qualifications of an area for wilderness.

The land must pass that test. Our recommendations have to be based on conditions as they exist now, and not on conditions that might exist 50 or 100 years from now.

In developing some of the proposals you have before you today, we could not include certain areas because they do not meet the criteria presented in the Wilderness Act.

One measure of suitability for wilderness is a weighing of other public values. For example, if these areas are not included in the Wilderness System, we would be able to construct water systems, sanitation facilities, and other similar structures which are prohibited in wildernesses.

This would permit us to accommodate a far greater number of campers, hikers, horseback riders, and other back-country users, and better provide for their health and safety.

Wilderness designation has an impact on other citizens needs too. The social and economic welfare of many Americans and the stability of many communities depends upon the carefully planned management and utilization of national forest resources.

Timber must be grown and harvested. Watersheds must sometimes be modified to improve and stabilize water yield. This may mean conversion of vegetative types or erection of snow fences.

Sometimes it is necessary to reseed or modify national forest ranges for the benefit of permitted domestic livestock. We need to carry out programs to better fish and wildlife habitat. This could involve trout stream improvement, vegetative type conversion, and wildlife watering installations. And throughout the national forests millions of hours of healthful outdoor recreation and enjoyment can and must be provided for by the development of winter sports areas, campgrounds, picnic areas, and other special recreation facilities.

These are all practices or installations which, while needed and appropriate in many places, do not conform with the criteria established for the designation and management of wilderness. We cannot