

Senator CHURCH. The very dark green area on the map, which is designated as 5 and F, I understand the F part was originally proposed by the Forest Service for exclusion from the area.

Mr. CLIFF. That is correct.

Senator CHURCH. But as a result of the local hearings, the Forest Service decided to include it.

Mr. CLIFF. In our original proposal, we proposed to exclude both 5 and F.

Senator CHURCH. I see.

Mr. CLIFF. After the hearings, and after taking another look at the situation on the ground, we decided we could find suitable boundaries, and that this area, indeed, rates wilderness classification, so we added it after the hearings.

Senator CHURCH. This is encouraging to me, because it demonstrates that local hearings do, in fact, have utility and that you are listening to the testimony of local people. Sometimes, you know, the Forest Service is accused of making up its mind about matters of this kind, and then holding hearings which are purely perfunctory, but I think that accusation is not well founded. This is indicative of the fact that you are holding hearings with the purpose of accumulating all of the testimony possible from people who are interested, whether they live close by or afar, and that you are taking that testimony into account in the final decisions that you reach. I must say that that certainly commends itself to me.

Mr. CLIFF. Thank you, Senator. We try to do the best job we can of analysis before the hearings. As you will see as you proceed with these hearings on wilderness, we have made changes after the hearings have been held. We made some changes on the Mount Jefferson after the hearings were held—rather small areas, but significant areas—and this is the case in a number of others.

Senator CHURCH. I think this is very important, because it is extremely difficult for us to sit in Washington and to look at a set of maps, and to listen to the testimony, and to make a judgment from here, and for that reason, we included provisions in the wilderness bill that call for local hearings in the field in order to give the people who are interested the maximum opportunity to make their case. If that mechanism is functioning properly, then you come here with the presumption on your side, and I think that is how we have to proceed.

We want to hear from any of those who feel that you have made the wrong decision, and who want other areas included. Of course we will give whatever they have to say careful consideration, but your case has the presumption with it, as long as we are convinced that you have, in fact, been conducting these local hearings in the way that was intended by the Congress when those provisions were written into the bill.

That, at least, is my own view of how we need to approach this matter, because it would be a mistake if we were simply to try and substitute ourselves in place of the Forest Service, at this point, unless a very strong case can be made before us that some serious mistake has occurred. So I am glad to know that you are modifying your original proposal in the light of local hearings, as you move along.

Very well, have you any further questions, Senator Hansen?