

APPENDIX

(Under authority previously granted, the following statements and communications were ordered printed:)

STATEMENT OF THE WYOMING OUTDOOR COORDINATING COUNCIL, LANDER, WYO.

CONSIDERATIONS ON WASHAKIE WILDERNESS AREA

1. Elk and other big game, as well as timber, are important to the economy of the Dubois community and Fremont County. Figures established by the University of Wyoming Department of Commerce and Industry indicate that expenditures for the hunting of elk alone in the Dubois area bring some \$478,000 a year into the state. Dubois and Fremont County realize much of the benefit. Of this amount, that portion of the elk herd with which we are concerned (north of Highway 287) contributed about \$383,000. Barring any environmental or habitat changes, harvest from the herd can be considered a sustained yield.

Harvest records from the hunting areas north of Highway 287 indicate that about 500 animals are taken each year from this herd. The University of Wyoming figures indicate that non-residents spent an average of \$963 to harvest one elk and residents spent an average of \$680. Those figures increase considerably each year if for no other reason than supply and demand.

2. Some local segments of the Upper Wind River elk herd have been displaced and hunting opportunity has been lost through disturbances occurring on and around elk ranges. These disturbances have occurred because of the advent of 4-wheel drive vehicles and because of modern timbering practices—access roads, clear-cutting over extensive areas, and other modifications of elk habitat. It is the contention of the Colorado Game and Fish Department that elk are wilderness animals. Mr. John McKean, Chief of Game Operations, Oregon State Game Commission, has written (personal communication, February 5, 1968), "Rocky Mountain elk have a low tolerance for human disturbance. We share Wyoming's concern for the impact of access roads, snowmobiles, and other sources of disturbance that affect the distribution of the animals. We are particularly concerned on winter ranges, and anticipate a substantial reduction of elk populations if human molestation cannot be effectively controlled on critical wintering areas." The Idaho Fish and Game Department has testified as to the disturbing influence of logging practices on elk herds at a hearing on the Magruder Corridor of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department feels that the Dubois area could not now support the elk herd that it does without extensive wilderness areas into which the elk can retreat.

Loss of habitat in Wyoming practically means loss of elk. The Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and private landowners are loathe to allow any increase in most elk herds simply because of carrying capacity.

3. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has some \$260,000 invested in the East Fork Elk Winter Range. This complex was assembled through acquisition of private property (upon which taxes are still paid), trades of range privileges on Forest and BLM lands, and preferred leases of public lands. It was done to stabilize elk populations and prevent game damage to private holdings in the Dubois area. That investment is dependent upon several factors not the least of which is maintenance of suitable elk habitat. Some 2,500–3,000 elk use the winter range.

4. Elk are most easily managed when they are residents of an area. Migratory elk are difficult of management for several reasons, the most important being adequate harvesting. Of necessity, hunting seasons are set some months ahead. Yet, we have no control of the weather, and it is the combination of snow depths and cold weather which moves the elk out of the high country and into the lower valleys where hunting is most successful. Resident elk remain within a certain