

bill or on comparable legislation providing a comprehensive national system of wild and scenic rivers.

My testimony will be limited to two rivers in my State of Minnesota and the neighboring State of Wisconsin. The first is the St. Croix. An upper section between Taylors Falls, Minnesota, and Gordon, Wisconsin, would be designated a wild river, and the downstream section between Taylors Falls and the river's confluence with the Mississippi would be a scenic river. The second stream is a St. Croix tributary, the Namekagon. The section from its confluence upstream with the St. Croix to the dam near Trego, Wisconsin, would be a wild river, and the section from Lake Namekagon downstream to the dam near Trego would be a scenic river. Other witnesses will, I know, appear before the Subcommittee in support of other proposed wild and scenic rivers, all of which are as worthy of consideration as the St. Croix and Namekagon. And when public witnesses are heard later this month, I expect several to testify in greater detail for the rivers in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

My statement, ladies and gentlemen, will be of a general nature, because I am not a scientist or an engineer or a professional conservationist. But I am deeply interested in the cause of conserving, to the best of our ability, our Nation's fast-shrinking natural resources. Among the cleanest and most beautiful rivers in the United States are the St. Croix and the Namekagon. Cleanliness and beauty, while increasingly rare in the mounting morass of pollution that surrounds us, are almost unique when found near a metropolitan area. The St. Croix and its tributary only a few miles from the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. I know of no free-flowing and unpolluted streams anywhere else in the country that are so accessible to so many major cities.

Another reason the St. Croix and Namekagon should be included in this legislation, I feel, is their central location in relation to the rest of the United States. Not only are these rivers close to the Twin Cities; they are readily accessible, via interstate highway, railroad and airline, to such other population centers as Chicago and Milwaukee. And, because of the ease and speed of today's transportation systems, they are available with only slightly more effort to all Americans.

I feel strongly that decisive action is needed to protect areas such as the St. Croix. I have a personal interest in this legislation that dates back to my childhood. Many years ago my parents bought a cabin on the shores of the St. Croix near Afton, Minnesota, on the section of the river that would be designated a scenic river. I have swum, canoed, fished and sailed on the lower part of the river every summer since I was a boy. Several times I have canoed down both rivers from the "white water" of the upper part through the more placid waters of the lower. Three generations of Frasers continue to make vigorous use of the St. Croix every summer. No spot on earth means more to me and my family.

The upper St. Croix and the Namekagon qualify as wild rivers because they remain in their natural state, relatively unaffected by man. Large numbers of men do not take the trouble to gain access to their rugged beauty. This is ideal canoe country.

The lower, scenic portion—actually a 26-mile-long lake about one mile wide in most areas—lends itself to the use of power boats of all sizes. In a few sections there are homes and cabins. But because of the steep, heavily vegetated banks, most of these dwellings are several hundred feet from the river's edge. The water remains clear and unpolluted, and its banks remain in a natural state. To go from cabin to river is almost to go from civilization to wilderness. Many of the houses are not visible from the water. Even though there are cities along the lower river, and industries within these cities, the present development has not destroyed the quality of the river. We can and obviously should do all we can to protect this resource.

In order to make the river meet the needs of a growing population, more points of entry are needed. There must be more public use lands, which are available for purchase in accordance with the provisions of the bill. These provisions have been worked out carefully to protect the rights of landowners and to prevent commercialization of the area.

Even on the clean and lovely St. Croix and Namekagon, time is running out. Unless Congress acts to protect them, their high quality may start to deteriorate as civilization closes in on them. Failure to act promptly could mean such a drop in quality that the rivers would no longer qualify for a National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Such a failure would be a sad loss to the Nation.

Thank you.