

The pioneer naturalist and painter of American birds and mammals once wrote a publisher friend that the only thing that sustained him in his prodigious and exhausting feats of wilderness travel and labor was a determination to leave to his countrymen a legacy of the "varied splendor of American nature" that he feared would some day be gone.

In behalf of the National Audubon Society—our officers, directors, and 63,000 members—I thank this committee for its conservation leadership. Creating a national scenic rivers system will constitute another major and essential addition to what I call our national conservation estate.

This country was richly endowed with superb rivers that have figured prominently in our history and development, helping shape our civilization and national growth. Relatively few of them remain in anything like their natural condition. It is time to set some of them aside in recognition of their beauty, their recreational value, and in order to conserve the natural ecosystems that unspoiled rivers support, and that is where the wild trout come in that Mr. Bovey spoke so eloquently about.

The National Audubon Society respectfully urges the subcommittee to fashion a bill that combines the good features of H.R. 8416, which was introduced by Mr. Aspinall, and H.R. 90, by Mr. Saylor, both of which are superior in concept and in substance to S. 119, the measure passed last year by the Senate.

Mining, particularly the kind usually practiced in streambeds, can be disastrous to the natural beauty and ecology of a river. The Senate bill would permit mining claims, patents, and mining as presently allowed, although it does say that new claims located in wild or scenic river areas would be subject to "regulations" prescribed by the administering Secretary. Both H.R. 90 and H.R. 8416 provide that for new claims perfected after date of the act, the claimant would secure title only to the mineral deposits, not to the surface of the land. H.R. 8416 would withdraw from development the minerals in Federal lands under the beds or banks of the protected streams; we recommend the inclusion of this excellent feature in the bill that you report.

We also recommend the superior provisions of either the Aspinall or Saylor bills with respect to the prohibitions against the licensing of dams or other projects by the Federal Power Commission or other Federal agencies on any wild or scenic river and on streams designated for study.

The land acquisition authorization provisions of H.R. 8416 and H.R. 90 are both carefully and conservatively drawn, and either is better and more realistic than the similar provision in the Senate bill.

We prefer the classification system spelled out in section 2(b) of H.R. 90, chiefly for its simplicity, but we believe the classification proposed in section 2(b) of H.R. 8416 is also practicable.

An important substantive difference in the various bills is the designation of specific rivers, or portions thereof, that would go into the scenic rivers system at once, and those that would be designated for study. Here, Mr. Chairman, we urge the subcommittee to be bold. We recommend the immediate designation of all 16 of the streams listed in section 3(a) of H.R. 90 as scenic river areas under the authorized system. We further recommend the designation by name of all of the