

I am Thomas L. Kimball, executive director of the National Wildlife Federation which has its national headquarters at 1412 16th Street NW., here in Washington, D.C.

By way of identification, the federation is a private organization which seeks to attain conservation goals through educational means. The federation has affiliates in 49 States. These affiliates, in turn, are composed of local groups and individuals. When combined with associate members and other supporters of the National Wildlife Federation, these number approximately 2½ million persons.

I welcome the invitation to appear here today and shall endeavor to be as brief as possible in recognition of the committee's heavy agenda of business.

Mr. Chairman, as members of the committee know, a five-person study team spent 2½ years in reviewing the North Cascades area of the State of Washington.

Recommendations of the study team, as issued in a printed report in October 1965, could be summarized as these: the two Interior Department representatives sought a two-unit national park, the two Agriculture Department representatives proposed no park, and the chairman (also from Interior) favored a one-unit park.

The study team was unanimous in recommending wilderness status for several portions of the area. Some of the proposals suggested recreation area status for other portions. Thus, recommendations of the study team were by no means unanimous, as far as establishment of a park in this area is concerned.

After having viewed much of the area personally and discussing various points with others, these conclusions appear evident:

1. The North Cascades are of superb scenic quality and must be preserved for oncoming generations, a fact that meets almost unanimous approval; and

2. There appear to be major areas of disagreement on how the area is to be preserved and which Federal agency should have prime responsibility for management and preservation.

While differences exist between boundaries and other features of the various proposals, when boiled down to the barest essentials the committee would appear to have one basic decision to make: To decide whether the natural areas or wildernesses, or portions thereof, could be administered better by the National Park Service or by the U.S. Forest Service. After giving consideration to all factors, the National Wildlife Federation has joined the Washington State Sportsmen's Council, Inc., in believing that the public interest would be served best by Forest Service administration for these reasons:

1. The Forest Service originated the wilderness concept among Federal agencies and has a long and enviable record of administration in this regard;

2. The Forest Service is presently administering much of the area as wilderness and has experienced and competent personnel with the necessary expertise already on the job;

3. Washington State already has two large national parks encompassing approximately 1,130,000 acres not yet fully developed for maximum public enjoyment;

4. The Park Service tends to develop national parks for intense public recreation use which could have a deleterious effect on wilderness protection;