

Accordingly, the Chief of Engineers is withholding his recommendation on Big Walnut Reservoir pending further study of the impact of the project on natural values.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement.

I might say, Mr. Chairman, that the report is now with the Secretary of the Army for review and will be transmitted to the Bureau of the Budget today.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Zion?

Mr. ZION. In your opinion, if this Big Walnut is made a national landmark or designated as a national landmark, will this be incompatible with the project that has been contemplated?

Colonel ANDERSON. We checked carefully with the National Park Service on this and they feel that if the Big Walnut project were to be built and thus create a reservoir in the particular region, that is eligible for natural landmark designation, that this would negate the purpose of declaring this area a natural landmark.

Now, we did get a statement just this morning from Mr. Hartzog, the Director of the National Park Service which says in part:

I have advised the Corps of Engineers of our evaluation and conclusion that the natural landmark eligibility of the area in question would have to be withdrawn if the Big Walnut Creek reservoir is authorized by Congress and constructed. I have also urged upon General Noble the thought that, if the reservoir is authorized and constructed, the Corps of Engineers should acquire all of the landmark area and utilize that part not inundated as a nature study area.

We have added and modified the Big Walnut project to include additional lands, with a nature center, and education and scientific facilities for this purpose. The State of Indiana has agreed to operate and maintain and share the cost of this nature center.

Mr. ZION. In your opinion, would this recreation and nature study area that would be created under the revised plan of the Corps of Engineers be comparable to that that would have been available prior to the construction of the dam, Big Walnut?

Colonel ANDERSON. The dam or the lake created by the dam does create alterations within this particular region, sir; and although in my opinion the alterations are not significant in the opinion of the Park Service they are significant enough to remove the natural landmark designation.

Mr. ZION. Again, your opinion, please. Would the area as revised by the new plan of the Corps of Engineers, would it be a better recreation area than it is now?

Let us presume to leave it as is and without a lake. Would its value as a recreation area be better or worse as the result of contemplated plans?

Colonel ANDERSON. The conservation pool of this reservoir is about 27 miles long.

The natural landmark area in the upper reaches is about a mile and a half long. So, if you take the overall project as presently not being recommended by the Chief of Engineers but as recommended by the district engineer, there is a much greater capacity for recreation visitations than just at the natural landmark area.

Now, this project offers the opportunity of preserving the area by buying all of the area that is designated to be eligible as a natural landmark which is presently under private ownership.