

There is an illustrated need for storage development to provide an annual water yield to serve the Indianapolis area which is in excess of that which this subbasin can sustain. For this reason we must go beyond the boundaries of the upper west fork drainage to obtain this needed storage. The Big Walnut Reservoir is an attempt to provide this required interbasin transfer.

A second point which must be considered in making a decision in this matter of conflict between reservoir development and the preservation of an ecological community is the relative value of the ecosystem with which we are concerned.

Prior to the public announcement of a plan to construct a reservoir in the Big Walnut Creek Valley apparently few people knew of the existence of a unique vegetation area in this valley. There is little evidence of visitation to the area and, according to the information available to this office, only Wabash College and certain classes of one high school in Indianapolis used the area as an outdoor laboratory. The area did not become of great value to the general public until some alternate use was proposed.

There is already preserved for public use and now in public ownership an area similar in biotic nature; similar in ecological reaction to a climatic, topographic, and biologic environment, an area more accessible to the public and to those who wish to use it as an outdoor laboratory. This area within 25 miles of the Big Walnut Creek area is now owned by the State of Indiana under an agreement with Nature Conservancy, Inc., to preserve it as a natural area.

There is no doubt that the ecology of the Big Walnut area will be changed with the construction of the Big Walnut Reservoir. However, much of the attraction of the present area, the hemlock trees, the beech-maple forest, the historic sites, and the heron rookery will not be affected by the presence of the reservoir. What will be changed will be the general ecosystem and those plants which now exist in that portion of the valley to be flooded, including a portion of the Canadian yew colony.

The decision faced in this matter is whether the partial preservation of a second natural area of the same general character as one already under public protection should take precedence over creation of a water storage facility which is a vital segment of a water development program essential to the continuing growth of a metropolitan area such as Indianapolis.

Thank you very much.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Zion?

Mr. ZION. In your opinion, would the recreational features of this area be enhanced or would they not be as a result of the Big Walnut project?

Dr. BARTON. Well, in terms of present usage, Congressman Zion, there is essentially—well, I will not say no, but very little usage of this area at this time.

In fact, I would say that with the exception of the people in the immediate vicinity and the landowners in this particular area, few of us in Indiana knew about this area until it was proposed to be included in the reservoir project area.

Mr. ZION. Thank you very much.

Mr. JONES. Any further questions?