

Tree cavities suitable for the nesting of wood ducks are rare in the vicinity of the Dyke Marsh. This beautiful waterfowl could undoubtedly be increased considerably by the erection of predator-proof and starling-deterrent nesting houses along the borders of the open waters. Small islands, or other offshore loafing structures to provide freedom from disturbance would also be very useful in attracting many kinds of aquatic birds.

Nature trails, bird observation points, and fishing sites can be developed from parking areas that should be created along the west boundary of the Dyke tract, where human activity will not be unduly disturbing to the wildlife of the central marshes. The Belle Haven picnic grounds at the north end of the Dyke Marsh already supply excellent opportunities for persons interested in watching the activities of large flocks of diving ducks, gulls, terns, and many other waterfowl.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D.C., October 10, 1967.

Col. FRANK W. RHEA,
District Engineer, Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army Engineer District, Baltimore, Baltimore, Md.

DEAR COLONEL RHEA: In response to public notices dated March 24, 1964, NABOP-P (Hunting Towers Operating Co., Inc.), and NABOP-P (Hoffman, Howard P., Associates, Inc.), the National Park Service and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife advised the Corps of Engineers of their opposition to the granting of the requested permits on the grounds that the construction of the proposed bulkhead and fill would adversely affect fish and wildlife, park and recreation values in the area, and might adversely affect the riparian rights of the United States as owner of the area in Alexandria, Va., known as Jones Point. Revised applications filed in July 1964, which reduced the area of the proposed fill, were reviewed by the same two bureaus of this Department and were opposed on the same basis as the original applications.

However, since that time we have reconsidered our interests in this matter, in the light of existing conditions in the area. We have concluded that the granting of the applications would not significantly affect recreation or conservation values in the Hunting Creek area. Accordingly, we withdraw the objections interposed to the granting of the permits in accordance with the revised applications.

This withdrawal is subject to the following understanding. The frontage of the federally owned land at Jones Point extends from the Maryland-Virginia boundary to the east line of South Royal Street. Our lawyers have advised us that it is their best judgment that the Federal property interest extends to a westerly boundary line which follows the east line of South Royal Street projected southerly into Hunting Creek. They also advise that the assertion of title to this line by our Department is not entirely free of question since conditions in Hunting Creek have changed and are changing so radically, it may be ultimately resolved only by a court of law.

There are enclosed marked prints of the revised plans accompanying your public notice of July 1964, bearing our Map File No. NCR 117.5-680 and 681 and showing this asserted interest of the United States in red. There is also enclosed a map prepared by the National Capital Region, National Park Service, titled National Park Service Boundary, Hunting Creek, George Washington Memorial Parkway, NCR 117.5-708, showing our latest survey of the mean low waterline in Hunting Creek at our Jones Point Park together with other pertinent information.

Sincerely yours,

STANLEY A. CAIN,
Assistant Secretary of the Interior.