

Although they are too small to be important in a historical sense, they have had the protection of the Federal Government for more than 50 years. The Gravel Island and Green Bay National Wildlife Refuges were originally established for use by nesting native birds by Executive Order No. 1678 of January 9, 1913, and Executive Order No. 1487 of February 21, 1912, respectively. Some of the tree and shrub cover of the islands has been lost due to avian life such as the great blue and black-crowned night herons. Waterfowl, herring gulls and ring-billed gulls find ideal nesting conditions on the islands, particularly at low water levels because of additional habitat and the absence of mammalian predators. Ground hemlock abounds on two of the islands while it is rare on the mainland.

The islands have cold winters and moderate summers with an average annual rainfall of 28 inches.

Little social or economic impact in the vicinity would result from the islands being added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Many areas in the vicinity are available for a variety of recreational uses and designation of the islands as wilderness would not interfere with such uses. Few visitors would find the small smelly islands attractive, and visitors could easily erase the prime requisite for bird use-solitude. Travel to the islands is difficult and landing conditions on the island must be perfect before any visits are possible. All visitor use must therefore continue only by special permit in order to protect bird nesting colonies and to provide public safety.

B. PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with section 3(d) (1) (B) of the Wilderness Act, a public hearing was held in the Court House in the City of Sturgeon Bay, Door County, Wisconsin, on February 15, 1967. Mr. Daniel H. Janzen was hearing officer. Mr. Frank Martin, Assistant Regional Supervisor, Division of Wildlife Refuges, Minneapolis, Minnesota, represented the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

1. *The public hearing transcript*

A total of 27 people was present at the hearing. Statements were presented by eight persons as individuals and by seven persons representing organizations. All statements favored the wilderness proposal.

2. *Communications from citizens*

All of the 159 individuals who expressed an opinion were in favor of the wilderness proposal. The principal argument was that wilderness status would increase protection of the islands against undesirable developments. Communications from 32 individuals were received after the public hearing. All of them were also in favor of the proposed wilderness.

3. *Communications from organizations*

All 17 organizations submitting an opinion were in favor of wilderness designation for the islands. The main argument was that wilderness status would preserve the islands in their existing state. The communications from 10 organizations received after the public hearing also were in favor of the proposed wilderness.

4. *Elected officials*

A Ward Alderman and County Supervisor commended the Department of the Interior for affording protection to the islands in the past, and expressed her support for the wilderness proposal. No communications were received from U.S. Senators, Congressmen, the Governor, or other elected officials.

5. *State agencies*

The State of Wisconsin presented a favorable statement through the State Conservation Department.

6. *Federal agencies*

The Geological Survey stated in part that there are no records of mineral production from the refuges or nearby areas and no known mineral deposits of commercial significance. The mineral resource potential in the area is considered to be poor.

The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation stated that it felt the establishment of a wilderness area on the Wisconsin Islands is a desirable action.