

Fishermen and hunters will be permitted to use the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge as in the past. Access to all areas within the national wildlife refuge will also continue as before, except access by motor vehicles into the wilderness would be restricted to the minimum requirements for administration of the areas and existing private rights. For the fishermen or hunter willing to walk, row, or paddle a mile or so, these wilderness areas will eventually be the only areas left, even in the State of Maine, where the solitude and beauty of true wilderness would be guaranteed for generations to come. Leaving selected roads of the Edmunds Unit outside of the wilderness proposal will facilitate public access and the management of existing structures within the wilderness.

D. WILDERNESS RECORD

5. A designated wilderness area, even in Maine, will soon be the only place in accordance with section 3(d)(1)(B) of the Wilderness Act, a public hearing was held beginning in the auditorium of the Calais Memorial High School, Calais, Maine, at 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 12, 1967. Mr. Daniel H. Janzen, Former Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, was the hearing officer. The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife was represented by Mr. Richard E. Griffith, Regional Director, Boston.

1. Public hearing transcript

Sixty-three individuals attended the public hearing and 28 statements were presented for the hearing record. The results of the hearing testimony and statements were 22 in favor and six against the wilderness proposal within the Edmunds Unit. All statements mentioning the Birch Islands wilderness proposal were in favor of it.

Arguments favoring wilderness status for the Edmunds Unit were generally in one or more of the following categories:

1. It would provide an opportunity for study of the natural process of recovery and ecology, including soil, plant, and animal life, following the decimation of repeated logging and wild fires.
2. There is no known stand of virgin timber left in Maine, and wilderness protection by Act of Congress would permit one area to develop mature tree vegetation with undisturbed protection assured for generations to come.
3. The combination of the Cobscook Bay State Park and adjacent wilderness would eventually be of greater economic value to Washington County through attraction of tourists and campers than continued timber and pulp harvest in the Edmunds Unit.
4. Only wilderness status protection will prevent eroding of the wilderness quality by "improvements" and "developments" resulting from encroachment activities of mankind.
5. A designated wilderness area, even in Maine, will soon be the only place a person can enjoy a true wilderness experience, safe from the intrusion of four-wheel-drive vehicles, trail motorcycles, snowmobiles, or powerboats.

Statements opposing the wilderness proposal for the Edmunds Unit were generally centered around keeping the national wildlife refuge under its present management without the additional protection and restrictions of wilderness status. Some statements claimed that the wildlife refuge under its present management provides a great and valuable service, and that wilderness status would defeat the purpose of the refuge and contribute nothing in return.

The Wilderness Society recommended and actively promoted an additional area of 2,500 to 5,000 acres within the Baring Unit. This additional area lies west of the old railroad and Charlotte Road, north of the South Trail, and east of State Route 191. Its northern boundary was approximately 400 yards south of Conic Road, with Cranberry Lake excluded. The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife did not study or propose this area during the current study period.

Proponents of the Baring Unit proposal, representing about 50 percent of the total statements received, favored wilderness status for one or more of the following reasons:

1. It would provide natural development of a wider diversity of habitat, thus permitting natural vegetation to restore itself and attracting a wide variety of wildlife (in addition to those of particular interest to hunters) in a protected habitat guaranteed free forever from man-caused disturbances.
2. In spite of past logging, the unit still contains sufficient timber to provide a mature-appearing natural forest in one generation, and the remaining timber is of better quality than that on surrounding lands.