

**STATEMENT OF ESTE STOWELL, NORTH JERSEY CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION; ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. ARTHUR FENSKE,
DIRECTOR, NORTH JERSEY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION**

Mr. STOWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senators, Congressmen, I would like to read a very brief statement in behalf of the North Jersey Foundation and then add one or two remarks.

The better part of a decade has passed since the Great Swamp Committee, predecessor of the North Jersey Conservation Foundation, took the initiative in preserving the diverse natural marvels of the Great Swamp.

The North Jersey Conservation Foundation speaks for 7,015 individuals, 478 organizations in 301 communities and 29 States who have donated more than \$1.5 million so that enough of the Great Swamp could be bought to guarantee the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a workable preserve. The money was used to purchase more than 3,000 acres which has been deeded to the Federal Government, at no cost to the taxpayers, as the nucleus of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

We are proud of the role we have played in the creation of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. Even more important to us is our feeling of continued obligation to strive for the perpetual preservation of Great Swamp as a tiny cross section of a once extensive wilderness area. We feel an added obligation to guarantee the trust placed in us by the thousands of Americans who made this refuge possible.

Our achievement has national importance as an example of the kind of citizen action that is necessary today to preserve our deteriorating environment. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has done an outstanding job in saving Great Swamp. The cooperation between the Bureau and citizen groups has been remarkable. Their wilderness proposal is added proof that such an alliance can be fruitful and worth striving for.

We unconditionally endorse the Bureau's proposal to have the 3,750-acre M. Hartley Dodge wilderness unit and the Harding unit included in the national wilderness system. The M. Hartley Dodge tract for the most part is virgin woodlands while the Harding unit is a roadless island of marsh and wetlands. These two units comprise a comprehensive cross-section of Great Swamp ecology.

If I may interrupt my statement, Senator Hansen, that is perhaps part of the answer to the question you raised.

Senator HANSEN. Yes.

Mr. STOWELL. These were originally separate areas because the ecology of each was different and were later combined because it seemed a more workable proposition even though we were aware of the road between them.

We urge the committee to review as much as possible the extensive testimony included in the wilderness hearing records. We ask that the index to this record be made part of this hearing record today and we hope the committee will scan this index and learn the wide scope of interest among those who both worked and donated money to save Great Swamp.