

SIERRA CLUB RECOMMENDATIONS

General.—While the Sierra Club is generally quite pleased with the handling of these wilderness proposals by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, we would like to call the committee's attention to a technical point in the language of these pieces of legislation and to suggest alternative language. This point was raised by Senator Allott.

The language of section 3 of these bills, and of the other wilderness proposals from the Department of the Interior, pertaining to the prohibited uses of the wilderness and the exceptions thereto, differs in certain respects from the language of the Wilderness Act itself.

The major difference is that while the Wilderness Act refers to the administration of the area "for such other purposes for which it may have been established as also to preserve its wilderness character" and excepts certain prohibited uses "to meet the minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this act," section 3 of these Interior proposals refers to exceptions of prohibited uses "in connection with the purposes for which the area is administered."

We would suggest that section 3 be deleted and that Section 2 be amended as follows:

SEC. 2. The area designed by this Act as wilderness shall be known as * * * and shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Wilderness Act, and Subsection (c) of that Section, except where emergencies require resort to otherwise prohibited uses to fulfill the purpose for which the Refuge was established.

We feel this language gives the Bureau the flexibility it needs to administer the area, without risking a possible conflict in interpretation of the Wilderness Act.

Great Swamp Wilderness, S. 3379.—The proposed Great Swamp Wilderness is unique in its proximity to our greatest population center, located as it is just 30 miles from its most distant environmental cousin, the "neon wilderness" of Times Square. This vestige of wilderness at the very doorsteps of some 30 million people has been preserved for us through the hard work and dedication of a handful of New Jerseyites and through the dollars contributed by thousands more from every corner of the Nation.

The overwhelming citizen support for the inclusion of portions of Great Swamp in the national wilderness preservation system has been almost incredible. This unprecedented record of support is a good measure of the soundness of the wilderness proposal before the committee.

The proposed 3,750-acre Great Swamp Wilderness is probably misnamed because it is actually two separate wilderness units: The upland M. Hartley Dodge Wilderness of 2,500 acres and the marshy Harding Wilderness of some 1,250 acres. Because it is swamp, and therefore somewhat difficult of access, the Great Swamp Wilderness need not bear the brunt of the mass wilderness surrounded by the megalopolis. The Harding and Dodge Wilderness areas, the nonwilderness portions of the national wildlife refuge, and the adjoining Morris County Nature Center and Somerset County Passaic River Park offer in a compact area a broad range of recreational opportunities available nowhere else in the New York metropolitan area.