

**STATEMENT OF STEWART M. BRANDBORG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
AND M. RUPERT CUTLER, ASISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY**

Mr. BRANDBORG. Thank you, sir.

I am accompanied by Mr. M. Rupert Cutler, assistant director of the society.

As you know, we are headquartered here in Washington, D.C.

The Wilderness Society is pleased to appear here today in support of legislation to designate 10 wilderness areas in six States for inclusion in our growing National Wilderness Preservation System. The wilderness system was established by the Wilderness Act of 1964, an act which was strongly supported by our members, other conservation groups, and conservation-minded citizens throughout the United States.

The support for that act derived from the realization that in this country we still have the opportunity to preserve a significant system of areas of wilderness, but that we can do so only by obtaining firm security for our remaining primitive lands in the form of legal protection enacted by the Congress. We, together with others, concluded that such protection by the Congress would establish a continuing program of wilderness preservation, assuring that wilderness, in its great diversity of forms and in every part of our country, shall endure as a part of our culture and heritage.

Today the National Wilderness Preservation System exists, a conservation achievement of which all, and especially the members of this committee, can indeed be proud. The program to implement this system, adding suitable areas to those which were included in the Wilderness Act itself, is now underway following the orderly procedures which the 1964 act established. As the wilderness administering agencies undertake their reviews of potential new wilderness areas, The Wilderness Society's members and cooperators are taking an active citizen's role in independently studying the lands involved, examining the agency proposals and, where appropriate, recommending desirable improvements in those proposals at an early stage in their development. These procedures provide a sensible means of constructive cooperation between citizens and administrators, bringing together the ideas of both and permitting the development of well-conceived proposals for submission to the Congress.

The 10 proposals being considered today are noncontroversial. They have followed this pattern and are exemplary illustrations of constructive public participation in land use decisions. Over 240 statements were presented at the various administrative public field hearings on these proposals, and in addition the Bureau received through the mail more than 7,500 written statements and letters of citizens views concerning them.

We appreciate this opportunity to present testimony today on these 10 outstanding wilderness proposals prepared by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

Mr. Chairman, these proposals mark a new facet of our national wilderness policy in several respects. Until now, the additions made to the wilderness system—San Rafael and San Gabriel—have, like most of the areas already comprising the system, been located on na-