

of such alteration. This is seen as an old abandoned ditch which is healed in. The island has never been diked or roaded, and represents essentially natural conditions.

Pauls Island, Nelson Island, and the western side of Preachers Island show scattered spoil piles on some of their shores that were left by the Corps of Engineers during the dredging of the nearby Intracoastal Waterway prior to the addition of these islands to the refuge.

Such spoil deposition has not taken place since the islands were added to the refuge, nor should such intrusion be permitted in the future. The spoil—sand and muck from the river bottom—appears as scattered random mounds. Experience indicates that vegetation will cover the mounds within a few years. Accordingly, while placement of more spoil definitely should not be permitted in the future, the temporary condition represented by the several scattered mounds does not warrant exclusion of these affected islands, which are of wild character, from consideration for wilderness classification.

Florida is developing rapidly and this region will face strong development pressures in the future. The Atlantic beach is 1 mile east, and a major north-south tourist route, U.S. Highway 1, is 1 mile to the west. Under these circumstances a substantial increase in land development pressure near the refuge can be anticipated. As coastal land and water areas continue to be developed, Pelican Island Refuge will become increasingly important, not only for its value to fish and wildlife resources but because it represents an ecological type now rapidly disappearing from the east coast of Florida. Permanent preservation of the refuge islands and the surrounding bay bottoms in their natural condition will be a source of continuing enjoyment for residents and visitors alike.

To avoid conflict with the colonial bird nesting which occurs on these islands, visitor use of the islands themselves must be kept to a minimum throughout the year. This does not, however, impair the wilderness benefits to be realized by protective designation. The islands can be approached by boat and are readily visible from surrounding lands. They are thus a part of the visual environment, to be enjoyed and valued just for the looking. The islands act as "spatial foils," to use an architect's terminology, increasing the diversity and esthetic interest of the landscape. Opportunities for public enjoyment of the wildlife resources and water-oriented recreation will be provided in the surrounding waters, with an ever-present backdrop of wilderness protected by legal designation and available for scientific study.

The Wilderness Society and its local cooperators have reviewed this proposal carefully. We are gratified by the responsiveness of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife to citizen recommendations for additions to the preliminary proposal. The Bureau is to be commended for its fine work on this proposal. The Wilderness Society urges favorable action on S. 3343, as introduced, to designate a very significant wilderness unit of 403 acres within the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge.

S. 3502 would designate six wilderness areas—the Michigan Islands, Huron Islands, and Seney areas in Michigan, Wisconsin Islands in Wisconsin, and two units in the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge in Maine.