

and opportunities there would be enhanced by designation as wilderness of a portion of this area.

In view of the expressed citizen interest, the Bureau has agreed to study the Baring unit during the second 3-year Wilderness Act review period. A hearing will be held in Maine and the other review procedures of the Wilderness Act will be followed. The Wilderness Society commends the Bureau for its responsiveness to this public interest, and we look forward to participating in this further review of wilderness potential in Maine.

Wilderness proposals concerning the Edmunds and Birch Islands units of the refuge have proceeded through the full administrative review process and are embodied in S. 3502. A 2,775-acre wilderness area is proposed in the Edmunds unit, and the entire Birch Islands unit of 7 acres is recommended for designation.

While there is a past history of some human disturbance on the Edmunds tract, it will become a place of even greater natural beauty and truly serve the purposes of a wilderness retreat if left free from further disturbance. Most wild areas in the East have not been entirely untouched in the past, and in this respect many of them differ from the larger western wilderness areas. But these eastern areas we are talking about are wild and, with the fascinating resilience of natural processes, they will grow to greater and more complete wilderness. They offer essentially wilderness qualities, and thus, as the Edmunds unit, meet the qualifications and requirements of the Wilderness Act.

Within the Edmunds unit, there is one plot where hot wildfire had completely burned away the top soil, leaving a barren area that would support no vegetation. But now, after 40 years, grasses and woody plants are gaining a foothold. As nature restores the life-giving soil and plant successions develop, there can be careful observations and facts recorded for scientific knowledge.

Dr. Clarence Cottam, well-known for his past outstanding service with the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, is thoroughly familiar with the Moosehorn Refuge, and has cited this situation as a unique scientific phenomenon.

It should be observed that in all of Maine, a State once famous for its magnificent pine forests, not one stand of virgin pine can be found today. There are a few trees, but nowhere a solid stand. The best is clearly second growth, and there is very little of that.

If we are to look to the future, beyond the present generations, and if we are to serve the interests of those who will live under more congested surroundings than we have today, we must provide wilderness protection for the Edmunds unit.

The Bureau's preliminary proposal was for a larger wilderness area in the Edmunds unit. However, in order to accommodate certain other uses, the proposed wilderness area has been reduced to the present size of 2,775 acres within the 5,350 acres of the unit as a whole.

East of the Edmunds unit lies Bobscook Bay, an arm of Passamaquoddy Bay. Here are located the two small islands of the Birch Islands unit. These 7 acres of spruce-covered islands, which boasts an active bald eagle nest, are fully suitable for wilderness designation. Seldom visited by man and uninhabited throughout the centuries, these islands remain as gems of unspoiled wildness.

The designation of these areas as wilderness should be viewed in regional perspective. In such perspective, the proposals carry a great