

opportunity to retain wild solitude will occur again so close to our largest metropolitan concentration. Brooks Atkinson sums up:

All around Great Swamp property values rise because the population is increasing and the supply of land remains the same. In Great Swamp the property values are low because the land is good for nothing except life, knowledge, peace and hope.

At this point I have outlined a number of important values which are embodied in the Great Swamp and which are convincing reasons for saving the area intact. Before examining the pending proposal in depth, I would like to present to the committee, for the record, a copy of an article on the swamp written by Brooks Atkinson. This article, which appeared in the New York Times magazine last year at the time of the field hearing in Morristown, brilliantly captures and expresses the wild flavor of the area. Additionally I should like to have incorporated a letter to the editor which appeared in response to Mr. Atkinson's article and portrays expressively the need for this wilderness amid megalopolis.

Late in 1966 the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife published its preliminary wilderness proposal for Great Swamp under the requirement of the Wilderness Act that roadless areas and roadless lands—areas “markedly distinguished from surrounding lands by topographical and ecological features”—within the national wildlife refuge system be reviewed to determine their suitability as wilderness.

On February 17, 1967, a public hearing was held in Morristown, N.J., to obtain citizen views on the proposal. Nearly 1,000 people were in attendance and 62 testified. At the hearing and in the weeks following, 6,665 letters and statements were submitted. In all of this testimony, only three statements opposed wilderness designation. As a demonstration of citizen interest and participation, this hearing made conservation history.

The Bureau's initial proposal was for a single wilderness area, the 2,400-acre M. Hartley Dodge unit, encompassing the east end of the refuge. The Wilderness Society, local conservationists, and other groups strongly supported this proposal and recommended that a second area of 1,250 acres, the Harding unit, should receive wilderness status. Hundreds of persons submitted statements for the hearing, endorsing this addition to the proposal.

Though called a swamp, the area actually comprises a variety of habitats. The Dodge unit is predominantly hardwood forest above the water table. The unit has been administratively managed as a natural area, and will continue so. Trails will be restricted to foot travel, and nature trails will be maintained to encourage continued use for education and recreation. The rich forest association, including magnificent stands of beech, white oak, sweet birch, sugar maple, and shagbark hickory, is ideal for such uses.

The Harding unit will add a substantial area of the more characteristic wet timbered swamp terrain immediately west of the Dodge unit. In several places the swamp opens into small marshes. Bottomland vegetation includes red maple, elm, azalea, highbush blueberry, swamp rose, willow, and a variety of groundcover species. Together the Dodge unit and the Harding unit comprise a comprehensive cross section of Great Swamp ecology. The botanical values are exceptional, with plants of the North and South flourishing side by side. After restudy-