

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DECEMBER 4, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

December 4, 1974

Dear Mr. President: (Mr. Speaker)

Pursuant to the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, I am pleased to transmit herewith proposals for thirty -seven additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

As described in the Wilderness Message that I am concurrently sending to the Congress today, the proposed new wilderness areas cover a total of over nine million primeval acres. In addition, the Secretary of the Interior has recommended that Congressional action on five other areas which include surface lands suitable for wilderness be deferred for the reasons set forth below:

- A. Three areas which are open to mining might be needed in the future to provide vital minerals for the Nation, but these areas have not been adequately surveyed for mineral deposits. The areas are the Kofa Game Range, Arizona; Charles Sheldon Antelope Range, Nevada and Oregon; and, Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range, Montana.
- B. One area is subject to withdrawals for power purposes and additional study is needed of the West's potential energy needs before a wilderness decision can be made. This is Lake Mead National Recreation Area, located in Arizona and Nevada.
- C. Certain parts of one area are subject to selection by the village of Mekoryuk under the terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and a wilderness recommendation should be made only after the completion of the Native selection process. The area in question is the Nunivak National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

Four other possibilities considered by the Secretary of the Interior in his review of roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more were found to be unsuitable for inclusion in the Wilderness System: Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon and Idaho; Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Maryland; Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky; and, Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. I concur in this finding and in the other recommendations of the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, all of which are transmitted herewith.

Wilderness designation of both of these new wilderness areas and those already submitted that are pending before the Congress would dramatically demonstrate our commitment to preserve America's irreplaceable heritage, and I urge the Congress to act promptly in this regard.

Sincerely,

GERALD R. FORD

The Honorable James O. Eastland
President pro Tempore
of the Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

The Honorable Carl Albert
Speaker of the House of
Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

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