98TH CONGRESS 1st Session | HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES | REPORT No. 98-40

ENTITLED THE "CALIFORNIA WILDERNESS ACT OF 1983"

MARCH 18, 1983.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. UDALL, from the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

together with

MINORITY AND SUPPLEMENTAL VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 1437]

[Including the cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1437) entitled the "California Wilderness Act of 1983", having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Page 1, line 3, strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following in lieu thereof:

That this Act may be cited as the "California Wilderness Act of 1983".

DESIGNATION OF WILDERNESS

SEC. 2. (a) In furtherance of the purposes of the Wilderness Act, the following lands, as generally depicted on maps, appropriately referenced, dated July 1980 (except as otherwise dated) are hereby designated as wilderness, and therefore, as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System—

(1) certain lands in the Inyo National Forest, California, which comprise approximately forty-nine thousand nine hundred acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled "Boundary Peak Wilderness—Proposed", and which shall be known as the Boundary Peak Wilderness;

(2) certain lands in the Cleveland National Forest, California, which comprise approximately five thousand nine hundred acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled "Caliente Wilderness Proposal" dated July 1980, and which shall be known as the Caliente Wilderness;

(3) certain lands in the Eldorado National Forest, California, which comprise approximately fourteen thousand acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled

grams in National Forest wilderness are unaffected by wilderness classification.

While a number of activities are permitted in wilderness areas (such as those related to livestock grazing and the protections afforded valid private rights), which could be interpreted as influencing the untrammeled condition of wilderness, all such permitted activities and uses are previously existing and temporary in character. Designation of an area as wilderness primarily precludes permanent modification of an area through such activities as timber harvest, construction of permanent roads, dam building, erecting new permanent structures and facilities, and similar artificial modifications. The overriding principle guiding management of all wilderness areas, regardless of which agency administers them, is the Wilderness Act (section 4(b)) mandate to preserve their wilderness character.

Although the wilderness character of some wilderness areas (particularly those which may be located in the same geographic region) might appear to be identical, none contains the same ecological components which characterize an area in exact combination, and which, in turn, causes each wilderness to be different from all others. Most importantly, wilderness is much more than rocks, streams, vegetation and scenery. Native wildlife species are an integral and natural component of the character of a wilderness on an interdependent basis with its physical features: soils, water, geology and plants. Indeed, the continuance or restoration of native wildlife populations dependent on natural habitats often constitutes one of the prime reasons for designating wilderness, and is one of the "conservation" purposes for which wilderness is to be managed pursuant to section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act. Thus, wilderness managers must consider all of the various components which characterize an area, including fish and wildlife needs, and not limit management considerations to recreational uses, scenic qualities and physical features alone.

Wildlife conservation as a science is less than a half century old. Early in this century, wildlife population management consisted mainly of protecting desirable wildlife species from predators, transplanting preferred stock to depleted areas, regulating hunting pressure, and setting aside sanctuaries. However, in the 1930's Aldo Leopold (now known as the father of wildlife management) found that there is a direct interrelationship between animals and plants in any given ecosystem and that wildlife species composition and abundance are directly related to the successional stage of their individual habitats at a given point in time. In other words, different wildlife species are found in a mature, climax forest than in another previously forested area in an early stage of succession which is gradually recovering from disturbance and composed of grasses, herbs, brush, small trees and the like. Applying Leopold's theorem to field conditions, wildlife managers over the years have developed sophisticated techniques designed to hold a particular successional stage at a desired point in order to pyramid populations of favored wildlife species, primarily game animals. In addition, research programs have revealed that wildlife species, like humans, require the same essential life sustaining ingredients of food, water and shelter, in proper combination, for survival. Thus,