

LWD - Wilderness Proposal Public  
Hearing Record Analysis

## PUBLIC HEARING RECORD ANALYSIS

### LAKE WOODRUFF WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

As required by Section 3(d)(1)(B) of the Wilderness Act, a public hearing for the Lake Woodruff Wilderness Proposal was held at DeLand, Florida. The Lake Woodruff Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Federal Register on February 15, 1974.

An original letter announcing the hearing and explaining the proposal, a copy of the wilderness study summary, and a copy of the Regional Director's public hearing announcement were mailed from Atlanta on February 13, 1974, to Federal, State, and local governmental agencies and officials. Specific individuals included the Governor of Florida, County Commissions, Federal Department heads, U. S. Congressmen and Senators, and Florida State legislators.

A form letter announcing the hearing, a copy of the study summary, and the Regional Director's public hearing announcement were also mailed to other groups, organizations, and individuals. Local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations were provided with the hearing announcement package and a Regional Office-prepared news release.

The Lake Woodruff Wilderness Public Hearing was held in the Volusia County Agricultural Center near DeLand, Florida, on March 19, 1974.

The hearing, which began at 9 a.m., was conducted by Donald M. Spillman, Attorney, Regional Solicitor's Office, Atlanta, Georgia. Acting Regional Director Ray R. Vaughn represented the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife at the hearing.

#### THE PUBLIC HEARING

Twenty-seven people attended the Lake Woodruff Wilderness Hearing.

Eleven oral or written statements were presented, not including the statement of Acting Regional Director Vaughn. Nine of these statements favored wilderness designation, one presented a qualified opposition to the proposal, and one spoke without specific reference to the wilderness proposal.

#### 1. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

Acting Regional Director Ray R. Vaughn summarized the Bureau's wilderness proposal for Lake Woodruff Refuge by stating that "...Audubon, Dexter, St. Francis, and the three Bird Islands appear to possess wilderness characteristics and can best help meet our objectives by remaining in a natural state. The remainder of the refuge was found unsuitable because of outstanding mineral reservations, existing and planned habitat management and public use developments, and other evidence of the works of man."

2. Elected Public Officials

Governor Reubin O'D. Askew expressed support for the proposal and hope that the other parts of the refuge continue to be manipulated for waterfowl wintering habitat in a letter that was read into the record by the hearing officer.

U. S. Congressman Bill Chappell and Florida Representative Hyatt Brown were both represented at the hearing but made no statement concerning the proposal.

3. Organizations

Nine organizations made oral and/or written statements at the public hearing. Eight of these supported wilderness designation as proposed by the Bureau. Three of these eight also made additional recommendations. One organization expressed a qualified opposition to wilderness "unless it is properly patrolled and protected" and unless more hunting is provided on the refuge.

The basic reasons given in support of wilderness designation are as follows:

1. Wilderness can enhance the value of the refuge.
2. Further protection for needed wilderness resources along the St. Johns River.

3. Will provide opportunity to observe and study native wildlife and plants in a natural habitat.
4. Will protect endangered species.

4. Individuals

Two individuals made oral statements at the public hearing. One supported the Bureau proposal and the other did not comment specifically on the wilderness proposal.

BEFORE AND AFTER THE HEARING

A total of 114 written statements were received prior to April 18, 1974, the date the official record was closed. The great majority, 93, supported wilderness designation as proposed by the Bureau. An additional 14 statements favored the Bureau proposal and either qualified their support or made additional recommendations. Seven statements did not comment specifically on the wilderness proposal.

1. Elected Officials

Governor Reubin O'D. Askew expressed support for the proposal and hope that the other parts of the refuge continue to be manipulated for waterfowl wintering habitat.

The City Commission of the City of DeLand submitted a resolution endorsing the proposal.

2. Federal Officials, Departments, and Agencies

Four Federal Agencies or Departments responded to the public notice.

None made a specific comment regarding the wilderness proposal.

The Forest Service said they would provide comments prior to the close of the record; however, none were received.

3. State and Local Officials and Agencies

The Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission supported the Bureau proposal.

The Volusia County Environmental Control Office supported the Bureau proposal.

4. Organizations

Twelve organizations submitted statements regarding the Lake Woodruff Wilderness Proposal. Ten of these expressed support for the Bureau proposal, one supported the Bureau proposal and made additional recommendations, and one statement did not indicate a position with regard to the proposal.

Reasons given for supporting wilderness designation were the same as those set forth in the discussion of organizational response at the public hearing.

5. Individuals

Ninety-four individuals submitted written statements prior to the closing of the record. The majority, 79, expressed support for wilderness as proposed by the Bureau. An additional 13 statements indicated support of the Bureau proposal and made additional wilderness recommendations. Two written communications did not comment specifically on the wilderness proposal.

While most statements merely indicated support for the proposal, reasons given in support of wilderness designation include the following:

1. This habitat for endangered species must be held in trust.
2. Wilderness deserves the same sort of priority "multiple use" concepts have enjoyed in the past.
3. The wilderness would be a valuable teaching area.
4. Wilderness provides habitat for endangered species.
5. Wilderness is a vital step toward protecting refuges from increasing pressures and potential exploitation.
6. Florida is being overrun by developers and wilderness will protect the refuge.

## SUMMARY

A total of 124 written and oral statements were submitted concerning the Lake Woodruff Wilderness Proposal. The majority of these, 115, favored wilderness designation for a portion of the Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge. One statement presented a qualified opposition to the proposal and eight made no specific comment on the proposal.

## DISCUSSION

Approximately 14 percent (17) of all statements wanted additional acreage in wilderness on the refuge. Twelve of these recommended purchase of outstanding mineral rights and curtailment of habitat management on that part of the refuge between Norris Dead River and the St. Johns River, an area of approximately 7,500 acres. These statements did not suggest immediate wilderness designation for this area; rather, they recommended administration of the area for future wilderness. The other five made no specific recommendations.

The Bureau feels that the additional lands proposed must continue to be managed to fulfill the refuge's wildlife objectives--which can be done without purchase of outstanding mineral rights. Although figures are not available, it is felt that the cost of purchasing the mineral rights on 7,500 acres coupled with the loss of habitat management capability would not be offset by wilderness benefits.