



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR,
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES
AND WILDLIFE

FILE COPY
Surname Date

Wilderness-Valentine

NOV 18 1969

Hon. David T. Martin
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

<i>RL Means</i>	<i>11/14</i>
<i>Hughlett</i>	<i>11-14</i>
<i>Ball</i>	<i>11/17</i>

Dear Mr. Martin:

This letter is in response to our recent telephone conversation regarding the proposed study of the wilderness potential of Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Nebraska.

The Wilderness Act (P.L. 88-577) requires the Secretary of the Interior to review every roadless area of 5,000 acres or more, and every roadless island, within the National Wildlife Refuge System and report to the President his recommendation as to suitability or non-suitability of each such area as wilderness. After appropriate review, the President transmits to the Congress his recommendation on whether an area is suitable or non-suitable as wilderness. An area can be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System only if so provided by an Act of Congress.

The Valentine National Wildlife Refuge contains areas meeting the mandatory criteria for review as wilderness. However, field reviews have not been initiated. Our present plans call for field studies to begin in the fall of 1970 with a tentative completion date of late 1971. A public hearing will be held locally, as required by Section 3(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act, at which time we shall present the results of field studies for public review and comment.

Section 4(a) of the Wilderness Act states that wilderness purposes are supplemental to the primary purposes for which a refuge has been established. Therefore, in the event that a portion, or portions, of Valentine Refuge eventually were to be classified as wilderness, there could be no interference with the multiple purpose management program at the refuge.

RF

Land management progress, such as grazing, would continue where such use was established before the date of legislation including an area in the National Wilderness Preservation System; provided that such progress are compatible with the operation of the refuge first, and the wilderness second. Field studies will help make these determinations as will the testimony of citizens at the public hearing.

We hope that this will help to clarify questions that have been raised regarding Valentine Refuge and the wilderness program. If we may be of further assistance, please ask.

Sincerely yours,

((SGD) JOHN S. GOTTSCHALK

Director

cc:

Regional Director, Atlanta, Georgia (RF)
Directorate Reading File

RFHBCrandell:nf 11/14/69

1-1-552Y
Surname:

Roll 8/26
McCarthy 8/27

AUG 30 1971

Honorable Carl T. Curtis
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Curtis:

This is in response to your recent letter regarding
Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Nebraska.

At present, there are no plans for land acquisition with
respect to the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge. The
Wilderness Act of 1964 directs the Secretary to review
areas within the National Wildlife Refuge System and make
recommendations to the President as to the suitability or
unsuitability of each such area for preservation as wilder-
ness. A wilderness study is in progress on the Valentine
National Wildlife Refuge, and we believe it is to this
study that your constituent is referring.

We hope this clarifies the situation and if we can be of
further assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,

[(SGD)] M. A. MARSTON

Assistant to the
Director

cc:

Directorate Reading File

RF

CSO

CL 18754-2

FSF:RF:DAHughes/CSO:DRally:jb 8/26/71

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

August 16, 1971

Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sirs:

I have received an inquiry which relates to the Valentine Wildlife Refuge in Nebraska. I have been informed that the Department is considering taking over additional land to that which is already under your jurisdiction. I would appreciate it very much if you will furnish me information as to what your plan is in this regard. I would like to know how much land you plan to take and for what purpose. Also, I would be interested in knowing whether the government will buy the land and whether there will be any payments in lieu of taxes.

Thanking you for an early reply, I am

Sincerely yours,



CARL T. CURTIS, USS

CTC/rma



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

FILE COPY
Surname Date

<i>Ferguson</i>	<i>12/4</i>
<i>McCarthy</i>	<i>12/4</i>
<i>Schmidt</i>	<i>12/4</i>

In Reply Refer To:
FSF/RF
FSF 0499

DEC - 8 1972

Dear Mr. McCollister:

This responds to your November 28 letter regarding a second public hearing in Omaha, Nebraska, for the Valentine and Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuges wilderness proposals.

As you have noted, the public hearing for the Valentine Refuge proposal is scheduled for December 12 in Valentine, and the Crescent Lake hearing will be held December 14 in Oshkosh.

The sites for these hearings were selected because of their proximity to each refuge, to be convenient to the area that would be most affected by wilderness designation. The communities of Valentine and Oshkosh are somewhat distant from Omaha but are located on major all-weather highways and accessible by various means of transportation. We have scheduled the two hearings so that interested individuals traveling considerable distances can attend both hearings in the same trip.

In addition the hearings themselves are only a part of the official public hearing record. Written correspondence can be submitted for the record any time after the hearing is announced until 30 days after it is held. This correspondence is treated in the same manner as testimony given at the hearing and made a part of the hearing record. Individuals, therefore, will have nearly 3 months in which to present their thoughts and ideas on our proposals. We feel this fully meets the intent of Congress in permitting the fullest reasonable extent of public expression.

For the reasons cited above, we believe that a second public hearing would not yield significantly greater opportunities for public participation.

We sincerely appreciate your thoughts and hope you understand our position on this matter. New ideas and fresh approaches to the conservation of natural resources from you or your constituents

RF

are always welcomed and appreciated by the Department. We look forward to working with you to see that the outstanding wildlife values of both Valentine and Crescent Lake Refuges are properly protected and preserved.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) Curtis Bohlen

Deputy Assistant

Secretary of the Interior

Honorable John Y. McCollister
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

cc:

Secretary's Reading File (2)

Directorate Reading File

CL

FW

RF

CSO

FSF 0499

FSF:JGillett/CSO:eg 12/4/72

Ferguson 12/4
A.S. Acting

<i>Littles</i>	<i>11/30</i>
<i>McLellan</i>	<i>11/30</i>
<i>MANI</i>	<i>12/1</i>

Dear Mr. McCollister:

This refers to November 28
 I am replying to your letter of November 28 to Secretary Morton

regarding a second public hearing in Omaha, Nebraska, for the Valentine and Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge wilderness proposals.

As you have noted
 The public hearing for the Valentine Refuge proposal is scheduled for December 12 in Valentine, and the Crescent Lake hearing is *will be held* scheduled for December 14 in Oshkosh.

these
 The sites for the public hearings were selected because of their proximity to each refuge, and so as to be convenient to the area that would be most affected by wilderness designation. The communities of Valentine and Oshkosh are somewhat distant from Omaha but are located on major all-weather highways and accessible by various means of transportation.

We have scheduled the two hearings so that interested individuals, traveling considerable distances, can attend both hearings in the same trip. In addition the hearing is only a part of the official public hearing record. Written correspondence can be submitted for the record any time after the public hearing is announced until 30 days after *it is held. This* the hearing. Written correspondence is treated in the same manner as testimony given at the hearing and made a part of the hearing record. *INDIVIDUALS WILL HAVE* The public, therefore, has nearly 3 months in which to present their thoughts and ideas on our proposals, and we feel this *fully* abundantly meets the intent of Congress in permitting the fullest extent of public expression, as is reasonable.

after
 Because of the extensive opportunity for public comment offered by the
~~for the reasons cited above we believe that~~
 announced hearing ~~we~~ respectively submit that ~~a~~ a second public hearing
 would not yield significantly greater opportunities for public participation.

We
 I sincerely appreciate your thoughts ~~on the matter~~ *this* and hope you
 understand our ~~rationale for holding only a single public hearing.~~ *position on this matter* You
 can be assured that new ideas and fresh approaches to the conservation
 of natural resources ~~by you or your constituents are always welcomed~~ *= from*
 and appreciated by the Department. *we* I look forward to working with you
 to see that the outstanding wildlife values of both Valentine and
 Crescent Lake Refuges are properly protected and preserved.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary of the Interior

JOHN Y. MCCOLLISTER
Second District, NEBRASKA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
511 CANNON OFFICE BUILDING
202-225-4153

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DISTRICT OFFICE:
2313 FEDERAL BUILDING
215 NORTH 17TH STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102
402-221-3231

INTERSTATE AND
FOREIGN COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE AND FINANCE

November 28, 1972

File
C.L.
Hughes
4/15

The Honorable Rogers C.B. Morton
Department of the Interior
Interior Building
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing⁶ in regard to public hearings on two National Wildlife Refuges in the State of Nebraska.

According to the latest news release issued by the Department of the Interior public hearings will be held on December 12 for the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, and on December 14 for the Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Each of the respective hearings will be held in towns near the refuges - Valentine and Oshkosh.

The purpose of this letter is to ask your consideration for hearings of the above mentioned refuges in Omaha, Nebraska. In my opinion and in the opinion of the state's largest chapter of the Audubon Society, the Omaha Chapter, such hearings in Omaha would be beneficial because of the input and extensive participation which would generate new ideas and fresh approaches to the naturalization and maintenance of our wildlife. Additional public hearings on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge and the Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Omaha would prove to be most enlightening, I'm sure.

My thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

John Y. McCollister
JOHN Y. MCCOLLISTER
Member of Congress

JYM/ch

Date

11-30

FROM:

~~Assistant Secretary (FWP)~~ *RR*

TO:

1. *FSA*

2.

3.

4.

*CSO
RF*

FOR:

☐

Approval

☐

Information

☐

Per our Conversation

☐

Comment

☐

Action as Appropriate

☒

Prepare Reply for

AIS

Sig.

☐

As Requested

☐

File

☐

Return

☐

Forward

☐

See me

*This needs
a quick response*

Remarks:

Date Reply Due:

12/7/72

From:

McCallister, James

M. C. - 2 - 8/12/72

Reply for reference to

12-8-72

Number:

FSF 0499

Rfrd:

RF

Subject:

2 Whitehouse drawings

Date:

11/30

Rfrd:

Remarks:

Valentine Mark - 10/12/72

Crescent Lake Mark - 12/1/72

Date:

Rfrd:

12-8-72

Date:

Ack'd:

Signed:

Curtis Bohlen

Form 3-263

JOHN Y. MCCOLLISTER
SECOND DISTRICT, NEBRASKA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
511 CANNON OFFICE BUILDING
202-225-4155

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

DISTRICT OFFICE:
2313 FEDERAL BUILDING
215 NORTH 17TH STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102
402-221-3251

INTERSTATE AND
FOREIGN COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE AND FINANCE

November 28, 1972

Action Office
For info only

703
C L
Hughes
4/5

The Honorable Rogers C.B. Morton
Department of the Interior
Interior Building
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing in regard to public hearings on two National Wildlife Refuges in the State of Nebraska.

According to the latest news release issued by the Department of the Interior public hearings will be held on December 12 for the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, and on December 14 for the Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Each of the respective hearings will be held in towns near the refuges - Valentine and Oshkosh.

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My thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

John Y. McCollister
JOHN Y. MCCOLLISTER
Member of Congress

JYM/ch

NOV 29 1972



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR,
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES
AND WILDLIFE

FILE COPY

Surname Date

Ferguson	12/15
2507 L	12/15

DEC 15 1972

In Reply Refer To:
FSF/RF
FSF 0489

Dear Senator Hruska:

This responds to your letter on behalf of Mr. Mitch Chambers regarding his support for the proposed wilderness area at the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.

Mr. Chambers' letter was forwarded to our Regional Office in Twin Cities, Minnesota, for inclusion in the record of the hearing on this matter. Enclosed is a copy of our response to Mr. Chambers. We are glad to know of his interest in wilderness preservation and appreciate his expression of concern. If we can be of further assistance to you, please feel free to call on us.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) R. Kahler Martinson

ACTING ASSISTANT Director

Honorable Roman L. Hruska
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Enclosure

cc:
Regional Director, Twin Cities (RF)
Directorate Reading File
RF CSO

FSF/RF/CSO:AStClair:eg 12/14/72

BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES. WILDLIFE
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REFUGES

ASO. BRANCH OF PLANNING

Mr. Chambers letter has been
sent to region 3 for inclosure
in the hearing record.

Region will supply
copy of the acknowledgment
of receipt of letter to you.

Wilderness
Refuges

ALLEN J. ELLENDER, LA., CHAIRMAN

JOHN L. MCCLELLAN, ARK.
WARRIOR G. MAGNUSON, WASH.
JOHN C. STENNIS, MISS.
JOHN O. PASTORE, R.I.
ALAN BIBLE, NEV.
ROBERT C. BYRD, W. VA.
GALE W. MCGEE, WYO.
MIKE MANSFIELD, MONT.
WILLIAM PROXMIRE, WIS.
JOSEPH M. MONTGOMERY, N. MEX.
DANIEL K. INOUE, HAWAII
ERNEST F. HOLLINGS, S.C.

MILTON R. YOUNG, N. DAK.
KARL E. MUNDT, S. DAK.
MARGARET CHASE SMITH, MAINE
ROMAN L. HRUSKA, NEBR.
GORDON ALLOTT, COLO.
NORRIS COTTON, N.H.
CLIFFORD P. CASE, N.J.
HIRAM L. FONG, HAWAII
J. CALEB BOGGS, DEL.
CHARLES H. PERCY, ILL.
EDWARD W. BROOKE, MASS.

THOMAS J. SCOTT, CHIEF CLERK
WM. W. WOODRUFF, COUNSEL

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

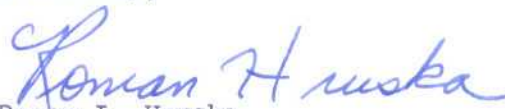
November 22, 1972

Mr. Spencer H. Smith, Director
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Smith:

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a letter from Mitch Chambers, of Champion, Nebraska, expressing support for the proposed wilderness area at the Valentine Refuge. It is requested that the letter be made part of your record on this proposal.

Sincerely,


Roman L. Hruska
U. S. Senator
Nebraska

RLH:kcg
Enclosure

• ALLEN J. ELLENDER, LA., CHAIRMAN

JOHN L. MCCLELLAN, ARK.
VARRA, G. MAGNUSON, WASH.
JOHN C. STENNIS, MISS.
JOHN O. PASTORE, R.I.
ALAN BIBLE, NEV.
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CLIFFORD P. CASE, N.J.
HIRAM L. FONG, HAWAII
J. CALEB BOGGS, DEL.
CHARLES H. PERCY, ILL.
EDWARD W. BROOKE, MASS.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

THOMAS J. SCOTT, CHIEF CLERK
WM. W. WOODRUFF, COUNSEL

November 22, 1972

Mr. Spencer H. Smith, Director
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Smith:

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a letter from
Mitch Chambers, of Champion, Nebraska, expressing support for the
proposed wilderness area at the Valentine Refuge. It is requested
that the letter be made part of your record on this proposal.

Sincerely,


Roman L. Hruska
U. S. Senator
Nebraska

RLH:kcg
Enclosure

617
copy from RF
100 000 111

December 4, 1972

Mr. Mitch Chambers
Champion, Nebraska 69023

Dear Mr. Chambers:

Senator Ihuka has forwarded to this Bureau your letter in support of the two wilderness proposals on the National Wildlife Refuges in Nebraska. Your letter will be included in the record of each proposal.

In addition, I am enclosing a copy of the Wilderness Study Summary for each proposal and the notice for each public hearing for your further information.

It is not necessary that you attend these hearings inasmuch[#] as you have already expressed your support by letter, but you are certainly welcome. Your letters will have equal impact with the oral statements made at the hearing.

We are pleased to know of your interest in preserving our natural environment and thank you for expressing your beliefs.

Sincerely,

Forrest A. Carpenter
Regional Supervisor
Division of Wildlife Refuges

Enclosures

cc: Wash. (RF) ✓

Reg. 6

FSF 0489



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Federal Building, Fort Snelling
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111

ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR,
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES
AND WILDLIFE

December 4, 1972

Mr. Mitch Chambers
Champion, Nebraska 69023

Dear Mr. Chambers:

Senator Hruska has forwarded to this Bureau your letter in support of the two wilderness proposals on the National Wildlife Refuges in Nebraska. Your letter will be included in the record of each proposal.

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We are pleased to know of your interest in preserving our natural environment and thank you for expressing your beliefs.

Sincerely,

/s/

Forrest A. Carpenter
Regional Supervisor
Division of Wildlife Refuges

Enclosures



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

ADDRESS ONLY THE DIRECTOR
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES
AND WILDLIFE

FILE COPY
Surname:

In Reply Refer To:

FSP/RF

SCSO - S 48619

FEB 27 1973

Ferguson 2/27

Dear Senator Hruska:

Secretary Morton has asked us to respond to your letter regarding public reaction to our wilderness proposal on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.

Much of the testimony presented at the public hearing held in Valentine on December 12, 1972, was in opposition to wilderness status; however, testimony received during the period the record remained open overwhelmingly favors wilderness designation. A very preliminary analysis of all comments indicates approximately 80 percent favored our proposal.

Those opposed present a variety of arguments mainly centered on three issues: loss of revenue to the county, loss of recreational opportunities, and greater potential for fire.

Our thinking on each of the above is as follows:

1. Loss of revenue--Should a wilderness area be established, the basis on which revenue is returned to Cherry County will not change. Revenue returned to the county is based on 3/4 of 1 percent of the adjusted value of acquired land or 25 percent of the net receipts from products of the land, whichever is greater. At the present time, because of revenues derived from grazing on the refuge, the county receives 25 percent of net receipts. In 1972 this amounted to \$28,116.43.

A general reduction in the intensity of the grazing programs was initiated this year and will continue whether a wilderness area is established or not. Therefore, we expect revenues from this source will probably diminish somewhat in the future. At the same time, land values are anticipated to increase; 3/4 of 1 percent of the land value will probably be greater than 25 percent of the grazing receipts in the near future and will become the basis for future returns. We reemphasize that wilderness status will not directly affect the amount of money returned to Cherry County.

~~LE~~ RF

2. Loss of recreational and wildlife values--Recent studies on Valentine Refuge indicated a reduction in the amount of grazing and showed that only periodic removal of vegetation from the meadows would produce the greatest wildlife benefits and be particularly beneficial to waterfowl. Accordingly, our grazing program is undergoing change. Annual mowing of the meadows will be discontinued; the grass will be allowed to revert to nesting cover and periodically grazed to remove at least a portion of the vegetation. This type of grazing program has been initiated and is compatible with wilderness designation.

Wilderness status would not limit recreational use of the area. Those recreational pursuits currently enjoyed on the refuge could continue if a wilderness was established. Hunting, fishing, hiking, and related activities are all permitted in wilderness areas. If a wilderness is established on Valentine Refuge, it will probably attract people to the area, as it is one of the very few grassland areas being considered for such designation.

3. Fire--We recognize that all grasslands throughout the sandhills are a fire hazard, as witnessed by the large fires of recent years which, incidentally, were off the refuge. Wilderness status would not substantially increase this hazard; and, as we have repeatedly stated, we plan to continue to control fires on the entire refuge--including the wilderness area--by any means at our disposal including use of motorized equipment. You can be assured that we recognize the threat of fires to the grasslands, homes, and human lives and will take every measure in our power to control fires. We will continue to cooperate in the control of fires off the refuge. Whenever public health or safety are jeopardized in any way, the use of motorized vehicles within established wilderness areas is specifically authorized by the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136; 78 Stat. 890).

You can be assured that we will consider all comments both for and against the proposed wilderness before our recommendations are submitted to Congress for further review. We are certain that, by working together, we can develop the strongest position possible to insure the perpetuation of the unique grassland ecosystem found on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely yours,

R. KAHLER MARTINSON

ACTING ASSISTANT Director

Honorable Roman L. Hruska
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

cc:
Director's reading file
RF SCSO CSO
FSF/RF:JGillett:CSO:AS:mcc 2/24/73

BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REFUGES

BRANCH OF PLANNING

Original incoming & draft
response was lost
between AO and CSO.
These are duplicates of
both -

Phase upslide
w/ac & Regime 3ad6

Tim C.

WHEREAS, at a regular meeting of The Cherry County Farm Bureau, held at The First National Bank, Valentine, Nebraska, November 30, 1972, the proposal for the creation of a National Wildlife Wilderness from a part or all of the area now embraced by the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, and after discussion the following resolution was presented, and

Whereas, the geological formation of The Sandhills of Nebraska is so unique that no other area in The United States is comparable to this area, and

WHEREAS, the proposed areas are under good soil conservation management for proper propagation of wildlife and waterfowl, and

WHEREAS, when the Sandhills were in a primitive stage or a natural stage, buffalo, deer, elk and other wild animals lived on the grasses as their food altho intermittently lightning caused fires that destroyed much of the cover on the hills and low lands resulting in blowing of the sand and the destruction of animals and birds, and

Whereas, historians and evidence handed down from the first settlers in The Sandhills, this including the Indians, confirmed that the condition of The Sandhills including the present area of The Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, was in a poorer or less desirable condition in the past years compared to it's present condition, and

Whereas, the Sandhills improved with use by man, and

WHEREAS, the Cherry County Soil Conservation service have proven that after a certain amount of dead cover is accumulated that if a part is not removed the land begins to deteriorate, and

Whereas, motorized vehicles would not be permitted on the Wilderness Area this would add to the fire hazard as modern rural fire fighting equipment is all motorized, and

WHEREAS, people and domesticated animals would be denied a reasonable use of the lands involved, and

WHEREAS, adjoining private land would become less valuable because of the wilderness environment, and

WHEREAS, a Wilderness Area will be a deterrent to the progress of Cherry County, and

WHEREAS, twenty five percent of the income derived from the proposed area is now paid to public schools and a Wilderness Area would reduce this revenue so that taxpayers would have to make up the difference as a Wilderness Area would not have a potential income.

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cherry County Farm Bureau oppose the establishment of a Wilderness Area and direct President Powell and or Secretary Mrs. Loraine Dittmer to appear in person to give oral testimony and to cause a copy of this resolution to be filed with The United States Department Of The Interior Fish and Wildlife Service At Valentine, Nebraska, Cherry County Court House December 12, 1972 when a public hearing will be had as to the desirability of including the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge or any contiguous 5,000 acre portion of the refuge in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

William S. Powell

Mrs. Loraine Dittmer

<i>Settles</i>	2/21
<i>Cubik</i>	2/21
<i>Gennett</i>	2/21
<i>Tougher</i>	2/22

DRAFT

AS
Langman 2/23

*Secretary Maton
has asked
us to*

Dear Senator Hruska:

respond
~~I am responding~~ to your letter of ~~January 19~~ regarding public reaction to our wilderness proposal on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.

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2. Loss of Recreational and Wildlife Values - Recent studies on Valentine Refuge indicated a reduction in the amount of grazing ^{showed that} and only periodic removal of vegetation from the meadows would produce the greatest wildlife benefits and be particularly beneficial to waterfowl. Accordingly, our grazing program is undergoing change. Annual mowing of the meadows will be discontinued, and the grass will be allowed to revert to nesting cover and periodically grazed to remove at least a portion of the vegetation. This type of grazing program has been initiated and is compatible with wilderness designation.

Wilderness status would not limit recreational use of the area. Those recreational pursuits currently enjoyed on the refuge could continue if a wilderness was established. Hunting, fishing, hiking, ^{+ related activities} etc., are all permitted in wilderness areas. If a wilderness is established on Valentine Refuge, ^{will} it would probably attract people to the area, as it is one of the very few grassland areas being considered for such designation.

3. Fire - We recognize that all grasslands throughout the sandhills are a fire hazard, as witnessed by the large fires of recent years, which, incidently, were off the ^{Refuge} ~~Range~~. Wilderness ^{status} would not substantially increase the hazard, and, as we have repeatedly stated, we plan to continue to control fires on the entire refuge, including the wilderness area, by any means at our disposal including use of motorized equipment. You can be assured that we recognize the threat of fires to the grasslands, homes and human lives, and will take every measure in our power to control fires. We will continue to cooperate in the control of fires off the refuge, and whenever public health or safety are jeopardized, in any way, the use of motorized vehicles is specifically authorized by the Wilderness Act within established wilderness areas.

(16 U.S.C. 1131-1136, 78 Stat. 890).
You can be assured that we will consider all comments both for and against the proposed wilderness before our recommendations are submitted to Congress for further review. ^{We are} I am certain that, by working together, we can develop the strongest position possible to insure the perpetuation of the unique grassland ecosystem found on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.

Sincerely yours,

Director



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MISSOURI BASIN REGION

IN REPLY REFER TO:

BUILDING 67, DENVER FEDERAL CENTER
DENVER, COLORADO 80225

APR 4 - 1973

Honorable Otho Kime
State Senator
1317 L Street
Lincoln, NB 68508

Dear Senator Kime:

This is in response to your inquiry regarding the status of the proposed wilderness area on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Nebraska.

A public hearing was held at Valentine, Nebraska on December 12, 1972. Much of the testimony at the hearing was in opposition. However, during the period the record remained open, an overwhelming amount of favorable statements were received. A preliminary analysis of all comments indicates approximately 80 percent favored the wilderness proposal.

The wilderness proposal has been submitted to the Secretary of Interior who will transmit his recommendations to the President. In addition, a draft of the Environmental Impact Statement has been prepared and sent out for comments.

Before our final recommendations are submitted to the Congress, we will consider all comments both for and against for the proposal wilderness. We are certain that, by working together, we can develop a strong position to ensure the establishment of a wilderness area that all of the people of Nebraska will be proud of.

Sincerely,

/s/ JOHN RAYDURN

Acting Field Representative
Missouri Basin Region

cc:
Regional Director, Region 3 (LM)
✓ Director, BSFW, Washington, D.C. (RF)