



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUN 17 1974

Dear Mr. President:

It is with pleasure that I recommend the establishment of areas totaling approximately 4,000 acres in Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The recommendation stems from this Department's responsibility under the Wilderness Act (78 Stat. 890) to recommend to the President areas within its jurisdiction suitable for designation as wilderness. Having reviewed potential areas in Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, we conclude that 4,000 of the refuge's 61,487 acres should be designated wilderness.

Formerly known as Mud Lake Refuge, the Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge occupies a bay on prehistoric Lake Agassiz, after which it was renamed in 1961. Established by Executive Order in 1937, the refuge is located in eastern Marshall County, in northwestern Minnesota. The primary objective of refuge management is to provide optimum conditions for the production of waterfowl, a purpose for which its vast expanses of marsh are eminently suitable. To this end, extensive water impoundment and manipulation of water levels are required. Other areas in the refuge are subjected in rotation to controlled burning in order to stimulate the growth of grasses and saplings which the waterfowl and wildlife (moose, deer, muskrat, and beaver) use for food and nesting. There is, however, a 4,000-acre area in the northern portion of the refuge which retains its pristine condition: it is this acreage which we recommend for wilderness designation. A mineral survey of this area has not been conducted. According to available geophysical data, lower Precambrian greenstones, which elsewhere in northeastern Minnesota contain iron formations and base metal sulfides, are likely to underlie the refuge. It should be noted that the Governor of Minnesota has expressed his opposition to this proposal. We recommend that the Congress give appropriate weight to the governor's views in considering this proposal.

In accordance with the requirements of the Wilderness Act, a public hearing on the recommendation was held at Middle River, Minnesota, on February 21, 1974. Analyses of the hearing records and written expressions received, together with the letters received from other Federal agencies, are contained in the enclosed synopsis. Complete records have been compiled and are available for inspection by the public.

Enclosed is a draft bill which, if enacted, would incorporate the recommended area of Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Curtis Bohlen".

Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500