

## DESIGNATING PELICAN ISLAND WILDERNESS AREA

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

## REPORT

[To accompany S. 126]

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, to which was referred the bill (S. 126) to designate certain lands in the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, Indian River County, Fla., as wilderness, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

## PURPOSE

This bill, S. 126, is identical to S. 3343 of the 90th Congress which was favorably reported by the committee and unanimously passed by the Senate, but which did not receive House consideration. S. 126 would designate a wilderness area of about 403 acres of the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

## BACKGROUND

President Theodore Roosevelt, by an Executive order of March 13, 1903, established the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge—the first refuge of a system that has since grown to be the most far-reaching and comprehensive wildlife resource management program in the history of mankind. It is located in Indian River County, Fla., between the towns of Sebastian and Wabasso, some 75 miles north of West Palm Beach. The refuge area islands extend for several miles along the east side of the Indian River north of the Wabasso Bridge.

Visitor use of the islands proper must be held to a minimum throughout the year to avoid conflict with colonial bird nesting, which is the primary refuge objective. Opportunities for public enjoyment of the

wildlife resources and water-oriented recreation will be provided in the surrounding waters.

A public hearing on the wilderness proposal was conducted by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in Vero Beach, Fla., on April 5, 1967. Testimony was unanimously in favor of the wilderness proposal. The primary reason given for supporting the wilderness proposal included protection of colonial birds and their nesting and feeding habitat; protection of estuarine and fisheries resources; long-range preservation of natural areas for scenic, esthetic, and ecological values; preservation vital to long-range social and economic interests of citizens of Indian River County; and preservation of Pelican Island Refuge because of its historical value as the Nation's first national wildlife refuge.

#### DESCRIPTION

The wilderness area proposal includes all islands within Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge within T. 31 S., R. 39 E., Tallahassee meridian. The islands are Roseate, Pelican, Roosevelt, Horseshoe, North Horseshoe, Long, David, Plug, North and South Oyster, Preachers, Middle, Nelson, Pauls, and the four small islands designated as Egret Island.

A portion of the refuge is on the mainland, but this part was cut up by a mosquito control project before being added to the refuge. It contains numerous roads and is, therefore, not included in the proposal.

#### RECOMMENDATION

The Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee reports favorably on S. 126 and recommends early enactment.

#### COST

No additional budgetary expenditures are involved in enactment of S. 126.

#### DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

There follows the recommendation of former Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall sent last year to President Johnson urging establishment of the area:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,  
*Washington, D.C., March 13, 1968.*

The PRESIDENT,  
*The White House, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: It is with a great deal of pleasure that I recommend the establishment of the Pelican Island Wilderness within the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, Indian River County, Fla., as a unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge was established by President Theodore Roosevelt by an Executive order of March 13, 1903, and was subsequently enlarged by Executive Order No. 1014 of January 26, 1909, and Public Land Order No. 3276 of November 29, 1963. It was the first national wildlife refuge of a system that



has since grown to be the most far-reaching and comprehensive wildlife resource management program in the history of mankind. It is particularly fitting, therefore, that this historical wildlife refuge be the first proposal recommended by the Department of the Interior for designation as wilderness.

In accordance with the requirements of the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 890), a public notice was issued on January 23, 1967, of the proposed Pelican Island Wilderness, and a public hearing was held in Vero Beach, Fla., on April 5, 1967. The hearing record was held open to provide additional opportunity for written expression by interested citizens until June 1, 1967. Thirty-two statements were presented at the public hearing and 65 letters were received. These views are summarized in the enclosed synopsis of the proposal.

In accordance with the requirements of the Wilderness Act, the Indian River County commissioners, Gov. Claude Kirk, and all interested elected officials, as well as Federal and State agencies, were notified of the proposal. Their views are also summarized in the enclosure to this letter.

The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines have examined the proposed Pelican Island Wilderness and have determined that the overall mineral resource of the area is poor.

A complete record has been compiled including written statements and oral testimony received in response to our announcement of public hearings. This record is, of course, available for inspection.

The Pelican Island area is eminently qualified for designation as wilderness, and I recommend submission to the Congress of the enclosed draft legislation to incorporate about 403 acres into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Respectfully yours,

STEWART L. UDALL,  
*Secretary of the Interior.*

Enclosure.

A BILL To designate certain lands in the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, Indian River County, Fla., as wilderness

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That, in accordance with section 3(c) of the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 890, 892; 16 U.S.C. 1132(c)), certain lands in the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, Florida, which comprise about 403 acres and which are depicted on a map entitled "Pelican Island Wilderness—Proposed" and dated July 1967 are hereby designated as wilderness. The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of the Interior.

SEC. 2. The area designated by this Act as wilderness shall be known as the "Pelican Island Wilderness" and shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Wilderness Act.

SEC. 3. Except as necessary to meet minimum requirements in connection with the purposes for which the area is

administered (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no commercial enterprise, no temporary or permanent roads, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of motorized transport, and no structure or installation within the area designated as wilderness by this Act.

#### SYNOPSIS OF PELICAN ISLAND WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

##### *A. Background*

Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge is located in Indian River County between the towns of Sebastian and Wabasso, some 75 miles north of West Palm Beach. The refuge islands comprising the wilderness study area extend for several miles along the east side of the Indian River north of the Wabasso Bridge.

The immediate area has enormous potential for real estate and recreational development. The Atlantic beach is only a mile to the east. U.S. Highway No. 1, a major north-south tourist route, is 1 mile to the west. The Indian River in this area offers excellent sport fishing and other forms of water-oriented recreation. With the recent completion of the bridge across Sebastian Inlet and subsequent improvement of State Highway A1A along the barrier island, a substantial increase in land development near the refuge can be expected.

As coastal land and water areas continue to be developed, Pelican Island Refuge will become increasingly important, not only for its value to fish and wildlife resources but because it represents an ecological type that is rapidly disappearing from the east coast of Florida. Permanent preservation of the refuge islands and the surrounding bay bottoms in their natural condition will be a source of continuing enjoyment for residents and visitors alike.

##### *B. Description*

The wilderness study unit and proposal includes all islands within Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge within T. 31 S., R. 39 E., Tallahassee meridian. Comprising about 403 acres, the islands are: Roseate, Pelican, Roosevelt, Horseshoe, North Horseshore, Long, David, Plug, North and South Oyster, Preachers, Middle, Nelson, Pauls, and the four small islands designated as Egret Island.

A portion of the refuge is on the mainland, but this part was cut up by a mosquito control project before being added to the refuge. It contains numerous roads and is, therefore, not included in the proposal. The mainland portion also does not meet criteria for study since it is not an island in an island refuge.

##### *C. Management requirements*

Visitor use of the islands proper must be held to a minimum throughout the year to avoid conflict with colonial bird nesting, which is the primary refuge objective. Opportunities for public enjoyment of the wildlife resources and water-oriented recreation will be provided in the surrounding waters.

Pelican Island contains mosquito-producing habitat in close proximity to population centers, but it is not a problem area at present.



Wilderness designation would preclude the use of impoundments or ditches. Alternate methods of mosquito control acceptable to the Bureau and the mosquito control district will be developed and utilized when actually needed.

#### *A. The wilderness record*

In accordance with section 3(d)(1)(B) of the Wilderness Act, a public hearing was held in Vero Beach, Fla., on April 5, 1967. Mr. Daniel H. Janzen, former Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, was hearing officer. The Bureau was represented by Mr. W. L. Towns, associate regional director, Atlanta, Ga.

1. *Public hearing transcript.*—During the public hearing, 32 statements were presented or read into the record. These statements came from one State agency, three local cities, four agencies or boards of Indian River County, 18 organizations, three individuals, and three local schools. Testimony was unanimously in favor of the wilderness proposal. Local support from public officials, civic groups, and residents of Indian River County, in which Pelican Island Refuge is located, was particularly strong.

In conjunction with statements presented orally or read into the hearing record, a number of petitions and resolutions supporting the wilderness proposal were turned in to the hearing officer. These represented 34 different organizations and were signed by over 1,260 individuals.

The primary reasons given for supporting the wilderness proposal included: Protection of colonial birds and their nesting and feeding habitat; protection of estuarine and fisheries resources; long-range preservation of natural areas for scenic, esthetic, and ecological values; preservation vital to long-range social and economic interests of citizens of Indian River County; and preservation of Pelican Island Refuge because of its historical value as the Nation's first national wildlife refuge.

At least 15 statements presented during the hearing and many of the petitions and resolutions turned in recommended that the proposed wilderness area include Roseate Island, Pauls Island, Nelsons Island, and the west side of Preachers Island which had not been included in the Bureau's proposal because of past ditching and spoils deposits. Arguments for including these islands were that the disturbed areas are rapidly reverting to a natural condition and that these islands are essential as buffers against future developments.

Mr. Beidler, representing the county mosquito control district, indicated that the outlets of existing ditches on Roseate Island must be kept open for mosquito control purposes. The final wilderness proposal includes these islands.

2. *Communications from citizens.*—Forty-five communications were received from individuals, all in favor of the wilderness proposal. The principal reasons given for supporting the wilderness proposal were to provide additional protection against developments that would destroy the colonial bird and marine resources of the Pelican Island area, to preserve the unique ecology of this area for its scientific value, and to preserve the resources and natural beauty of the area for its recreational values.

3. *Communications from organizations.*—Twelve communications were received from organizations, all of them expressing support for the wilderness proposal. The principal reasons for support were: the need for preserving wilderness areas for the future, and protection of the area and its resources against encroaching development.

4. *Comments of elected officials.*—Six communications from elected officials or groups were received for inclusion in the record. All were in support of wilderness designation for the islands in Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge. They were: Congressman Paul G. Rogers, Florida; City of Vero Beach, Fla.; City Council of Sebastian, Fla.; Board of Commissioners, Indian River County, Fla.; Indian River County public schools, and Indian River County Chamber of Commerce.

5. *State agencies.*—Communications from two State agencies were received. A letter from the trustees of the internal improvement fund took no position on the wilderness proposal but expressed interest in protecting rights of riparian owners in sections 4 and 9. Dr. Maurice Provost, director of the Entomological Research Center, Florida State Board of Health, Vero Beach, endorsed the wilderness area concept but expressed disappointment that refuge islands would not be available for research involving construction of impoundments.

6. *Federal agencies.*—Communications were received from four Federal agencies. The U.S. Department of Commerce indicated no opposition to the proposal, while the Department of Housing and Urban Development indicated no position at this time. The Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines submitted a statement and mineral appraisal report which was received too late to be included in the public hearing transcript. The statement and report have been included in the wilderness record as communication No. 45, "Correspondence Received in Washington Office." The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation has reviewed this proposal and feels it desirable to include these islands in the wilderness system.