

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Director, BSF&W, Washington, D. C.

DATE: May 31, 1972

FROM : Regional Refuge Supervisor, Twin Cities, Minn. (RF)

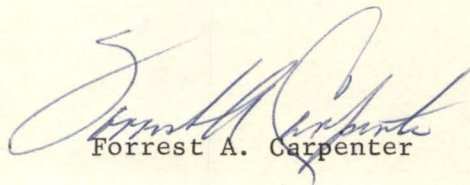
SUBJECT: Wilderness Review Package - Valentine

Enclosed for your comments is the review package for the Wilderness Proposal for Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Valentine, Nebraska. The package includes:

1. A mock up of the summary brochure.
2. The Wilderness report and photos.
3. Small maps of the refuge with proposal.
4. Bureau Representative Statement.
5. Hearing Officer's Statement.
6. Notice of Hearing.
7. Draft of Environmental Impact Statement.

The brochure is a smaller size to conform to the specifications required at Albuquerque Printing office.

Please return this material with your comments.


Forrest A. Carpenter

Attachments



12-04-71

~~Wayne Gueswel~~
Earl Cunningham

VALENTINE NWR WILDERNESS DILEMMA

Having studied this very carefully, I cannot help but feel that the boys in Region 3 have done less than a good job on their homework. I detect a very strong effort to pass the buck on this, although I cannot really blame them, considering the uncertainty about what a "wilderness" really is that pervades the Bureau and, indeed, the Department.

This warrants considerable discussion and I propose that we convene a session later in the week, or early next week, AFTER the boys have gotten out from under the current crush of wilderness presentations. I would like to get the benefit of the thinking of several people, including, but not limited to: the wilderness gang, Gueswel and Shields, Ballou, and Stiles.

I suggest that we think about this matter along these lines:

1. If the objectives of Valentine are the production of waterfowl as a highest priority, followed by the maintenance of other migratory birds and appropriate resident wildlife, then it follows that grazing is a part of the picture only (?) as a management tool.
2. IF this is valid, then the question is: How should grazing be employed as a management tool? Do we know, really, how it should be employed to get the results we want in the best way? (Do we really know that grazing is really needed as a management tool?)
3. Let's assume that grazing is a valid and desirable management tool for use on Valentine. This being the case, then we should employ grazing on OUR TERMS for the sole purpose of wildlife management. The question now is: Is grazing as now employed on Valentine on the terms WE desire? I think not, in light of item 6, page 2.
4. IF this is correct, then what kinds of modification of grazing should we look toward? Something akin to what is outlined in Item 6, page 2, seems to be a definition of grazing on OUR TERMS.
5. IF this is true, then what must be look toward in order to get the initiative we desire in the grazing program? Obviously, we must move into the area of what is politically possible. We could, for example, curtail grazing very soon, say over the next two or three years. We could plan to do it during the next decade, by providing for this in the Wilderness legislation for Valentine. Whatever we do, we must be prepared to make a good case for this action.

In order to make a good case, we must have, at the very minimum, some information not set forth in this memo. For instance: We don't know how dependent the permittees are on Valentine grazing for their living. How large are these permittees' private holdings--how badly hurt would they be if they had to give up their grazing allotments on the refuge?

If we assume we can develop a carefully etched picture of how grazing fits into the long-term management of Valentine, then we can better determine how to move in connection with a proposed Wilderness area on this place.

Our folks in Minneapolis have based everything here on the assumption that we are faced with an either-or situation. Either we permit grazing on the terms that have prevailed for more than three decades or we get rid of it. Either we can accept grazing as it is now practiced or we do not have a wilderness.

How about another set of assumptions:

1. Grazing--on our terms--is necessary and can be compatible with wilderness;
2. Changing the grazing program CAN be defended and can be accomplished without a wrenching change WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF WILDERNESS LEGISLATION THAT RECOGNIZES THIS. That is, we make a case for grazing as a true tool of management and then proceed to work out a scheme that might provide for 10 years of phase-out, during which permittees are allowed to maintain their fences and windmills the way they do now, BUT WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT DURING THE NEXT TEN YEARS THEY PHASE OUT THEIR OPERATIONS, REMOVE THEIR CATTLE AND THAT WE REMOVE THE FENCES AND WINDMILLS AT THE END OF THAT DECADE.

Future grazing would then be done precisely in accordance with our specifications and solely for the purpose of wildlife management through pre-planned habitat management. Herding, short-term intensive grazing, etc., would be emphasized.

These ~~schemes~~ schemes taken into consideration all the factors affecting the local folks except the matter of money return to the county. Cherry County gets many times the revenue return through 25% of the grazing income than would be the case with the 3/4 of 1% of the land value. This is the real ^{political} problem, of course, and is not readily resolved, particularly since grazing on our terms is not likely to produce very much in the way of revenue.

In short, the issue is not simply will grazing as we now conduct it, ^{be} in keeping with the concept of wilderness. The question is, I think, is this kind of grazing what we really want and is what we really want in keeping with wilderness. We cannot go on and on and on doing things on other people's terms if those terms are contrary to what we know to be in keeping with the fundamental objectives of the land we manage.

Oh, hell....you've all heard me hold forth on this before. ^EIt's get together and discuss it a while. Forrest and Co. will hit me between the eyes with this when I visit them on the 16th and 17th of December, so I'd better be armed with something. Earl, you ^etime is the most critical, so you select a date and time for a meeting and I'll see that it fits into my schedule in some way. Thanks!

Lynn

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Director, BSF&W, Washington, D. C. (RF)

DATE: November 23, 1971

FROM : Regional Director, BSF&W, Twin Cities (RF)

SUBJECT: Valentine Wilderness Proposal

Your comments on our subject study report summary are being reviewed for appropriate changes and resubmission. It is evident from your comments, from telephone conversations and from our own discussions that serious problems exist in the interpretation of wilderness guidelines, definitions and policies.

The biggest hang-up in the Valentine proposal involves cattle grazing. Since this is a prelude to an even greater problem in the up-coming Crescent Lake study, we feel it necessary to explore with you the ramifications of this proposal and to solicit your comments before resubmission of the study report summary.

First of all, in defining an area that meets the basic requirements of the Act, we studied the entire refuge from the standpoints of acceptable conditions and future plans as conceived by the project manager in developing refuge objectives. The northwest part of the refuge was ruled out because of existing and proposed public use and waterfowl habitat developments. The northeast part was ruled out because of extensive marsh development plans in the Marsh Lakes area. The southeast portion was ruled out because of management and development plans for the Greater Prairie Chicken that inhabits only that area of the refuge.

This left the southwest part of the refuge for consideration. An area of about 13,000 acres with minimum management requirements and negligible development potential was defined in that segment. It was roadless in the sense that routes of travel normally require the use of 4-wheel drive vehicles. The "imprint of man's work" was also "substantially unnoticeable" in the sense that 16 windmills and 23 miles of fence are necessary appurtenances to the approved practice of grazing on a wilderness area.

Our problems involving grazing and wilderness can best be pointed out as follows:



1. Grazing is a practice of long standing at Valentine Refuge. It involves rather intensive management of small units as opposed to the open range type of grazing huge units in the West.
2. Grazing is specifically authorized in the Wilderness Act without qualification as to acceptable types.
3. Appurtenances of grazing (fences, windmills, rubbing posts, salt blocks, etc.) are presumed acceptable as essential to management in this type of grazing.
4. Motorized transportation, used almost exclusively by permittees in herd management, would be prohibited within the wilderness area. Utilization of saddle horses to maintain appurtenances would result in rapidly deteriorating facilities and no replacements, resulting inevitably in the termination of the grazing program.
5. Permittees would strongly resist such defacto termination of grazing privileges. An administrative decision to terminate grazing because of wilderness designation would be resisted by the Wilderness Society as well as our permittees. Any termination of grazing privileges would be unpopular with local people for three main reasons: simple loss of privileges (considered a loss of "rights" to some), added fire danger, which ranchers associate with non-use, and the loss of revenue to Cherry County.
6. Termination of grazing on a regular and annual basis on the proposed wilderness would be welcomed, however, by the refuge manager. A grassland management study team recently completed a survey at Valentine. The team recommended general reductions in grazing rates, changes in haying practices on meadows and the establishment of a large block for experimental periodic grazing. Such periodic grazing would be set up to accomplish specific objectives in habitat manipulation. Grazing pressure would be applied to specific areas through herding; crossfences, windmills, etc., would not be required. This approach would eliminate permittee dependence since the herds used would be from regular units in other parts of the refuge.

In reviewing the magnitude of the wilderness-grazing problem at Valentine, we find there are 17 grazing units or portions thereof within the proposal. Eleven units with 8,600 acres are grazed during the summer or fall. Three units with 1,140 acres are primarily lowland meadows where harvested hay, using motorized equipment, is fed to cattle during the winter. The three remaining units with about 1,980 acres are former grazing units now held in reserve.

Seven permittees are affected by this wilderness proposal. Units they operate are located as shown on the attached map. A summary of their operations appears in Table I, attached.

The permittee affected to the greatest extent is Ralph Baker, a figure of political prominence in Cherry County and a strong supporter of Senator Hruska. All of Mr. Baker's grazing lease is within the wilderness proposal and constitutes about one third of the total land area. Mr. Baker's partner, Douglas Wrage, has about half of his grazing privileges within the proposal.

Mrs. Philomene Young leases the largest amount of grazing land on the refuge; about 11 percent of her grazing units is located within the proposal. She recently married Mr. Otho Kine, a State Legislator from the Valentine district.

The grazing units of Kurt Wendler, recently deceased, will be placed in reserve status when his widow has had a few years to phase out the operation. The three other permittees have the following percentage of their grazing privileges within the proposal: Hugh Sherman - 50 percent, Dean Colburn - 40 percent, and Gerald Beel - 6 percent.

With this background, you can understand our desire for guidance and support before we proceed further. There are three alternatives we wish you would treat directly in your reply, these are:

1. No wilderness. If the windmills, fences, and other appurtenances of grazing at Valentine are incompatible with wilderness, as we feel they are, then designation is not now possible and we will revise our summary report accordingly.
2. Wilderness with fences and windmills. If the appurtenances of grazing are considered compatible, then we must make and promote a proposal for wilderness. If we promote a proposal on this basis, it will be supported (and likely expanded) by the Wilderness Society, but the prohibition of motorized travel by permittees will doom the grazing program within a few years and leave a wilderness of worn out fences and windmills. Our permittees deserve early notice of this possibility since it would become abundantly clear at the public hearing.
3. Wilderness without fences or windmills. This alternative presumes that the area meets basic wilderness requirements. An administrative decision would have to be made to terminate regular, annual grazing in favor of periodic grazing, as previously discussed. This periodic grazing would be restricted to uncut forage since hay cutting with mechanical contrivances would be forbidden. This would also permit removal of all appurtenances from the area before wilderness designation.

The obvious problem with either alternatives No. 2 or No. 3 is the sudden, radical change that terminates, reduces, or drastically alters the operation of seven permittees. Two of these permittees are politically powerful and one is a widow. This action would eliminate 11 percent of the grazing program on about 19 percent of the refuge. Habitat management would improve with this action, but the political implications are overwhelming.

We would welcome any other alternative that is more palatable. It is essential that we take a common position, understood and supported at all levels from the Secretary's office on down. The approach we take at Valentine will undoubtedly provide the pattern for the Crescent Lake proposal.

Your early consideration of this dilemma with your recommendations would be appreciated.

James S. Roberts

Attachment

VALENTINE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

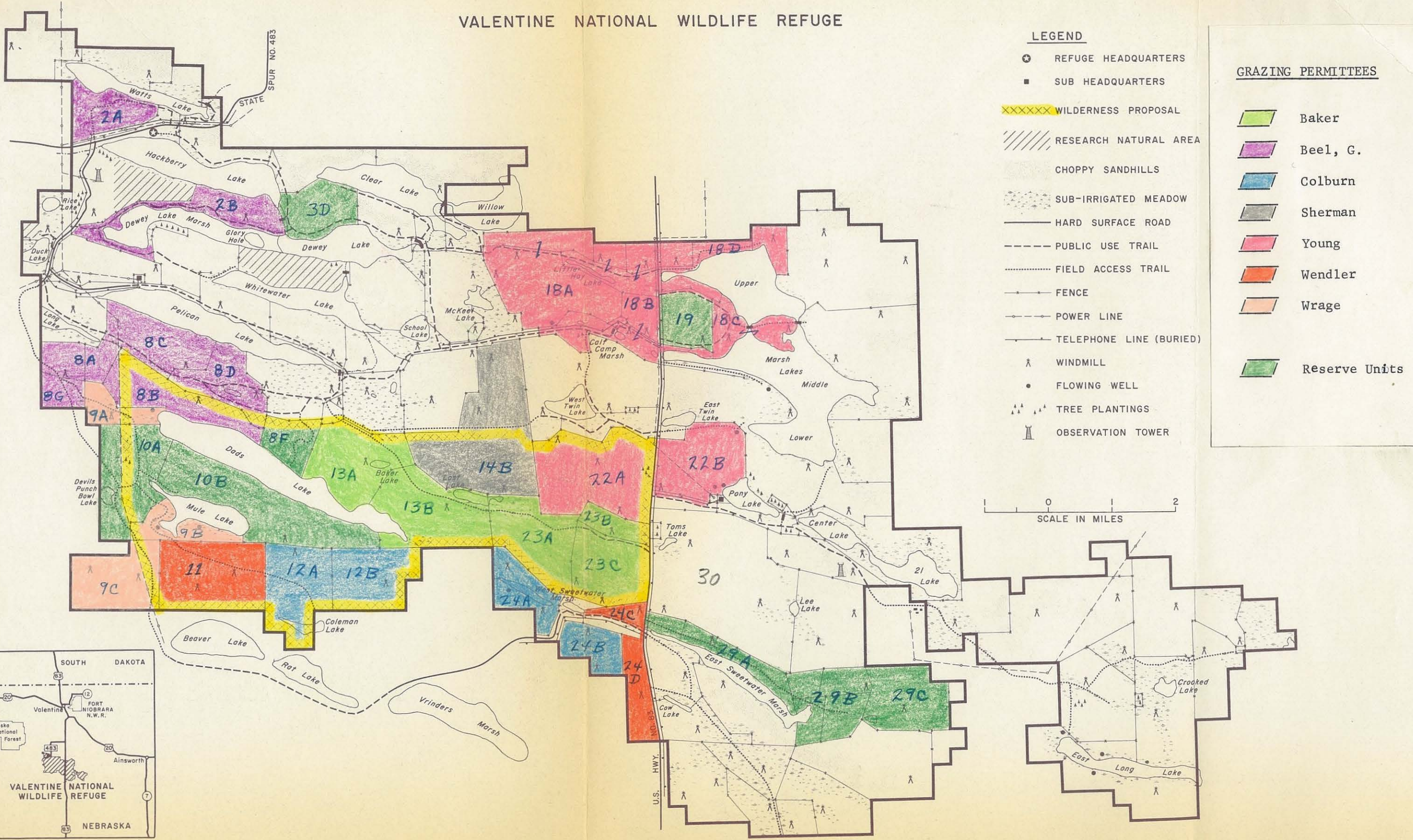


TABLE I

Permittee	Grazing Units	Total Acres	Total AUM'S	Within Wilderness Proposal			Outside Wilderness Proposal		
				Units	Acres	AUM's	Units	Acres	AUM's
Baker, Ralph	G-13A G-13B G-23A G-23B G-23C	3,705	1,901	G-13A G-13B G-23A G-23B G-23C	3,705	1,901	None	None	None
Beel, Gerald	G-2A G-8C G-2B G-8D G-8A G-8G G-8B	3,744	3,053	Part of G-8B	600	200	Part of G-8B plus all of other units	3,144	2,853
Colburn, Dean	G-12A G-12B G-24A G-24B	2,514	1,537	G-12A G-12B	1,807	576	G-24A G-24B	707	961
Sherman, Hugh	G-14B	1,238	400	Part of G-14B	700	200	Part of G-14B	538	200
Young, Philomene	G-18A G-18B G-18C G-18D G-22A G-22B	5,805	4,604	G-22A	1,447	501	All but G-22A	4,358	4,103
Wendler, Kurt (deceased)	G-11 G-24C G-24D	1,706	984	G-11	1,024	263	G-24C G-24D	682	721
Wrage, Douglas	G-9A G-9B G-9C	1,452	1,411	Part of G-9A All of G-9B Part of G-9C	516	716	Part of G-9A Part of G-9C	926	695

MONTHLY RECREATION USE REPORT

STATE NEBRASKA

REFUGE VALENTINE

REGION 3

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 03

YR 1971

PAGE 1

ACTIVITY NAME

VISITS BY MONTH

TOTAL VISITS	AV HRS PER VISIT	12-HR DAY SUMMARY
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JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
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HUNTING:

BIG GAME								25	20	430	20	495	5	231
UPLAND	30							505	135	155	90	915	4	305

TOTAL-HUNTING	30							530	155	585	110	1410	4	536
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BOW			40	160	50	5		25	20	30	20	350	4	116
FISHING:														

WARM WATER	2085	1570	1000	985	5735	1220	700	500	570	125		905	15395	4	5425
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TOTAL FISHING	2085	1570	1000	985	5735	1220	700	500	570	125		905	15395	4	5425
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WILDLIFE PHOTO				35	100	40	10	20	5	5			215	3	60
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WILDLIFE OBS	10	5	5	20	350	150	150	200		15	50	10	965	2	227
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WILDLIFE TRAILS					90	65	60	83	60	40			398		30
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WILDLIFE TRC./RTS.					57	47				36			140	1	14
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PICNIC WILD-REL	1040	750	500	475	3780	1130	600	550	900	125	350	500	10700	1	891
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OFF SITE PROGRAMS	30					47		63				341	481		
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ON-SITE PROGRAMS					59			63		36			158		
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MISC WILDL				40	84	41	12		57	38	40	30	342	3	103
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BOATING									10				10	1	
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PICNICING	35	25	30	40	160	100	100	110	50	30	30	30	740		57
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WINTER SPORTS	250	160	100									50	560	2	96
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NUT VEG COLLECTING					25			30	10	10	5		80	1	11
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PEAK LOAD DAY	190	245	125	245	600	140	70	50	190	45	140	85	2125		
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ACTUAL VISITS	2290	1760	1135	1160	6771	1723	872	913	1310	325	660	1035	19954		
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TOT WILDL ORIENTED	3195	2325	1505	1595	10415	2790	1537	1479	2147	595	1055	1916	30554	2	7404
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TOT NON WILDLIFE	285	185	130	40	185	100	100	140	70	40	35	80	1390	1	166
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TOTAL ACTIVITY	3480	2510	1635	1635	10600	2890	1637	1619	2217	635	1090	1996	31944	2	7571
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VALENTINE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

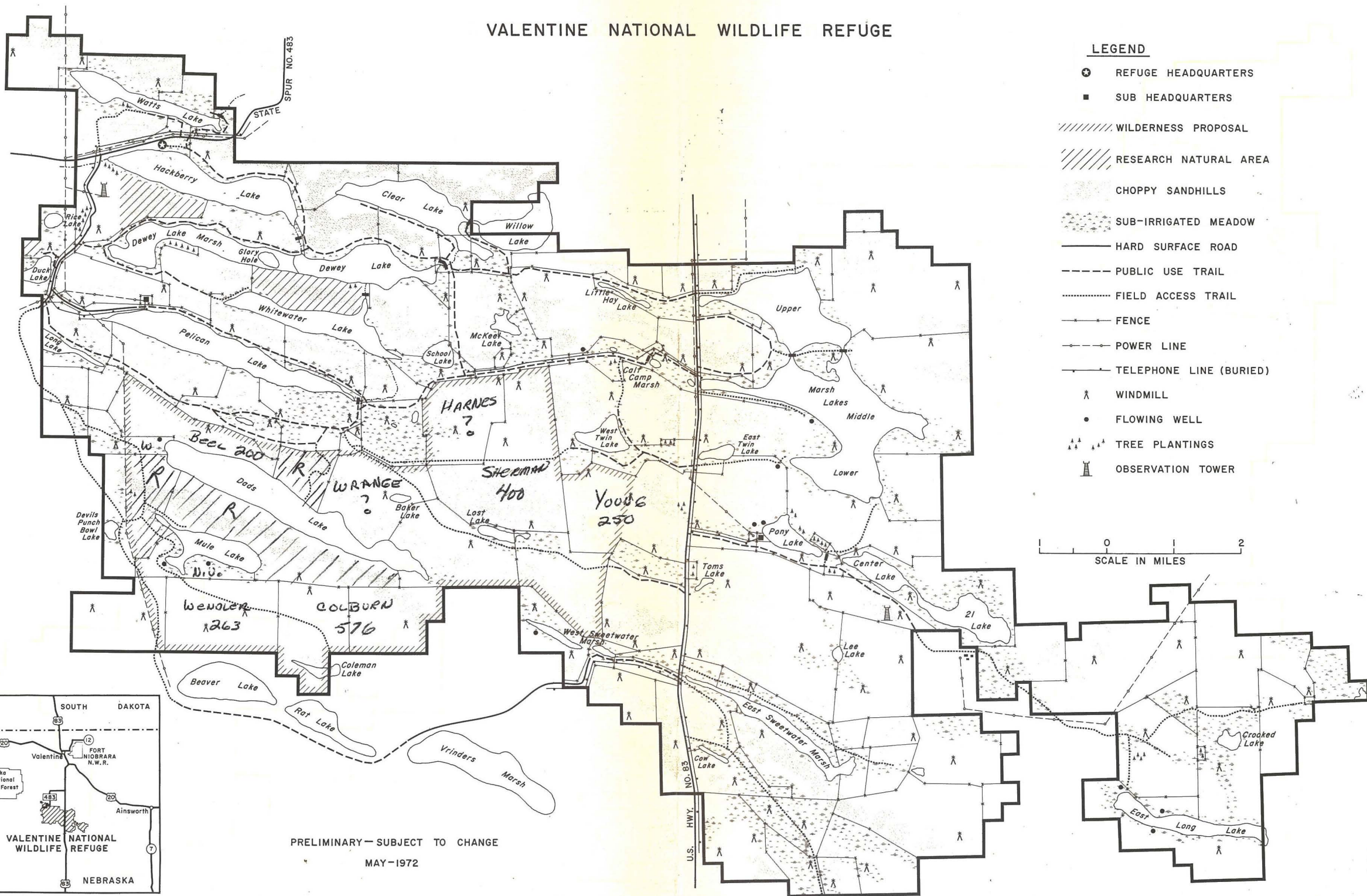
LEGEND

- ★ REFUGE HEADQUARTERS
- SUB HEADQUARTERS
- //// WILDERNESS PROPOSAL
- //// RESEARCH NATURAL AREA
- CHOPPY SANDHILLS
- SUB-IRRIGATED MEADOW
- HARD SURFACE ROAD
- - - PUBLIC USE TRAIL
- FIELD ACCESS TRAIL
- FENCE
- POWER LINE
- TELEPHONE LINE (BURIED)
- ⋈ WINDMILL
- FLOWING WELL
- ▲▲▲ TREE PLANTINGS
- ⋈ OBSERVATION TOWER

1 0 1 2
SCALE IN MILES



PRELIMINARY—SUBJECT TO CHANGE
MAY-1972





United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
Federal Building, Fort Snelling
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111

IN REPLY REFER TO:

VALENTINE WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

VALENTINE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Valentine, Nebraska

January, 1972

Ladies and Gentlemen: I am Forrest Carpenter, Regional Refuge Supervisor of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this hearing on the Valentine Wilderness Proposal within the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.

As background, I should like to point out that the Wilderness Act of 1964 directed the Secretary of the Interior to review all roadless areas of 5,000 acres or if less that are of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation in an unimpaired condition and every roadless island with the National Wildlife Refuge System to determine their suitability as wilderness.

Further, regulations of the Secretary of the Interior published on February 22, 1966, require this Bureau to review those areas qualified for study under the Wilderness Act that are: (a) reasonably compact; (b) undeveloped; (c) possessing general characteristics of wilderness; and (d) without improved roads suitable for public travel by conventional automobile.

The National Wildlife Refuge System consists of more than 320 units containing over 30 million acres. Units of the system are found on lands reaching from the shores of the Arctic Ocean to islands of the Central Pacific Ocean and from the Florida Keys to Maine.

There is one or more national wildlife refuge in every one of the 17 major Life Zones of North America. Therefore, the ecology of each national wildlife refuge differs from any other refuge, although some are similar. Because of these ecological differences, management objectives of individual refuges are often quite different. It has been determined that about 90 national wildlife refuges, containing over 25 million acres, located in over 30 states qualify for study as wilderness.

As you can see, the wilderness review program in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, of which this proposal is a part, encompasses a wide spectrum of lands within national wildlife refuges in the country. Only through careful study and analysis can a proper determination be



made regarding whether a national wildlife refuge, or a portion of a national wildlife refuge, qualifies for consideration by the Secretary of the Interior as wilderness. We are presenting the results of our study of Valentine Wilderness Proposal for your consideration today.

You have a copy of the report with summarizes the study we have made of this proposal. Copies of the complete study report are available for your scrutiny after the hearing here on the front table. We ask you to please leave them in the hearing room after you have finished with them, because the number of copies is very limited. A copy of my statement is also available, if you do not already have a copy, for your information and use.

Valentine National Wildlife Refuge is located 26 miles south of the city of Valentine on U. S. Highway 83 in Cherry County, Nebraska. It was established in 1935 as a breeding grounds for migratory birds and other wildlife. None of this 71,516 acres refuge was withdrawn from public domain.

The entire refuge was reviewed for wilderness potential and the ^{16,318}~~12,900~~ acre unit proposed here was selected. The topography sets this portion of Nebraska off from the remainder of the county. The unique sandhill ranges sometimes rise over 100 feet high and lie in generally longitudinal patterns from the W-NW to the E-SE. Some of the hills have sharp and steep slopes while others are more gently undulating. The deeper valleys between the ranges have long narrow lakes while the broader valleys at higher elevations have moist, grassy meadows. The proposal includes the best and most undeveloped portion of this unique formation on the refuge.

The Sioux Indians were the early residents of this area. When the land was opened for settlement, cattle were brought up from Dodge City, Kansas initiating the open-range days which terminated with the last big roundup in 1885. Valentine established itself as a pioneer cattle town and grew rapidly. It boasted wooden houses and sidewalks cut from the ponderosa pine in the Niobrara River valley.

A CCC camp was built on the refuge in 1935, and the boys built boundary fences, roads, trails, towers and cabins. They also planted trees and shrubs for wildlife which can still be seen today. The camp was closed in 1939, and the buildings were razed.

When the refuge was established, much of the land had been over-grazed, and blow-outs had formed near the tops of many of the south facing slopes of the sandhills. Slowly the vegetation has been brought back to where most of the blow-outs have healed over and the native grasses and forbs have recovered.

The great drowth of the thirties had focused national attention on the rapidly diminishing waterfowl numbers. The Valentine area with its numerous lakes and marshes was attractive to waterfowl. Since then, the protection

afforded by the refuge has attracted great numbers of waterfowl and other migratory birds. The rare trumpeter swan has become a nesting resident. Canada geese are producing young and bald eagles, golden eagles and peregrine falcons use the refuge during migration.

The prairie chicken is a particularly interesting species which makes its home on the refuge. A section of the refuge east of Highway 83 has been devoted to its preservation and management. Studies are continuing to learn more about the requirements and management of this rare and disappearing species.

The native grasses which are found on the proposed area include: sand blue stem, little blue stem, big blue stem, sand reed grass, sand love grass and phragmites to mention just a few.

Some of the common forbes found here are: yucca, spiderwort, blazing star, prairie sunflower, goldenrod and prickly-pear cactus.

Our proposed recommendation to the Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Washington, D. C. will be that the Valentine Wilderness Proposal be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The Bureau here concludes its presentation in behalf of the proposal, and thanks you for your attention.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Valentine National Wildlife Refuge

Notice of Public Hearing Regarding Wilderness Proposal

Notice is hereby given in accordance with provisions of the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (Public Law 88-577; 78 Stat. 890-896; 16 U. S. C. 1131-1136), that a public hearing will be held beginning at 9:00 a.m. on January Nebraska, on a proposal leading to a recommendation to be made to the President of the United States by the Secretary of the Interior, regarding the desirability of including Valentine Wilderness proposal within the National Wilderness Preservation System. The wilderness proposal consists of approximately ^{12,577}~~12,900~~ acres within the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge and is located in Cherry County, Nebraska.

A report containing a map and information about the Valentine Wilderness Proposal may be obtained from the Refuge Manager, Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Valentine, Nebraska 69201, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Federal Building, Fort Snelling, Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111.

Individuals or organizations may express their oral or written views by appearing at this hearing, or they may submit written comments for inclusion in the official record of the hearing to the Regional Director at the above address by March , 1972.

Acting Director
Bureau of Sport Fisheries
and Wildlife

6
D R A F T

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING
WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

PURSUANT TO PROVISIONS OF THE Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (P.L. 88-577; 78 Stat. 890-896; 16 U.S.C. 1131-1136), a PUBLIC HEARING will be held in the Cherry County Court House, Valentine, Nebraska beginning at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of developing information with respect to the desirability of including the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge or any contiguous 5,000 acres portion of the refuge in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The wilderness study encompasses the entire refuge of 71,516 acres in Cherry County, Nebraska. A summary report containing a map of the refuge and additional information concerning the study may be obtained from the Refuge Manager, Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Kennedy Star Route, Valentine, Nebraska 69201, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Federal Building, Fort Snelling, Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111.

All interested parties including Federal, State, County and municipal agencies, local interests, and individual citizens are invited to be present at the above time and place. They will be afforded full opportunity to express their views concerning the proposed wilderness.

Oral statements will be heard, but for accuracy of the record, all important facts and arguments should be submitted in writing as the record

of the hearing will be forwarded for consideration by the Secretary of the Interior. Written statements may either be mailed to the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111 in advance of the hearing or handed to the hearing officer at the hearing. The Department of the Interior encourages written expression relative to the proposal at any time. However, in order to be incorporated in the official Wilderness Record, all communications should be mailed to the Regional Director at the above address by September 1972.

Please bring the foregoing to the attention of persons known to be interested in the matter.

Regional Director

Federal Register Notice

Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

Valentine National Wildlife Refuge

Notice of Public Hearing Regarding Wilderness Proposal

Notice is hereby given in accordance with provisions of the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (Public Law 88-577; 78 Stat. 890-896; 16 U. S. C. 1131-1136), that a public hearing will be held beginning at 9:00 a.m. on January 1972, at the Valentine, Nebraska, on a proposal leading to a recommendation to be made to the President of the United States by the Secretary of the Interior, regarding the desirability of including Valentine Wilderness proposal within the National Wilderness Preservation System. The wilderness proposal consists of approximately ^{12,317} 12,900 acres within the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge and is located in Cherry County, Nebraska.

A report containing a map and information about the Valentine Wilderness proposal may be obtained from the Refuge Manager, Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Kennedy Star Route, Valentine, Nebraska 69201 or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Federal Building, Fort Snelling, Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111.

Individuals or organizations may express their oral or written views by appearing at this hearing, or they may submit written comments for

RF
RE
CH
AC

January 4, 1973

United States Department of Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife
Federal Building, Fort Snelling
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111

Dear Sir:

On December 12, 1972 at the Annual Meeting of the Sandhills Cattle Association, it was moved and passed that this group go on record as opposing the formation of a wilderness area at the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge or the Crescent Lake Refuge or any wilderness area in the unique Sandhills range area.

Sincerely,

SANDHILLS CATTLE ASSOCIATION

R. J. Lovejoy Sec. mgr

R. J. Lovejoy, Sec. mgr.

RJL/mmc

Hwy # 20
Valentine, Nebr 69201

*to a wilderness - the sandhills are
not a wilderness.*
Jeff



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Information
TWIN CITIES, MINNESOTA

BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

For Immediate Release

PUBLIC HEARING SLATED ON WILDERNESS AREA IN NEBRASKA

A public hearing to discuss a wilderness study on Valentine National Wildlife Refuge in Nebraska is scheduled for January in the Department of the Interior announced today.

The meeting on the Valentine wilderness proposal, covering 12,900^{16,517} acres, will be held at 9:00 a.m. Notice of the hearing was published in the Federal Register on

The proposal includes a selected portion of the refuge typical of Nebraska sandhill country. Several shallow lakes are found in the deeper valleys between the ranges of sandhills while moist grassy meadows are located in the valleys of slightly higher elevations.

A map and other information about the Valentine wilderness proposal is available from the Refuge Manager, Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Valentine, Nebraska 69201, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Federal Building, Fort Snelling, Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111.

Oral or written statements may be submitted at the hearing or written comments can be sent to the Regional Director by March



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
Federal Building, Fort Snelling
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111

IN REPLY REFER TO:

(RF)

PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES

VALENTINE WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

VALENTINE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

VALENTINE, NEBRASKA

January , 1972

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The hearing officer is Elmer Nitzschke, Field Solicitor, Twin Cities, Minnesota who has been assigned by the Secretary of the Interior to conduct this public hearing. Most of you undoubtedly filled out an attendance card as you entered the door; if you have not done so, we would like to ask that you complete one. The information on these cards will be used by the hearing officer to help him conduct this hearing. The hearing officer will call on all those who indicate on this card that they wish to be heard or recognized. If anyone wishing to make an oral statement has to leave early, please indicate this on the card so that the hearing officer can arrange for you to testify.

As indicated in the Notice of Public Hearing, this hearing is being held to obtain information relating to the desirability of establishing a unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System within the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge. In arranging for this hearing, notices were sent to the United States Senators and Congressmen, the Governor of the State of Nebraska and other elected officials. Replies which have been received from them will be read later and incorporated into the transcript of this hearing. Notices were also sent to Federal and State agencies and organizations and individuals known to be interested in the matter. You have been provided a copy of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife statement outlining the proposal. It is suggested that you read this statement as soon as possible. It should answer most of your questions.

When you are called upon for your statement, please come forward to the microphone, state your name and organization you represent, or if you are speaking as an individual, please make this clear. All written statements will become a part of the official record whether they are filed with the hearing officer, read in the open meeting, or orally summarized. In the

1971

interest of conserving time, you are requested to file lengthy statements for the record and summarize them orally at this hearing. Please keep in mind that it is the official transcript, containing all written statements, as well as oral presentations, that will be used for review by the Department of the Interior and later by the Congress in their consideration of this study. Statements will be made under oath, and since this is not an adversary proceeding, there will be no cross-examination.

This meeting will be conducted strictly for the purpose of recording the position of the organization you represent, or your personal view. Debates between individuals and officials of the Government or private organizations will be ruled out of order. Please direct any inquiries to the hearing officer who will rule as to whether the questions is pertinent to the study for which this hearing has been called, keeping in mind that the purpose of this hearing is to compile an official record of public opinion with respect to the merits of this wilderness proposal, as directed by the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, Public Law 88-577. Neither is it the duty of the public hearing officer to reach any conclusions nor make any decision regarding the wilderness proposal.

After this public hearing, a thorough review will be made of this wilderness proposal, but this is not the last opportunity for public expression. The record of this public hearing and all other information on the proposal will be reviewed by the Secretary of the Interior who will transmit his recommendations regarding the proposal to the President. The President will transmit his recommendations to the Congress. After appropriate consideration, which will include hearings, the Congress will accept, reject or modify the proposal as a unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The hearing will be in session from 9:00 a.m. until all interested parties have had an opportunity to express their views. Please note that the official record of the public hearing will be kept open through March , 1972 for those who wish to submit statements or modifications of previous statements for inclusion in the record. Send such statements to the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Federal Building, Fort Snelling, Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111.

The Department of the Interior welcomes your views at any time, but in order to be included in the official record, your views should be in the offices of the Regional Director at the above address by March , 1972.

Thank you for attending.

Regional Director

DRAFT

A B I L L

To designate certain lands in the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Cherry County, Nebraska, 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 Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Nebraska which comprise about 16,317 acres and which are depicted on a map entitled "Valentine Wilderness - Proposed" and dated August, 1972, and 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. As soon as practicable after this Act takes effect, the Secretary of the Interior shall file a map and a legal description of the Valentine Wilderness with the Interior and Insular Affairs Committees of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives, and such description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act: Provided, however, That correction of clerical and typographical errors in such legal description and map may be made.

Sec. 3. The Valentine Wilderness shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the provisions of the Wilderness Act governing areas designated by that Act as wilderness areas, except that any reference in such provisions to the effective date of the Wilderness Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the effective date of this Act.



Avocet On Nest

Harvey L. Gunderson

WILDERNESS HEARING ALERT

You may be receiving this alert via third class mail. If you cannot attend the hearing, your letter — accepted up to 30 days after the hearing date — is included in the official record of proceedings and is just as effective as those submitted earlier.

Crescent Lake and Valentine Nebraska

Nebraskans now have the one-time opportunity to help preserve significant, vast prairie lands under the 1964 Wilderness Act. The Act requires the Department of the Interior to review every roadless area of 5,000 acres or more within the National Wildlife Refuge System and report to the President its recommendations on the area's suitability for wilderness preservation. A wilderness area may then be established by an Act of Congress.

Public Hearings

Valentine National Wildlife Refuge
December 12, 1972, 9:00 a.m.
Court House, Valentine, Nebraska

Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge
December 14, 1972, 9:00 a.m.
Court House, Oshkosh, Nebraska

These two public hearings, required by the Wilderness Act, are held to solicit citizens' opinions and suggestions for wilderness preservation of qualified acreages. These areas presently represent Nebraska's only opportunity to have significant tracts of unique lands protected under the Wilderness Act. Citizens are urged to attend one or both hearings and present their views to Department of the Interior officials.

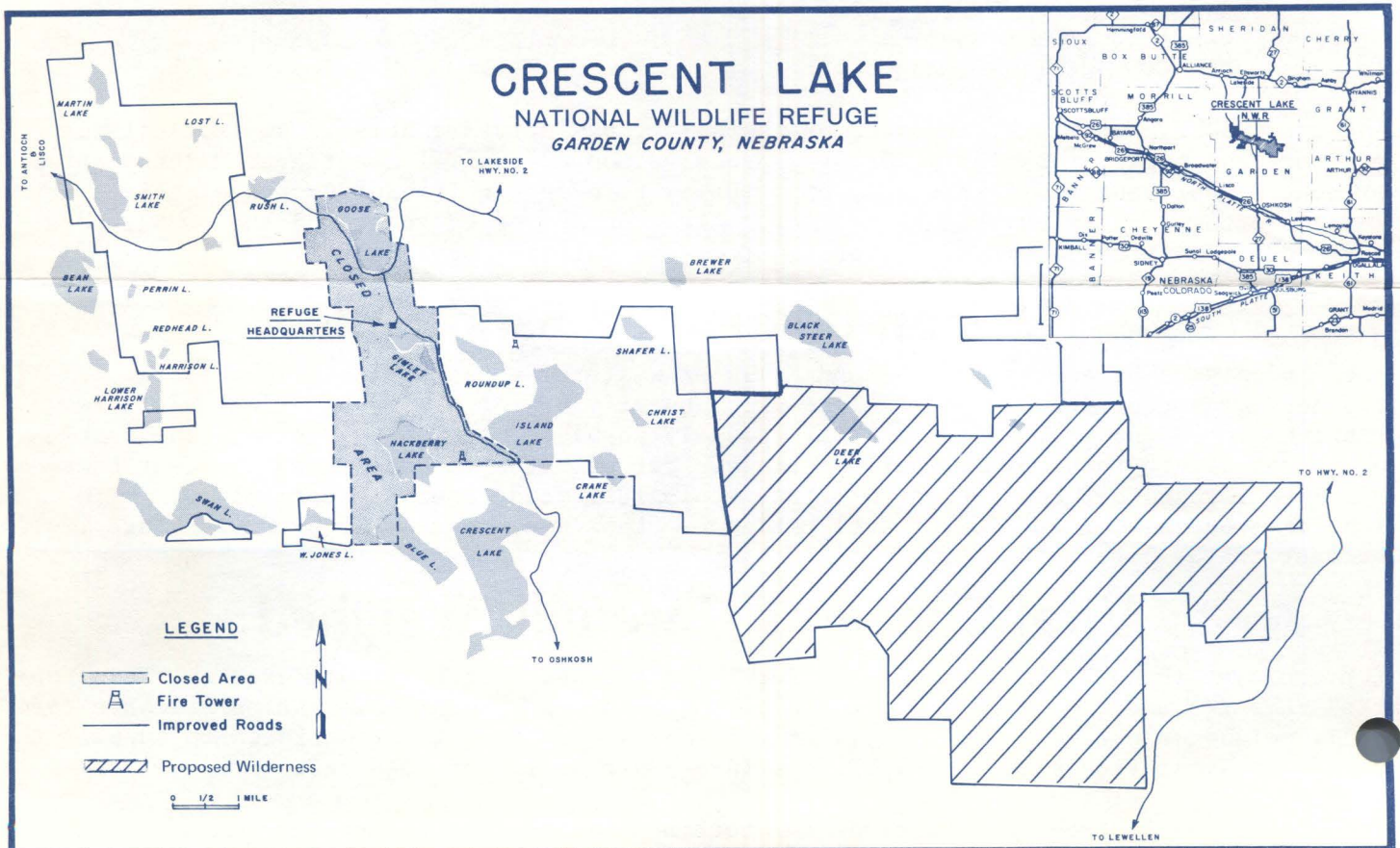
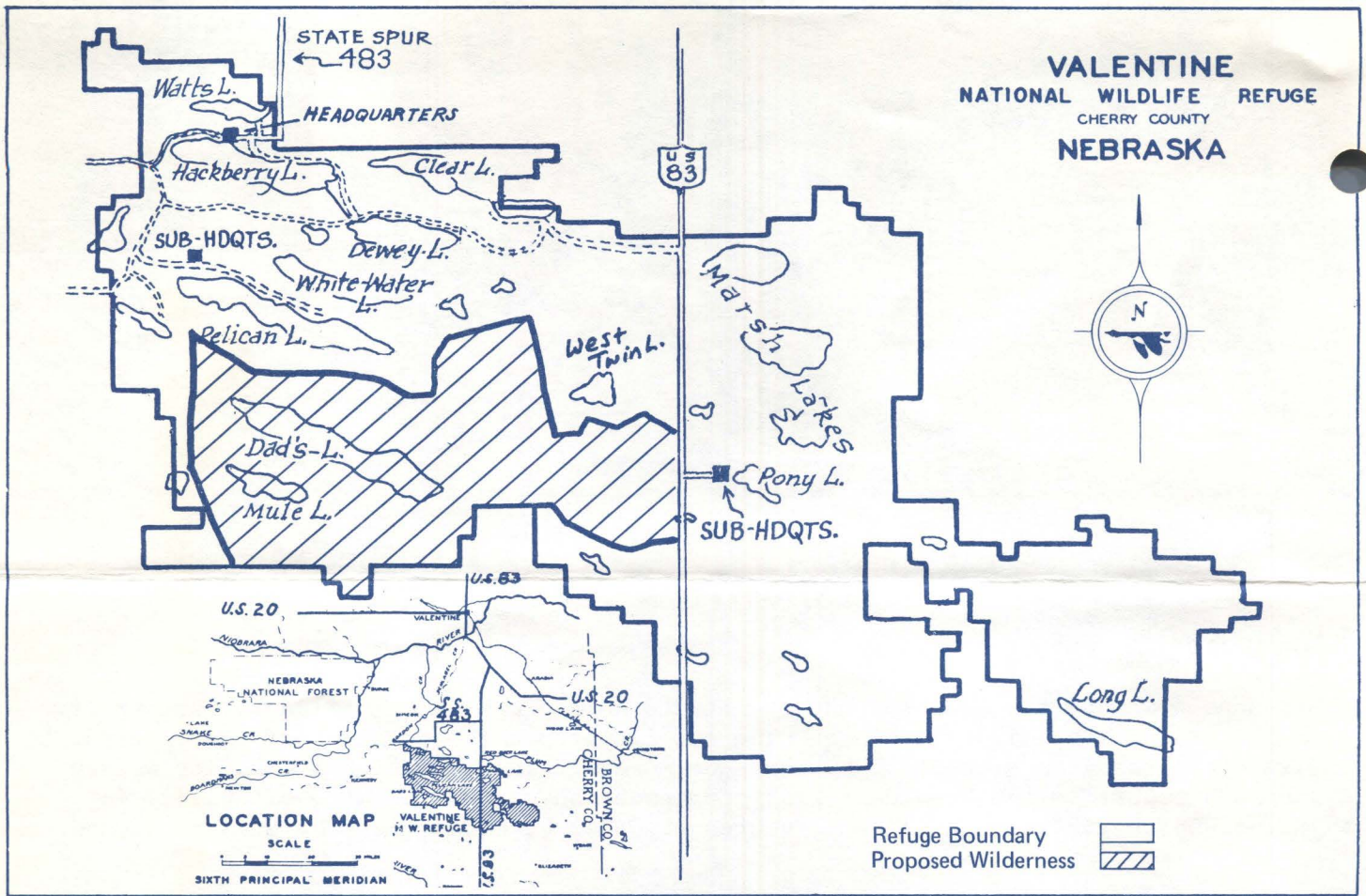
Horizon-dominated Sand Hills

The expansive, horizon-dominated Sand Hills of western Nebraska boast two national wildlife refuges, each containing wild roadless areas qualifying for review as wilderness. Few tourists leave the major roads of this sparsely populated region to discover the subtle pleasures within these prairie wildernesses. Yet both the Valentine and Crescent Lake wildlife refuges are considered important ecological study areas by not only wildlife scholars, but also inquisitive local citizens. Land use programs of both areas are important to the local economy.

Vital Concerns Carefully Weighed

Concern over the wilderness proposals for these refuges centers around grazing, fire control measures and continued visitor use of the area. Nebraska conservationists have carefully weighed these important and valid concerns in reaching their decision to support the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife's (BSFW) proposals for both refuges.

The Wilderness Act does not preclude the continuation of established grazing use of national wildlife refuges. Grazing can and will continue as a management tool to enhance



waterfowl nesting habitat. The Bureau plans some long-range changes in grassland management of both refuges whether wilderness is established or not, since the Wilderness Act does not impair the Bureau's administrative discretion.

The Wilderness Act provides flexible management for emergency needs and adequate, though minimal, administration. While motor vehicles are prohibited within a designated wilderness, their emergency use to control fire threatening adjoining property is definitely permitted.

The Wilderness Act supplements the purposes for which national wildlife refuges are established and administered. Wilderness designation would not exclude people from entering the area for nature study, hunting, fishing, hiking and canoeing, subject of course to wildlife needs and wildlife refuge regulations. No works of man may be built, however, and a few windmills and fences within both refuges are scheduled for removal.

Wilderness designation simply insures that the scenic, educational, scientific and recreational assets of such natural areas are preserved for the benefit of future generations.

The Valentine Refuge Proposal

The 71,516-acre Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, located 26 miles south of Valentine on U.S. Highway 83, was established in 1935 as a sanctuary for waterfowl and other wildlife species. Its sub-irrigated meadows, marshes, lakes and grassy uplands provide habitat for white-tailed and mule deer, coyote, foxes and other common mammals. Waterfowl are numerous. Threatened species include the greater prairie chicken, bald and golden eagles, trumpeter swan, greater sandhill crane and peregrine falcon. The moderate cattle grazing permitted on the refuge is its principal economic use. Fishing, picnicking and hunting are primary public recreational uses, centered around wildlife-oriented interests. Increasing biological and ecological studies in the area enhance the value of the refuge yearly.

The BSWF has studied the Valentine Refuge and recommends that 16,317 acres (see map) be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Bureau's proposal includes two large lakes, Mule and Dad's, along with several smaller ones. The boundary is marked on the west by a power line and on the east by U.S. Highway 83. The south boundary follows the present refuge boundary but excludes West Sweetwater Marsh. On the north it follows a fenceline, excluding a large sub-irrigated meadow and West Twin Lake.

Concerned citizens interested in preserving samples of America's remaining wild grasslands in their natural state have studied the Bureau's wilderness proposal for the Valentine Refuge. With Nebraska citizen groups they highly endorse the Bureau's 16,317-acre proposal. These groups do question the justification of a road projected south of Pelican Lake under "future management needs." They question whether the wilderness character of the refuge could withstand the impact of such a road along the entire length of its northern boundary. Conservation groups feel that access, presently adequate, could be improved if necessary by a few more delineated trails.

The Crescent Lake Refuge Proposal

Visitation figures are low, yet bird watchers throughout the nation come to observe waterfowl and wildlife in the sizeable grass-covered dune area of the Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Long-billed curlews and avocets that nest in the lush meadows and numerous marsh areas are of particular interest. Canada geese and various species of ducks utilize the refuge, along with threatened species listed for the Valentine Refuge. Of the 45,996-acre Crescent Lake Refuge, the BSWF recommends approximately 24,502 acres for wilderness designation. This section, in the eastern part of the refuge, has few lakes and does not require intensive wildlife management practices that the western unit demands. Recent studies analyzing the relationship of various grazing methods and

intensities with wildlife needs concluded that new grazing programs will be implemented regardless of whether this area is placed in wilderness. Mowing of the meadows will be discontinued, with intermittent grazing used as an alternative management tool. Properly placed salt blocks, natural water and temporary fencing will meet grazing needs.

Nebraska environmental groups enthusiastically support the Bureau's far-sighted plan for preserving a viable prairie wilderness within the Crescent Lake Refuge. As with Valentine, local concern centers around land management programs, particularly grazing. Citizens recommend that a committee be formed consisting of ranchers and environmental groups to advise refuge managers on land use management programs.

How You Can Help

Sponsors of this alert urge you to attend both hearings and:

For Valentine NWR

- ° Support the 16,317-acre BSWF proposal for a Valentine wilderness.
- ° Discourage the projected road along the Valentine wilderness northern boundary.
- ° Urge citizen involvement in land use management decisions.

For Crescent Lake NWR

- ° Support the 24,502-acre BSWF proposal for a Crescent Lake wilderness.
- ° Recommend the formation of a committee of ranchers and environmental groups to advise refuge managers on land use management programs.

If you cannot attend a hearing, please write a letter expressing your support of Nebraska conservationists and commenting on that proposal by January 14, 1973, to:



Regional Director
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111

Please note that there are two hearings and two proposals. Although they may be in the same envelope, you must write a separate letter to the regional director for each proposal.

Sponsors of this Alert

Wildlife Society, Nebraska Section, Lincoln
Fontenelle Forest Nature Center, Bellevue
Quality Environmental Council, Omaha
The Wilderness Society

Nebraska Chapters, National Audubon Society
ASUN Environmental Task Force, Lincoln
Sierra Club and Nebraska groups
Friends of the Earth





