

California Federation of Women's Clubs



Los Angeles District
 Department of Conservation
 of Natural Resources
 May 23, 1939

Shook
Mr. DeLoe
File 11
Rec 4/7 JK
Ret from cabinet 4/13 - JK

RECEIVED
 SERVICE
 MAY 3 - 1939

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
 Washington, D C

Dear Sir:

It won't be long now till my letters to you about my beloved swampland will be one of those "chamber of horrors" specimens-- but it seems to me that someone is going to solve this vexing problem one of these days and while I live I want it solved carefully.

It is the same old lowlands south of Los Angeles, thru which you have driven, but which so far I have not managed to get you to look at even. The owners of this 2000 acre tract continually seek public funds "to drain Nigger Slough". Its elevation is such that the only plan that seems as though it might approach a drainage makes a canal from 450 to 90 feet wide to extend miles and miles inland, bringing salt water at least 10 miles to stand all the time. To me this is a dreadful thing to do. Besides the cost to do this is some \$5 000 000---and only a few private owners would be benefitted and the drainage would be doubtful in advantage.

This morning's paper carries a story that you again will visit Los Angeles. Can't you, please, Mr President, just allow us who love these lowlands and want something beautiful and lasting made of them, to get the benefit of your fleeting interest in them?

We have such wonderful and rare waterbirds that still try to eke out an existence around here----our fresh waters are all being tied up in pipes, or drained away entirely--so that our wildbirds are almost exterminated so far as this metropolitan area is concerned.

With the five million dollars asked--this whole area should be purchased and made into an aquatic park--to try to stave off the disappearance entirely from this whole part of the coast of our waterbirds---naturalists are agreed as to this benefit, from the Biological Survey thru our own Fish and Game to the ornithologists in this part of the state. Of course, it should not take anything like the five million to buy it--and if purchased outright it would give employment to many men putting in dams, walls, and replacing roads----but the public afterward would have something worth while, instead of two or

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three land owners who would try to use the land for settlement which will always be of doubtful possibility and feasibility.

This inland lake could be used in many ways by the public and as you can see for yourself within the next fifty years every available lot will have a house on it--the only reason it is now somewhat unsettled is because of the one owner holding it--he is Mr Hamilton Cotton, a most estimable Democrat, by the way. He wants the problem settled---and I believe a cash offer would buy out the owners and turn over to the public something worth vastly more than the taxes that would accrue over many, many years from trying to settle this land. Every acre of open parkland will eventually mean a great deal to the public.

Southern California now is getting so full of people that its open places are priceless--what it will be a few years from now only figures will tell.

I have no personal interest in this area---and know most of the answers the owners put up pleading for drainage----but the feasible thing to do with swamplands is to try to keep some of them--and make this refuge world famous. It has some 80-90 species of birds still trying to visit or nest here.

Will you not, on this visit, just allow us to tell you what to look for if you do not want any more details about it? I wrote you before but did not get my letter to you and so it was answered in regular stereotyped form, sometimes very amusing--but necessary, I suppose. This area is only 14 miles south of Los Angeles--you have driven thru it many times I am sure when you are here--six major highways bisect it at different places, miles apart.

Sincerely,

Bertha H. Fuller

(Mrs Edwin S Fuller)
District Chairman Conservation

Address: 717 S Flower,
Inglewood, California

Your radio address last night was good---I love facts and figures and you had them ready last night.

BHF

Mr. Kennedy



Re Nigger Slough. It never impressed me as worth stopping for bird observations during my winter vacations in Calif., but it is regarded by local ornithologists as a fairly good place considering that it is surrounded by small towns (Compton, Hermisillo, and Gardena), and duck farms. I should judge it to be $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide and 5 to 8 miles long. Tom Vint tells me it was much larger back about 1915; but a drainage canal (to the L.A. River, I believe) has lowered the water level very considerably. Most of it is in L.A. County, a small part is within the corporate limits of L.A. By expenditure of considerable money it could be made into an attractive natural park, but it is not of national or state caliber, — good or fair city or county possibilities, perhaps.

C.F.

*Sayer
Calkins
Ford*

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

ADDRESS ONLY
DISTRICT DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

June 17, 1939.

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California*

Ms. Edwin S. Fuller,
District Chairman of Conservation,
California Federation of Women's Clubs,
717 South Flower Street,
Inglewood, California.

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

By reference from the White House, we have received your letter of May 23 concerning your proposal to acquire and develop as a park for the preservation of wildlife a 2000-acre tract in Los Angeles County, known as "Nigger Slough."

We appreciate your thoughtfulness in advising the Federal Government about this area. However, it is the policy of the National Park Service to acquire and administer only areas of outstanding national significance for their scenic, scientific, historic, or recreational value. It is doubtful whether the area you described would qualify for inclusion in the national park system.

Perhaps this area would be suitable for State or local park or recreational purposes, and with this in mind it is suggested that, if you have not already done so, you communicate with the California State Park authorities.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) Fred T. Johnston

Fred T. Johnston,
Acting Supervisor of Recrea-
tion and Land Planning.

cc: [redacted], with cc. of
[redacted] letter

cc: Mr. Kennedy
cc: BRPSC - Room 5214

BSK-MSS-fmd