

TO: Director DATE: 2/10/66
 FOR: INFORMATION ACTION
 DISTRICT REGION: INITIALS: mph

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
 Three Rivers, California 93271

L58

February 10, 1966

~~Camp Recreation~~ 2/18
 General - Calif.

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Western Region
 From: Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon
 Subject: Proposed Sierra National Recreation Area

On invitation from the Sierra Land Use Committee, I met with them on the evening of February 3 in Fresno. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a proposal being made by this Committee for a Sierra National Recreation Area. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, California Division of Fish and Game, local Chambers of Commerce, County Supervisors, and other County and local government officials. Notice of this meeting with copies of the proposal were mailed to you in my memorandum of January 14.

The territory proposed to be encompassed by the National Recreation Area would include parts of three national forests, Yosemite, Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks, and extend from Sonora Pass, Highway No. 108 on the north, to Walker Pass, Highway No. 178 on the south. However, it was not proposed to include all of or change the status of national parks or national forests.

No one expressed open opposition to the proposal during the meeting. However, many questions were raised which gave indication that it would be strongly opposed by many organizations including the Forest Service. Forest Supervisor Walter Puhn, speaking for the three National Forests, stated that the overall objectives of the proposed recreation area were good. He expressed some concern over the fact that established and well planned programs already cover what is proposed and could be carried out if funds were provided the Forest Service. These programs already have approval of the present Administration and the Bureau of the Budget and are being implemented as fast as funds become available. He also mentioned the problem that would result from the "compounding" of regulations between the Forest Service, State Fish and Game Department, and County with those of a National Recreation Area.

Larry Cloyd, Division Supervisor, California Department of Fish and Game, mentioned the difficulties of coordination already existing between the different agencies and that this would add another. His position would depend upon the size of the area eventually proposed; that wildlife management should be left with the State; and the conflict that could develop between recreation area regulations based on health and welfare and the sportsmen's interest. He ended by saying that the Committee should continue the study.

Lawrence Whitfield, Forest Supervisor, Sequoia National Forest, repeated somewhat the points made by Walter Puhn, but included the thoughts that they may be adding unnecessary dimensions to Government and that there was no guarantee that Federal funds for a national recreation area would be any easier to obtain than for national forests.

The Bureau of Reclamation representative gave what was perhaps the most intelligent reply by stating that he had no comment and that a letter had been written to the Committee from their Regional Director, suggesting a meeting to discuss the proposal with him.

My comment included the following: That the area proposed was too large to administer as one unit and if it should be decided to classify it as a national recreation area, it should no doubt be broken down into several areas. I also expressed the opinion that they might be getting the cart in front of the horse; that the first step should be a comprehensive study of this part of the Sierra Nevada and then develop a master plan for its use, taking into consideration all land use interests involved. I pointed out that practically every agency represented had well developed plans for the use of the land or resources for which they were responsible and that the assembly of such existing plans would provide a good start for an overall master plan. After this had been accomplished, it could then be determined more accurately whether a national recreation area was needed. It was also stated that regional planning in the Sierra Nevada was needed if the many problems besetting this area are to be resolved.

There is every indication that the proposal of the Sierra Land Use Committee for a Sierra National Recreation Area will continue to develop considerable public interest and support, as well as strong opposition. It could well develop into an important public issue in this part of the San Joaquin Valley. It has already attracted widespread interest.

Enclosed for your information are two copies of two articles from the Fresno Bee on this matter

/s/ John M. Davis

John M. Davis

Enclosures