

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHAPEL HILL, N. C.
DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY

W. C. COKER
H. R. TOTTEN
J. N. COUCH

Feb. 10, 1936.

ALMA HOLLAND
T. G. HARBISON
J. E. ADAMS

The Hon. Jos. W. Bailey
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

A few days ago, Dr. H. C. Bryant, Assistant Director of the National Park Service, wrote me concerning conservation of animal and plant life. I have written him, urging the setting aside by the Government of two areas in North Carolina. At Highlands, N. C., at an elevation of about 4000 feet, there is an undisturbed primeval forest, representing in its perfection the most magnificent growth to be found in the United States, east of the Mississippi River. The area consists of two holdings, one called the "Primeval Forest", the other the "Richardson Woods". I have not at hand at the moment the acreage covered by these two tracts, but would guess it at considerably over a hundred acres. In these forests, which are adjacent, making one solid body, are found the largest hemlock, the largest cherry, ^{the largest birch} and the largest Fraser's Magnolia in the United States so far as the records go. These are not exceptions, the whole forest is made up of magnificent

The Hon. Jos. W. Bailey - p. 2.

specimens and never fails to make a deep impression on a visitor. Botanically and Zoologically speaking, this area is unparralled in its advantages. We have at Highlands a biological laboratory already well established and supported by several universities, including our own, where professors and advanced students go in the summer for research work, not only from our own and adjoining states but from northern states and from Washington. Without any exception everybody who has been there declares that there is no place in the country equal to it in its fauna and flora.

The other area mentioned above is a southern third of Smith Island at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. Here we have a remarkable extension of simitropical flora. One finds a vegetation reminiscent of Florida -- large Palmettoes, Magnolia grandiflora, American Olives, Carolina Laurel Cherry, and several species of Cactus. In the Journal of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society, Vol. 34, September, 1918, I have a short, illustrated article on this island. Two or three years ago, our state forester, Mr. Holmes, and our university president, Dr. Frank Graham, and myself, made an effort to raise \$5000.00 to buy the most important part of Smith Island. The occasion for our interest at the time

The Hon. J. S. W. Bailey - p. 3.

was that this part was to be sold for taxes and we could have gotten it probably for about what the taxes were. Not only North Carolinians are interested in the preservation of Smith Island, but your Washington botanists also. Dr. Diehl of the Bureau of Plant Industry has been down several times to study the flora and has talked to me, urging some kind of joint action in having it set aside as a reservation. You know how hard it is to get states to do anything like this, and so far we have not succeeded in getting ours to set aside either of these two areas mentioned above.


Knowing of your enlightened interest in all civilizing influences in our state, I look forward to strong influence from you to accomplish preservation of these two remarkable areas.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. S. W. Bailey".

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

February 12, 1936.

Memorandum for
MR. WIRTH: 

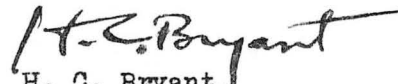
A few days ago I had a talk with Dr. Diehl of the Bureau of Plant Industry relative to the possibility of setting aside two important vegetation areas in North Carolina for permanent preservation.

One of these areas is two hundred acres of primeval forest near the town of Highlands, in which is stationed the Biological Laboratory supported by several neighboring universities. Within this undisturbed woodland are some of the largest and finest species of hemlock, birch, cherry, and Fraser's magnolia, and also an abundance of flowering plants, fungi, lichens, and other cryptogams.

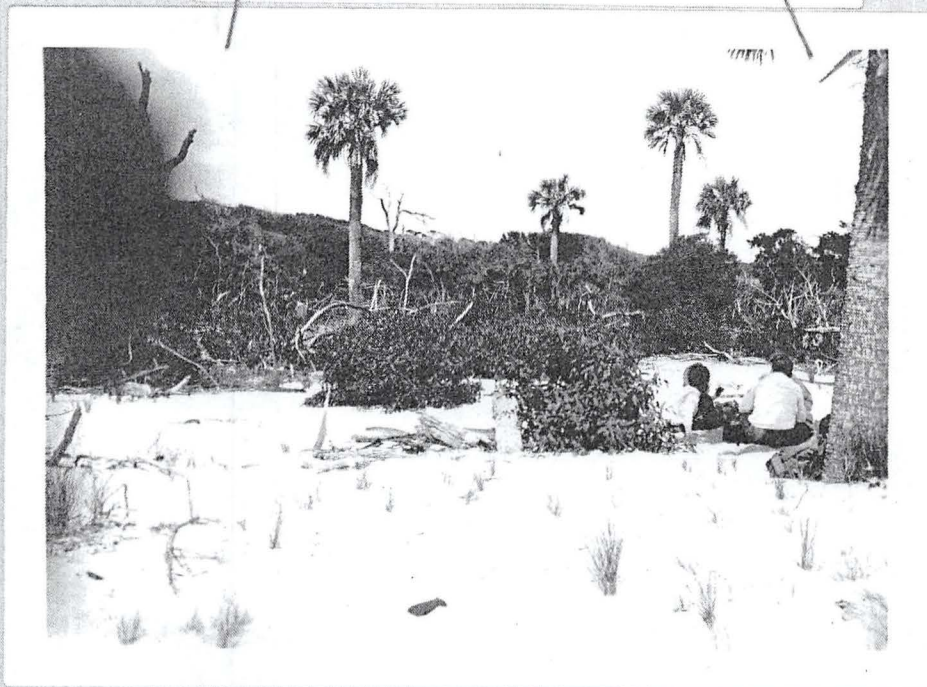
The other region is Smith Island, at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, which is a remarkable extension of semi-tropical flora similar to that of Florida. The island is about five by three miles square.

Dr. Diehl gave me the enclosed pictures which are illustrative of the characteristic growth of Smith Island.

It is probable that you will wish to investigate the possibilities of these two areas which come so highly recommended as being outstanding examples of a notable flora.


H. C. Bryant,
Assistant Director.

Enclosure 576368
CC Great Smokies



WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD
6TH DIST. NORTH CAROLINA

MEMBER OF
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

NINA GOODWIN
SECRETARY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

HEB
For answer
HEB



February 22, 1936

Dr. H. C. Bryant, Assistant Director
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Bryant:

I understand that the government is considering the acquisition of certain land at Highlands, North Carolina, which area consists of the "Primeval Forest" and "Richardson Woods". I understand that this area is an undisturbed primeval forest. There is at Highlands, North Carolina, a biological laboratory, which I understand is rendering a very splendid service.

I also understand that the government has under consideration the acquisition of a tract of land on Smith Island, at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, and that this particular tract has a remarkable growth of semi-tropical flora.

I am very much interested in the acquisition by the government of the two areas above mentioned, and I urge that your department conduct a very careful investigation in connection with said areas and that you arrange, if possible, for the acquisition of this land by the federal government. I shall be glad to hear from you if and when you have investigated these matters.

With best wishes and kindest regards,

I am

Sincerely yours,

William Umstead
William B. Umstead.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FEB 26 1936

8-35
Highlands

Third Regional Officer,
National Park Service,
2100 Central National Bank Bldg.,
Richmond, Virginia.

Subject: Land for proposed Highlands
National Monument, North Carolina.

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are copies of correspondence with Senator Robert Reynolds of North Carolina, and with Mr. W. C. Coker, Department of Botany, University of North Carolina, regarding tracts of primeval forests, one near Highlands, North Carolina, and another on Smith Island at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, which are being proposed for inclusion in the National Park system.

By letter of June 26, 1935, you submitted a form report on the proposed Highlands National Monument. The land referred to was a part of the estate of Mr. H. H. Richardson. Information recently received indicates that the tract referred to is owned by a Mr. Ravenel, who is interested in its preservation. It has been suggested that the Ravenel tract is of greater value as a primeval area than the other, but that both together might be desirable.

It is requested that you investigate these sites, or have them investigated by someone from your office who is capable of judging their possible value as primeval reserves, and submit a report as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) CONRAD L. WIRTH

Conrad L. Wirth.
Assistant Director.

Encl. 892606
CC: Third Regional Office
Dr. Bryant

JLB-fmd
mcs.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

*Will
Johnson*

MAR - 4 1935

Hon. William B. Umstead,
House of Representatives.

My dear Mr. Umstead:

Your letter of February 22 to Dr. Harold C. Bryant of this Service, regarding two tracts of primeval forest near Highlands, North Carolina, and another tract on Smith Island at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, has been received.

In response to a recent request from Senator Robert R. Reynolds, this Service requested a field investigation of these two areas. As soon as reports are received, we shall be glad to inform you.

Your cooperation in calling this matter to our attention is appreciated.

Cordially yours,

(SGD.) A. E. DEMARAY

A. E. Demaray.
Acting Director.

WLB
WLB-fmd
Rad.