

Lewiston, Idaho, Nov. 28, 1973

U. S. Forest Service Public Hearings
On Salmon Breaks and Idaho Primitive Areas and the Salmon River

My name is Jay Gruenfeld. I am speaking as an individual. My home is in Lewiston. I am a lover and user of the out-of-doors, particularly of wilderness type recreation. I have hiked, camped, hunted and fished under wilderness conditions in Colorado, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, New Guinea, Philippines, Scotland, and, for a short period of time, various places in Europe. I make this personal reference only to show that I have a deep and sincere interest in this problem from the standpoint of a recreationist as well as that of a professional forester.

I'm a strong believer in the establishment of large wilderness areas. I also recognize it's necessary for most of us to have a job so we have money to spend on recreation. So it's not so much a question of how much wilderness do we want but rather how much can we afford.

What is a wilderness area? The general definition might be "an area that gives a person a wilderness experience."

My favorite type of recreation is a wilderness hunting or fishing trip. Only in large areas, relatively untouched by the hand of man, do I obtain the hard-to-define feeling of spiritual and physical well being and solitude that, for me, is the essence of the wilderness experience.

But I am in the minority. Other people can get a similar pleasurable experience from a visit to Rock Creek Park in the heart of Washington, D.C., a stroll through some of our second growth forests, or a rowboat trip down

a gently flowing river or stream through a farming area.

Large areas of old growth timber are regarded by many recreationists, including many wilderness recreationists, as an obstruction barring the way into the high country where the real beauty lies. Granted that you must include some prime timber in a wilderness area, huge areas as proposed by some more radical wilderness advocates are of course a definite deterrent to use of the area by everyone. It is also in my opinion very unwise use of a resource.

In trying to determine the relative priority of recreation in the spectrum of possible uses it's sometimes helpful to consider the primary importance of natural resources. The basic strength of our civilization is still our ability to produce fuel, minerals, building materials, fibers, chemicals, and foods through the application of capital, science and technology on basic natural resources.

To substantiate this point you need only look at the powerful or wealthy nations of the world. Each owns or controls abundant natural resources. This becomes particularly true when the resource is renewable, such as agriculture and timber.

For another illustration of the importance of natural resources, oversimplify, --let's imagine a country somewhat similar to Idaho. A country with fine timber growing land and climate. Through fortunate circumstances this imaginary country has the best foresters in the world, who have fully developed the timber growing potentials of their land. The people in this country also enjoy recreation. Let's assume also that the forest products industries and recreation, with their service industries, are the sole economic

undertaking. Some of the people in this country decide that to further the recreational needs of the people, as well as the recreation industry, they would set aside all of the land exclusively for recreation. The results are easy to imagine. No forest products would be produced to generate the dollars which could then be spent for recreation. The standard of living would drop rapidly. This is an oversimplification but I think it does illustrate the basic importance of natural resources and the necessity of conserving them through wise use.

As a relative purist regarding wilderness, I think it's a mistake to include in Western Wilderness anything but first class wilderness. In future years we will have a better chance of keeping areas in Wilderness if they really deserve the rating. Including low quality areas invites future exclusions as wood fiber shortages develop and motorized recreationists become more politically effective. It's a little like fighting a forest fire--you try to pick a line you can hold.

There are large portions of these two primitive areas which are simply not first class wilderness in my opinion. When these same portions are first class for growing trees, I think they should be excluded from wilderness classification.