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THE WHITE HOUSE

MESSAGE ON CONSERVATION

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

As our population expands, as our industrial output increases, and as rising productivity makes possible increased enjoyment of leisure time, the obligation to make the most efficient and beneficial use of our natural resources becomes correspondingly greater. The standard of living we enjoy -- greater than any other nation in history -- is attributable in large measure to the wide variety and rich abundance of this country's physical resources. But these resources are not inexhaustible -- nor do they automatically replenish themselves.

We depend on our natural resources to sustain us -- but in turn their continued availability must depend on our using them prudently, improving them wisely, and, where possible, restoring them promptly. We must reaffirm our dedication to the sound practices of conservation which can be defined as the wise use of our natural environment; it is, in the final analysis, the highest form of national thrift -- the prevention of waste and despoilment while preserving, improving and renewing the quality and usefulness of all our resources. Our deep spiritual confidence that this nation will survive the perils of today -- which may well be with us for decades to come -- compels us to invest in our nation's future, to consider and meet our obligations to our children and the numberless generations that will follow.

Our national conservation effort must include the complete spectrum of resources: air, water, and land; fuels, energy, and minerals; soils, forests, and forage; fish and wildlife. Together they make up the world of nature which surrounds us -- a vital part of the American heritage. And we must not neglect our human resources -- the Youth Conservation Corps, proposed as a part of the Administration's Youth Employment Opportunities Bill, should be established to achieve the dual objectives of conserving and developing the talents of our youth and of conserving and developing our outdoor resources.

In the second month of this Administration I sent to the Congress a message summarizing our plans for the development of our natural resources. In the year which followed, heartening progress was made, including the following:

-- a full scale attack on one of the most destructive forms of waste -- water pollution -- has been mounted under the 1961 amendments to the Water Pollution Control Act.

-- the saline water program to find cheaper means of converting salt water to fresh water was given new impetus by legislation enacted last year; three demonstration plants have begun operation and two more will shortly be under construction.

-- flood plain studies were initiated under a new nationwide program to provide the States and local governments with information needed to regulate the use of flood plains, thereby minimizing frightful flood losses.

-- work was started on 74 major water resources projects and 79 small watershed projects, and planning for water resources development has been intensified.

-- under recently issued regulations, sufficient land can now be acquired in the construction of Federally-financed reservoirs to preserve the recreational potential of those areas.

-- our urban areas can now guide their growth and development through the acquisition of open space for recreation and other purposes under the Housing Act of 1961 -- a landmark in conservation effort.

-- the great outer beach of Cape Cod is now a National Seashore Area, protected for the present and future enjoyment of all Americans, the first major addition to the National Park System in 14 years.

-- a long-range duck stamp program has been launched to acquire additional lands for waterfowl so that they may grow and thrive.

-- a 10-year projection of needs and plans for the development of our national forests was sent to the Congress last September -- a major step forward in the management of publicly-owned forests.

-- the Delaware River Basin Compact was approved, providing a new basis for cooperative and coordinate development.

-- the Tennessee Valley Authority is giving new emphasis to tributary watershed development.

This progress is gratifying. But much remains to be done -- our renewed interest and momentum must not wane. To provide an opportunity for the exchange of further ideas -- and to permit those who have dedicated their efforts to the principles of conservation to participate in evaluating the progress that has been made -- and to seek the best possible advice in prescribing what must be done in the future -- I propose to convene a White House Conference on Conservation this year.

I. OUTDOOR RECREATION RESOURCES

Adequate outdoor recreational facilities are among the basic requirements of a sound national conservation program. The increased leisure time enjoyed by our growing population and the greater mobility made possible by improved highway networks have dramatically increased the Nation's need for additional recreational areas. The 341 million visits to Federal land and water areas recorded in 1960 are expected to double by 1970 and to increase fivefold by the end of the century. The need for an aggressive program of recreational development is both real and immediate.

The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, after a three-year study of our Nation's recreational demands and opportunities, has submitted a series of recommendations deserving the attention of governments at all levels and of the citizenry at large. Many of the Commission's suggestions have already been explored and developed to the point where we are prepared to recommend legislation implementing them. Others will be carefully considered and, where appropriate, put into effect by Executive action; where additional legislation is required, recommendations will be made to the Congress.

1. More than 20 different Federal Departments and Agencies have responsibilities of one sort or another in the field of recreation. It is essential that there be close coordination among these different groups and that all plans be fitted into a basic national policy. Accordingly, as recommended by the ORRRC Report, I shall appoint an Outdoor Recreation Advisory Council made up of the heads of Departments and Agencies principally concerned with recreation -- to provide a proper forum for considering national recreation policy and to facilitate coordinated efforts among the various agencies.

2. Another organizational recommendation of the ORRRC Report to be adopted is the creation within the Department of the Interior of a Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. This Bureau will carry out planning functions already assigned to the Department of the Interior and will administer the program of Federal assistance for State agencies I am proposing below. This new Bureau will serve as a focal point within the Federal Government for the many activities related to outdoor recreation, and will work and consult with the Departments of Agriculture, Army, and Health, Education, and Welfare, the Housing and Home Finance Agency and with other governmental agencies in implementing Federal outdoor recreation policies.

3. The interest and investment in recreational development by the various States have been irregular and uneven. Some have demonstrated

outstanding organizational skills with corresponding benefits. The ORRRC recommendation that the States should be encouraged and aided in their efforts to understand and realize the full potential that lies within their boundaries rests on sound ground. Accordingly, I urge the Congress to enact legislation which will shortly be transmitted to establish a program of matching grants for the development of State plans for outdoor recreational programs. This program will supplement that enacted last year which authorized assistance to State and local governments in planning and acquiring open space lands in urban areas for recreation, conservation and other purposes.

4. In most cases the magnificent national parks, monuments, forests and wildlife refuges presently maintained and operated by the Federal Government have either been donated by States or private citizens or carved out of lands in the public domain. No longer can these sources be relied upon -- we must move forward with an affirmative program of land acquisition for recreational purposes. For with each passing year, prime areas for outdoor recreation and fish and wildlife are pre-empted for suburban growth, industrial development or other uses. That expenditures for land resources is also a sound financial investment is clear from the multiplied value of those lands now devoted to parks, forests, and wildlife refuges which were acquired decades ago by the great conservationists -- moreover, steadily rising land prices can in some cases serve to foreclose public acquisition. Expansion of our permanent recreational land base can best be achieved by investments in our future in the form of modest user payments from those who now enjoy our superb outdoor areas and from recreation and land related receipts.

To meet our national needs for adequate outdoor recreational lands, I propose creation of a "Land Conservation Fund" to be financed by (1) proceeds from entrance, admission, or user fees and charges at Federal recreation areas; (2) annual user charges on recreation boats; (3) diversion from the Highway Trust Fund of refundable, but unclaimed, taxes paid on gasoline used in motor boats; and (4) receipts from the sale of surplus Federal nonmilitary lands.

To prevent costly delay in beginning an acquisition program, I recommend authorization be granted to include advances from the Treasury not to exceed \$500 million over an eight-year period in the proposed "Land Conservation Fund" which will be repaid from the regular revenue sources of the Fund. Money would be made available from the Fund for land acquisition by annual appropriations by the Congress.

5. Last year's Congressional approval of the Cape Cod National Seashore Area should be regarded as the path-breaker for many other worthy

park land proposals pending before the Congress. I urge favorable action on legislation to create Point Reyes National Seashore in California; Great Basin National Park in Nevada; Ozark Rivers National Monument in Missouri; Sagamore Hill National Historic Site in New York; Canyonlands National Park in Utah; Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan; Prairie National Park in Kansas; Padre Island National Seashore in Texas; a National Lakeshore Area in Northern Indiana; and Ice Age National Scientific Reserve, Wisconsin. Acquisition of these park lands would be financed through the "Land Acquisition Fund."

6. In some sections of the United States -- notably the East -- available public lands do not meet the large recreational demands. These pent-up demands can be met in some instances through the disposal of lands surplus to Federal needs. I recommend that the Federal Surplus Property Disposal Act be amended to permit States and local governments to acquire surplus Federal lands for park, recreation or wildlife uses on more liberal terms. Furthermore as the ORRRC report pointed out, fishing, hiking, picnicking, riding, and camping activities on private lands can -- and should be intensified and encouraged. One important step in this direction is the recommendation made in my Message on Agriculture which would permit the orderly movement of millions of acres of land not needed to produce food and fibers to recreational and other uses.

7. The special urgent recreation needs of our urban dwellers, first recognized by Congress in the Housing Act of 1961, are evident from the dramatic response to this Administration's open-space land programs on the part of States and cities throughout the Nation. In view of the known backlog of need for recreational lands, and the remarkable rate at which urban and suburban lands are being put to other uses, I have recommended that the present open-space grant authorization be increased by \$50 million.

8. The fast-vanishing public shorelines of this country constitute a joint problem for the Federal Government and the States requiring a carefully conceived program of preservation. I recommend approval of legislation along the lines of S. 543, as approved by the Senate, to authorize a study of the ocean, lake and river shorelines of the Nation to develop a Federal-State shoreline preservation program.

9. Finally, we must protect and preserve our Nation's remaining wilderness areas. This key element of our Conservation program should have priority attention.

I therefore again strongly urge the Congress to enact legislation establishing a National Wilderness preservation system along the lines of S. 174, introduced by Senator Anderson.

II. WATER RESOURCES

Our nation's progress is reflected in the history of our great river systems. The water that courses through our rivers and streams holds the key to full national development. Uncontrolled, it wipes out homes, lives and dreams, bringing disaster in the form of floods; controlled, it is an effective artery of transportation, a boon to industrial development, a source of beauty and recreation, and the means for turning arid areas into rich and versatile cropland. In no resource field are conservation principles more applicable. By 1980, it is estimated, our national water needs will nearly double -- by the end of the century they will triple. But the quantity of water which nature supplies will remain almost constant.

Our goal, therefore, is to have sufficient water sufficiently clean in the right place at the right time to serve the range of human and industrial needs. And we must harmonize conflicting objectives -- for example, irrigation vs. navigation, multiple-purpose reservoirs vs. scenic park sites. Comprehensive and integrated planning is the only solution of this problem, requiring cooperative efforts at all levels of government.

I, therefore, again urge the Congress to enact the Water Resources Planning Act which I transmitted to the Congress last July which would

-- authorize Federal grants-in-aid to assist the States in water resource planning;

-- authorize the establishment of river basin commissions representing State and national views to prepare and keep up to date coordinated and integrated basin plans; and

-- establish a Water Resources Council of key Cabinet officers to coordinate Federal river basin planning and development activities.

This Administration adheres to the policy enunciated in my Natural Resources message of last year that our available water supply will be used to provide maximum benefits for all purposes -- hydroelectric power, irrigation and reclamation, navigation, recreation and wildlife, and municipal and industrial water supply. These diverse uses and our future needs require thoughtful preservation and full development of our national water resources.

The lead time is long in the development of water resources. Years are required to plan and build sound projects. Time should not be lost on those projects which have already been transmitted to the Congress

for authorization: San Juan-Chama, Fryingpan-Arkansas, Burns Creek, Garrison Diversion and Auburn-Folsom South. Federal planning efforts have been intensified and studies and recommendations for authorization of additional water developments accelerated. These plans and recommendations will be submitted to the Congress as they are completed.

III. PUBLIC LANDS

One hundred and fifty years ago the vacant lands of the West were opened to private use. One hundred years ago the Congress passed the Homestead Act, probably the single greatest stimulus to national development ever enacted. Under the impetus of that Act and other laws, more than 1.1 billion acres of the original public domain have been transferred to private and non-Federal public ownership. The 768 million acres remaining in Federal ownership are a valuable national asset.

Although the acres set aside for national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges are contributing increasingly to the national welfare, we must take action to assure that the full potential is realized from the vacant unused areas in the public domain (180 million acres, exclusive of Alaska). More intensive management is now being applied to the public domain lands, but still more needs to be done. For example, we plan to establish a realistic schedule of fees and charges for use of Federal range lands, to replace the peculiar patchwork schedule now in effect.

As a basis for making the public domain lands more productive, a comprehensive inventory has been initiated. Although most public domain lands must be retained in Federal ownership for defense and conservation purposes, there are numerous tracts which can be utilized best through private ownership. We are currently updating procedures for land exchanges to provide more orderly patterns of land tenure on both public and private lands. But unfortunately, the laws governing the transfer of public lands to other ownerships are antiquated and new procedures are sorely needed. I urge enactment of a new general land-sale law along the lines of H. R. 7788, as introduced by Congressman Aspinall.

IV. SOIL, WATERSHED AND RANGE RESOURCES

For a quarter of a century, we have recognized that a major responsibility for resources conservation rests with the farmers, ranchers, and others who own three-fourths of the Nation's land area. Today, 2,900 soil conservation districts provide leadership in the conservation effort with Federal technical and financial assistance.

Much progress has been made -- by land terracing, strip cropping, and other erosion prevention and water conservation measures -- but nearly three-fourths of private crop and range lands still need improved conservation practices. Joint action to conserve this basic resource -- the land -- must be continued and intensified for the benefit of future generations.

During 1961 more watershed projects were approved for construction than in any previous year. This accelerated pace must be continued, on both public and private lands. These projects, while comparatively small, are of vital importance to rural areas and should be as broadly beneficial to the watershed area as possible. I urge, therefore, that the Congress enact legislation which will shortly be transmitted to clarify certain provisions of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act and to allow deferred repayment of municipal and industrial water supply costs.

A special problem of land conservation calling for immediate attention is the serious erosion and river pollution created by surface mining practices. Techniques must promptly be devised to prevent or minimize this despoilment if we are not to abandon great areas of scenic beauty and create difficult silting problems in many sections of the country. I have directed the Secretary of the Interior, working with appropriate Federal agencies and with the States, to recommend a program of research and action.

V. TIMBER RESOURCES

Timber growth, particularly in softwoods, must be increased significantly if we are to meet the Nation's projected future requirements for wood products. The growing of timber is a long-term project, requiring concerted public and private efforts, and considerable advance planning.

A major advance in Federal forestry efforts was the 10-year development program established for the national forests and announced last September. The Secretary of the Interior is currently preparing a comparable program for the forests under the jurisdiction of his Department.

To implement these, I recommend approval of legislation to be sent to the Congress shortly to accelerate the development of national multiple-purpose forest roads and trails.

Although management of public forests and the large private forests rests on a sound basis, there is opportunity for further improvement. For example, one step that can and will be taken is the establishment of a policy permitting the Federal Government to condition its granting of rights-of-way to private timber land owners within National Forests upon the receipt of

corresponding rights to cross their private lands in order to harvest timber from National Forests. For an effective national timber resources conservation effort, however, we must depend upon the quarter-billion acres of private timber lands, consisting primarily of small tracts in more than four million ownerships.

Improved timber management practice on these small tracts is difficult because of such problems as nonresident ownership, short tenure, owner's lack of knowledge or interest in forestry, limited economic incentives, and the inefficient size of forest units. Existing technical and financial assistance programs have proven inadequate, and I have therefore directed the Secretary of Agriculture to intensify the efforts of his Department to develop a program for improving the management of those small forests.

VI. MINERALS

During the last 30 years, this nation has consumed more minerals than all the peoples of the world had previously used. Twice in those 30 years we have doubled the rate of mineral production. Current demands are being met without difficulty primarily because of the immense technical and exploratory efforts of the 1940's and early 1950's. But present availability of raw materials must not blind us to tomorrow's requirements.

Conservation of mineral resources benefits from the fact that, for practical purposes, they are not fixed in quantity -- the useable volume and variety of minerals increase as technology advances. We have learned to use a host of materials which had no previous value or had value only in limited uses.

Technical research is obviously the critical element in a program of conserving and strengthening both our mineral resources and our minerals industries. To assure us of adequate quantities of minerals in the future, and to enable our minerals industries to compete in world markets, we must find more effective means of discovering and extracting mineral deposits, learn to refine materials of lower quality, and find both new uses for minerals which are relatively abundant, and substitutes for those which are scarce or difficult to procure.

A possible breakthrough for one of the hardest-hit minerals industries is the recent development of a coal slurry -- a mixture of coal and water -- which can be fed directly into great boilers for producing steam to generate electricity. This slurry, capable of being transported through pipelines similar to those used for oil, holds great promise and merits governmental and industrial consideration. I will shortly send to the Congress proposals

to facilitate the construction of pipelines to transport coal slurry in interstate commerce.

VII. POWER

One of the major challenges in resource conservation lies in the orderly development and efficient utilization of energy resources to meet the Nation's electric power needs -- needs which double every decade. The goal of this Administration is to ensure an abundance of low cost power for all consumers -- urban and rural, industrial and domestic. To achieve this, we must use more effectively all sources of fuel, find cheaper ways to harness nuclear energy, develop our hydroelectric potential, utilize presently unused heat produced by nature or as a by-product of industrial processes, and even capture the energy of the tides where feasible.

The ability to make long-range plans for the expansion of our Nation's electric power supply required by constantly growing power needs will be enhanced by a comprehensive nationwide survey to be undertaken by the Federal Power Commission. Under existing authority contained in the Federal Power Act, the Commission will project our national power needs for the 1970's and 1980's and suggest the broad outline of a fully interconnected system of power supply for the entire country. This information will encourage the electric power industry -- both private and public -- to develop individual expansion programs and intertie systems permitting all elements of the industry -- and more importantly the consumers -- to benefit from efficient, orderly planned growth. I urge favorable action on the request for adequate funds to initiate this study of the Nation's power needs for the next 20 years.

Advantageous arrangements and technological improvements for power generation and transmission are being developed by the Department of the Interior. Experimentation in extra high-voltage, direct-current transmission over long distances promises to enable us to send major blocks of low-cost off-peak electricity -- that which is generated when the demand is low -- as far as a thousand miles to areas where such energy can be put to higher and more valuable use because of their different patterns of electricity demands. Similarly, investigation is continuing on possibilities for using cheap off-peak power to pump water to storage reservoirs permitting the water to be used to generate power when demands are great and power sells at a premium.

VIII. RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

Implicit in the conservation thesis of wise use, improvement, preservation and restoration of our resources is the basic requirement of greater scientific knowledge and improved resources management. The catalog of resource problems set forth in this message demonstrates the importance of intensive research in the resources field. In response to the demonstrated need for concentrated and coordinated research, this Administration has

-- requested the National Academy of Sciences to undertake a thorough evaluation of the potentials and needs for research underlying the development and use of natural resources.

-- directed the Federal Council for Science and Technology to coordinate the wide-ranging research programs of participating agencies to strengthen and unify our total governmental research effort in the natural resources field.

-- directed the Council of Economic Advisers to stimulate research in the economics of resource use.

Coordinated research programs already underway and worthy of special note are the following:

Oceanography -- Our intensified effort to expand our knowledge and understanding of the vast resources held by the oceans through basic research and surveys of geologic and living resources will surely result in extending our known resource base, with encouraging prospects for improving our standard of living and adding protein-rich marine products to the diets of the hungry people of the world.

Sports Fisheries and Wildlife -- Studies of diseases and pesticides are continuing and efforts to solve the problems of passing migratory fish over high dams are being accelerated. A new laboratory has been opened on the Atlantic coast to study the management of salt-water sport fish -- the basis of a growing industry.

Agriculture and Forestry -- The Secretary of Agriculture will soon appoint an advisory panel of outstanding scientists to appraise and propose changes in the Department's research programs. The emphasis will be shifted from increasing production to problems of soil and water, forest resources, forage production, watershed protection, and protection of plants and animals against pests and diseases. Economic studies to provide the bases for sound land and water resources policies and optimum land use adjustments will be further intensified.

Water -- An Institute of Water Research participated in by all water resource agencies, to be established in the Department of the Interior, will conduct basic research on surface and ground waters to develop fundamental principles and facilitate improved translation of scientific information into water management practices. Concentrated and coordinated research programs in a number of agencies are being directed to such specific problems as desalinization of water, improving water quality and flood forecasting and preventing water evaporation.

Just as our investment of scientific talent, money, and time is better utilized in well coordinated and complementary programs within the Federal Government and by the closest working relationships with state and local governments, the academic community and industry, so our efforts should be meshed with those of the other countries of the world. Resource conservation problems are world-wide; efforts to solve them should be equally universal. This nation will continue to cooperate in international scientific and research undertakings; and the useful information and specific technological applications we develop -- economically feasible desalinization of sea water, for example -- will be made available immediately, as has always been our practice, to advance the welfare of all peoples of the world.

CONCLUSION

In the work of conservation, time should be made our friend, not our adversary. Actions deferred are frequently opportunities lost, and, in terms of financial outlay, dollars invested today will yield great benefits in the years to come. The progress made in the resources field in the first year of this Administration is encouraging; implementation of the new recommendations made today will maintain the momentum, enabling us to repay our debt to the past and meet our obligations to the future.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

THE WHITE HOUSE,

March 1, 1962.

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