UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

★ news release

For Release to PM's, MARCH 9, 1963

ADDRESS BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STEWART L. UDALL, AT THE EIGHTH BIENNIAL WILDERNESS CONFERENCE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, MARCH 9, 1963

I recall with pleasure that one of my first major public appearances as Secretary of the Interior occurred on this same platform during the last Wilderness Conference in the far-off year of 1961. I had been in office only a few weeks at that time and my report to you was mainly designed to acquaint you with my basic conservation philosophy.

Today I stand before you about ten years older than I was at that point in 1961, bearing the battle scars of high office. My conservation philosophy remains unchanged, but my report to you today will be considerably more detailed than it was on that occasion.

Since that time we have begun to cross into an entirely new watershed in the history of the conservation movement in the United States. We are doing so by necessity, because the path of land conservation that our government has used for more than half a century is running into a dead end.

Theodore Roosevelt's magnificent contribution to conservation was made by methods that are today becoming increasingly foreclosed to us. He was able to reach out into the public domain and by a stroke of the pen create, on land already owned by the government, the forest reserves and parks and wildlife lands that made his name synonymous with conservation. This is the pattern followed since that time in establishing most of our national forests in the West, national parks and other reserved areas. Other land was donated by such public spirited conservationists as Congressman and Mrs. William Kent, who presented to the government Muir Woods, just north of the Golden Gate.

Whether the method was donation or redesignation of parts of the public domain, the effect was the same--creation of new parks and reserves with very little financial outlay. It did not occur to many conservationists of that era that it would ever be necessary for the Federal Government to buy large tracts of land--like the Point Reyes peninsula--for conservation purposes.

In fact, the Speaker of the House, "Uncle Joe" Cannon, used to say, 60 years ago, "not one cent for scenery" and he meant it and he made it stick because it represented the public opinion of the time. Even an Administration as dedicated to conservation as Franklin Roosevelt's followed the same policy. In 1937 Senator Carl Hayden of Arizona wrote the President asking Federal purchase of certain lands within the Saguaro National Monument and here is what President Roosevelt responded:

"The general policy with respect to the acquisition of private lands for national parks and monuments has been to require their donation or purchase from donated funds .... I think that as general policy it is a wise one, and that I would not be justified in submitting an estimate to Congress for an appropriation from the general fund of the Treasury to purchase the privately owned land within the monument."

Those are words of the same President who four years later received a protest from Irving Brandt of the St. Louis Star-Times and from Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes that a proposed Army artillery range site at Henry Lake, Utah, was likely to result in the extermination of the trumpeter swan. Henry Lake was the solitary unprotected point on the short flyway of the swans from Yellowstone National Park and the Red Rocks Lake Wildlife Refuge.

President Roosevelt responded ringingly as follows:

"Memorandum For the Secretary of War: Considering the size of the United States, I think that Irving Brandt of correct. Please tell Major General Adams or whoever is in charge of this business that Henry Lake, Utah, must immediately be struck from the Army planning list for any purposes. The verdict is for the Trumpeter Swan and against the Army. The Army must find a different nesting place!"

Yet even with this conservation emphasis, we still were relying largely on transfer or donation as a means of acquiring needed outdoor recreation lands. We got the Tetons, the Everglades, most of Olympic and several other National Parks mainly through donation or by changing the status of public lands.

And while we have adhered to this policy, look what has happened to us. Only a miracle can save the Indiana Dunes. A little over 40 years ago, Stephen T. Mather of the National Park Service literally begged us to buy it. We could have had a stretch of 25 miles of shoreline for two million dollars. Mather had the foresight to see the meaning of a major public area on the South Side of the Great Lakes. The end result is to limit the outdoor heritage which might have been available to Chicagoans.

The same thing is true in the New York area. Portions of Fire Island are in public ownership, but more of it should be saved for public needs. Breezy Point comes to mind as another area of opportunity for city or State action to acquire available acres, although time is running out here, too. Not many years ago additional portions of Fire Island, Breezy Point and a number of other New York areas now foreclosed by industrial or residential development might have been obtained for the use of all the people for a very modest figure. Instead, large conservation projects of very great potential have gone begging.

When I leave my plane and ride into almost any metropolis you could mention I see youngsters who have to play along crowded sidewalks and in dangerous streets. Too often there is no bit of the out-of-doors where they can go exploring for an hour or so after school. It is getting harder to find a place to go for a ramble with Dad on Saturday.

City-bound youngsters in particular need the blessing of an available out-of-doors. They need access to beaches. They need places close by, yet removed, where they can walk. They need to discover an aspen leaf quivering in a faint breeze. They need a place to hunt lizards.

So what do we do? How do we make sure that the areas we need are available?

Just three weeks ago President Kennedy sent to the Congress proposed legislation to help assure to us and our children permanent access to our outdoor heritage. I refer to the Land and Water Conservation Fund proposal, introduced as S-859 by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs with a host of bi-partisan co-sponsors and in the House as HR-3846 by the Chairman of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, by the ranking minority member, and by a number of other Congressmen.

I commend to you the Land and Water Conservation Fund measure. The monies in the proposed Fund would be split about 60-40 between the States and the Federal Government. The States, which would be asked to provide matching funds, could use their share for planning, acquisition and development of needed State recreation lands and waters. The Federal share would be available for needed acquisition in the National Park System, the National Forest System, for preservation of endangered fish and wildlife and for refuge recreation needs.

The proposed Land and Water Conservation Fund involves no new taxes. Instead, it would be based in part on a system of user fees at Federal recreation lands and waters, proceeds from sale of surplus Federal real property, allocation of the existing 4¢ tax on marine fuels used in pleasure craft, and repayable advance appropriations. The charge could take the form of a Conservation windshield sticker. This Conservation sticker could well become an eloquent symbol and rallying point for the Nation's outdoor enthusiasts.

Monies from the Fund would be available upon appropriation by the Congress.

This would be the money that would help us, among other purposes, to obtain for all the public some of the few remaining outstanding outdoor recreation areas which are as yet relatively unspoiled. The gorgeous Channel Islands off the California coast should, in my opinion, be such an area. I anticipate the day when fast hydrofoil boats, or other means of transportation, would carry us to the Channel Islands and then leave us to make our way where we would without benefit of mechanical locomotion.

North of San Francisco in the famed Redwood Empire are some of the world's most magnificent trees, including some large virgin stands that will be logged over unless they are protected. Certainly these superb trees are a matter of significance and pride not only to Californians but to all American people. I would like to see a large representative section of these incomparable forests preserved as a national park for all the people of this country.

We are reaching the end of the road in public domain suited to outdoor needs. Maybe we can carve a Canyonlands National Park in Utah or a great basin park in Nevada out of land already owned by the public. Here and there, occasionally, another area. But not many. Most of what we get from now on, we will have to buy. We would hope this would include a variety of types of recreation land...areas for high-density use and more remote lands as well where we could partake of the isolation where I for one find rest when my soul is weary.

The need to purchase land for the National Forest System was established long ago by the Weeks Law of 1911, which enabled the government to buy forest areas in the East, where there were no major areas of public domain. A number of our Wildlife Refuges, again particularly in the East where public land was unavailable, also have been purchased.

But as far as the National Park System is concerned, the "not one cent for scenery" barrier was still in effect when I last spoke to you on this platform. Since that time we have cracked the barrier by getting authorization to spend public money for the purchase of Cape Cod, Point Reyes, and Padre Island. But the barrier is only cracked, and the big work is yet to be done in national forests and wildlife preserves as well as national parks.

We are going to have to buy almost all the additional outdoor recreation areas we need and let me say that there won't be any wilderness and few areas of any kind where you can enjoy a reasonable degree of isolation unless we develop an effective system of outdoor recreation area classification...zoning, if you will. The need is to establish enough of each kind of outdoor recreation opportunity to satisfy public pressures without destroying the resource. Ninety percent of us seek the out-of-doors, according to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission. Most people enjoy the simple activities--scenic driving, walking, swimming and the like. Some of us hike, climb mountains or go canoeing. Most of you here today are in that group.

And because of that fact I would anticipate that you will give your wholehearted support to the Land and Water Conservation Fund bill. The reason is simple: the monies in the Fund will provide the facilities that will give the vast majority of people places to enjoy driving and picnicking and swimming. If you love the wilderness, the alternative is awful to contemplate. The pressures will drive multitudes who really prefer the simple pleasures to find different "nesting places," perhaps in what is now the wilderness. We look to the new Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to devise an effective system of classifying outdoor recreation lands in conjunction with its responsibility for developing a National Recreation Plan, a responsibility in which it has the guidance of the Recreation Advisory Council. We look to the Land and Water Conservation Fund to help provide the monies required to purchase the additional lands we will need to handle the mounting pressures.

So I leave you this challenge. Provide the leadership that will show the Nation its need for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Explain the wisdom of this imaginative measure with its many pay-as-you-go provisions. Make it your mission to convince the public that reasonable admission and user charges are a logical means of providing a share of the necessary financing.

Leon Lindsay of the Christian Science Monitor says with justice that the voice of conservation is the muted voice, diluted, too-little heard except by its fellow zealots. He pleads for a new dynamic; substitution of eloquent good sense. I say to you that it is time to put aside our differences and let the voice of conservation be heard through the land in unified chorus. Secretary Freeman and I have recently signed what some of the newspaper writers have called a peace treaty. There is too much vital work to be done to waste time on old quarrels. It is our mutual high purpose to secure passage of the Land and Water Conservation Fund bill and get on with the job of enlarging our outdoor recreation opportunities.

Now I would like to talk to you for a few minutes about the broader subject of the world we live in and our relation to it. It is a world that steadily becomes more complex. New forces are changing it so rapidly that it seems impossible for any single individual to keep up with new developments in missiles, satellites, automation, and a technology accelerating with explosive force.

Lagging far behind these new developments are our ways of thinking about them. And this lag is without doubt the source of the greatest danger in the modern world. Too often we make our plans for a world that no longer exists. Obsolete assumptions persist, cluttering our thinking, paralyzing action. Some of these obsolete assumptions, such as the following, are relevant to the subject of this conference.

I. <u>The assumption that man must destroy nature in order to "conquer" it</u>.

In the 19th century this assumption was held as a matter of course by nearly all Americans. "Conquering nature" usually meant destroying nature--levelling the forests, gutting the land for minerals, plowing up the soil in such a way that it could be blown away by the winds, wastefully stripping our resources and obliterating every trace of the natural landscape. Although nowadays we all consider ourselves conservationists, too often we indulge in this same fallacious assumption. Too often our plans for development, particularly in suburban areas, are still based on the assumption that nature must be obliterated. The symbols of our relation to the land are the bulldozer and the steam shovel.

Implicit in this 19th century philosophy of "conquering nature" is the assumption that man is something separate from nature.

We are learning increasingly nowadays from psychology and biology that man is part of nature. His roots are in the natural world and he separates himself from it at his peril. The unnatural environment of our cities and pace of modern life accelerated the "civilized" diseases so familiar to us all. Physicians increasingly urge patients caught up in the urban "rat race" to get more relaxation. For many people the best kind of refreshment and renewal comes among trees and fields, along uncrowded seashores, or high on mountain streams. We have in many respects become a Nation of vacation seekers in search of temporary surcease from the abnormal strains of a fast-moving society. Above all, modern man, perplexed and beleaguered in mind and body, needs the wholeness and serenity that come from leisurely association with natural surroundings, particularly with nature in its pure, unadulterated state--true wilderness.

II. The assumption that science alone can solve all our problems.

If the assumption that man must "conquer" nature was the dominant fallacy of the 19th century (and to some degree of our own) the assumption that "we can leave everything to science" is a dominant fallacy of the 20th century.

For example, Robert Malthus's gloomy prediction that population will tend to increase faster than the food supply has been apparently proved false by the amazing ability of science to develop new sources of food and tremendously increase production. There is no denying the fact that faith in science has been a basis of our fabulous American productivity. It is true that science can achieve "miracles"--and does so every day. But as we take a long look into the future it is time we recognized that there are some things that science cannot do.

We can expect that as the world population increases, each person's share of the earth's resources will dwindle despite all that science can do. It is true that there are vast reserves of such resources as fossil fuels, but as time goes by these supplies will be of lower grade and progressively more difficult to extract. As increasing populations occupy greater areas of cropland, we can find new food resources by better use of these cultivated lands and by harvesting the waters of the oceans but an herculean effort will be necessary to keep burgeoning population from overtaking food supplies. So far as we can see into the future, our water resources will become more expensive as we resort to desalinization and transportation of water over great distances to supply arid but populous regions, and as we face the enormously costly prospect of desilting our reservoirs.

There is one resource, however, that science cannot provide or replace at any price. That resource is true wilderness.

It is here that the limitations of science are most apparent. It is here that our assumption that science can indefinitely provide for a proliferating population founders completely. None of our resources is infinite, but wilderness is the most finite of all. It is the most expendable of our basic resources. As a culture develops, wilderness is the last resource to acquire value. As a culture feels the pressure of population, wilderness will be the first to be consumed.

Let there be no doubt about this: If there is an irreconcilable conflict between wilderness and water, a people feeling the ominous pressure of population will sacrifice the wilderness to get the water. The same is true of other resources--our parks and wilderness areas are, by a ratio that is arithmetical, threatened by each incremental increase in population. The conflict need not even be real. All that is necessary is that enough people <u>believe</u> there is a conflict between wilderness and water, or between wilderness and lumber, and the demands to sacrifice the wilderness will become irresistible.

To "leave everything to science" is to invite disaster. The capacities of science are not infinite. If our population figures continue to skyrocket,

science cannot prevent our wilderness resources from disappearing completely as we feel the pressure of millions upon millions of people crowding in on the last open spaces on the continent.

III. The assumption that the population explosion is inevitable.

To question this assumption is possibly the greatest heresy of all. Government planners, if I am to judge by what comes across my desk, operate in a sort of bureaucratic trance when it comes to projections which indicate that the U.S. population will almost double in 40 years. And it seems to be a corollary of this assumption that the good, the true and the beautiful will go hand in hand with a more populous Nation. Is it not time that we seriously question the bases of these assumptions?

Is it not time to give serious consideration to the "ecology of man"--the relation of human population to its environment? Is it not time to ask whether man, as part of nature, is subject to the laws that govern other species, particularly the law that for every species in a particular environment there is an optimum population?

When a species expands beyond its optimum population, it puts pressure on its resources until there are not enough to go around, and the individual fails to achieve his full growth. Although this is most obviously true of food resources, it is also true of the resource of living space. Biologists find that for some species, as the amount of living space decreases beyond a certain point, neurotic strains are set up in the individual and his higher faculties atrophy.

How does this apply to humans? What is the proper man-land ratio? How much "living space" do humans need for best functioning? These are questions that are almost wholly ignored, but that are vital to our future.

Although there is an urgent need for research on this subject, certain aspects of the problem are already evident. They are particularly evident here in California, where population growth is seemingly a public business of considerable pride. The San Francisco Bay Area is a prime example. Studies by the U.S. Department of Commerce indicate that the population of this region will not merely double but almost quadruple within 60 years. For every person presently living in this area, according to the statisticians, there will be three others alongside him. Will there be four times as many automobiles on the freeways? Or will there be four times as many freeways? If so, where will they be built, if we also need four times as many subdivisions to house the quadrupled population?

Of one thing we can be absolutely certain: There will not be four times as much open space available to the residents of this region. There will not be four times as many parks. There will not be four times as much wilderness. Indeed, if we define wilderness, in human terms, by its correlation with solitude there may be very few wild lands left at all.

The mathematics of increasing population can lead to some entertaining speculation. To take a hypothetical example, suppose that an area in which 4,000,000 people live has available 4,000,000 acres of open space--one acre per person. (I would include, in open space, parks and wilderness as well as other undeveloped lands.) When the population doubles to 8,000,000 people, you might expect that there would remain half as much open space per person, or one-half acre each.

But a little reflection will show that this does not normally happen. Of the original 4,000,000 acres of open space, a great many acres have been occupied by the 4,000,000 new people. Say, for example, that those 4,000,000 new people (plus their houses, roads, schools, parking lots, stores, and factories) occupy 2,000,000 of the original 4,000,000 acres of open space. There are now 8,000,000 people and only 2,000,000 acres of open space, or one-fourth of an acre of open space per person.

Presumably the 2,000,000 remaining acres of open space will include the parks and wilderness regions, since the first to be occupied will be farm lands and other nearby open areas. But as the population continues to increase, there is irresistible pressure on even these dedicated lands. And long before the population doubles again, most of them will disappear.

We might formulate a law governing population and open space: THE AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACE AVAILABLE PER PERSON WILL TEND TO DECREASE AT A FASTER RATE THAN THE POPULATION INCREASES.

The law has a corollary: Unlimited population increases will ultimately reduce the amount of open space per person to zero.

Subsequently it will become a minus quantity--by continued increase in the density of population. In other words, people are piled on top of each other. The finest example of this situation is, of course, Manhattan Island. But those of us who love the wide-open spaces need not despair. There will always be the ocean--presumably.

To return from this little excursion into science fiction (which is not really as fictional as it seems)--and come back to the San Francisco Bay Area, we run into a problem that will require a better mathematician than I am to explore its consequences and formulate a law. That is the fact that if the population quadruples, we can expect that there will be far more than four times as much demand for open space, for parks, for wilderness. With increased leisure, rising incomes, and the growing popularity of outdoor recreation, it has been estimated that the demand in the U.S. as a whole, with a doubled population, will increase by at least three, and some estimates range as high as ten. If these figures were to be applied to the San Francisco Bay Area, we can consider the possibility that a quadrupled population will demand at least nine times as much outdoor recreation--nine times as much wilderness for hiking, fishing, camping, and ironically, for "solitude."

Under these conditions, for every person who now hopes to camp in the summertime on the floor of Yosemite Valley, there will be an eventual nine. For every present hiker down the John Muir Trail along the spine of the Sierra, there will be nine. For every tin can and bottle and carton that now litters park and wilderness trails, there will be nine. For every hundred people on the beach at Drakes Bay, there will be at least 900 and conceivably several times that many. Here we have, in dramatic and depressing terms, the geography of rising population.

It is obvious that land acquisition for parks and wilderness cannot keep up with an indefinitely expanding population. All open spaces will, by the ineluctable force of economics, be filled with subdivisions, office buildings, factories, freeways, parking lots. The public purse cannot compete with overweening private demands.

Even assuming that some parcels of wilderness can be held against the pressures of increasing numbers of people, the only way of preserving them would be to do what we do with any commodity in short supply--ration it. A wilderness trampled by thousands of refugees from the city is no longer a wilderness, and the only way it can be maintained in its natural state as the population increases is to keep people out--to limit access. You would make reservations and wait your turn, it would be as simple as that. This is what happens already in some crowded smaller countries.

Park and wilderness rationing in this country is not merely a prospect for the remote future but could conceivably become necessary in the years or decades immediately ahead. To get in the car when the mood strikes you and find natural sanctuary from the pressures of modern life--as we do at present--may become a privilege to look back on, in the years to come, as we customarily look back on "Golden Ages" of the past.

What will happen to the <u>quality</u> of life as we approach the point where the available natural areas of the continent offer standing room only? As population crowds in on us, it will surely be the quality experience that is sacrificed first--the kind of unique experience offered by wilderness. There will still be available the kind of outdoor experience that can be enjoyed today at amusement parks on the Fourth of July. And this may, indeed, be the <u>only</u> kind of outdoor experience available if we race blindly ahead down the road of "growth and progress."

We can only guess what will happen to the individual as the pressures of overcrowding increasingly bear down on him, as the subtle diseases of overcivilization take their toll on his mind and body. It may be that in the long run overpopulation of our own country will be a grave threat to the most important freedom of all--the freedom each person must have to maintain his own integrity, to be true to his natural self.

This is a gloomy picture. But I raise this prospect only to say that it is time we start to raise doubts about some of our biggest and most dangerous assumptions, to call in question the major premise of our planners and politicians.

When the last census showed that the State of Vermont had not gained in population, one of its most distinguished citizens, Robert Frost, said he was glad it had not. "We want to grow right," he said; and I commend his words to you today.

What does it mean to "grow right?" I would say that it means, among other things, to grow in such a way as to leave room for the quality experience, particularly in nature. It is to grow in such a way that our grandchildren will still be able to see in some places the natural shapes of the land, will be able to find surcease from the tensions of modern life among the God-given forms of mountains and trees and streams and unspoiled beaches.

And I am glad to say that despite the unparalleled growth here in the West, we can find examples here in California of some of the things that need to be done if we are to "grow right." One example is the fine work done by the group of Monterey County citizens led by Nathaniel Owings, who worked out a master zoning plan to save the magnificent coastline of Big Sur from freeways and bulldozers and haphazard subdivisions.

Another example is the work of the organization called "California Tomorrow" which has published that remarkable booklet that should be required reading for every voter in this State--"California, Going, Going...," calling attention to the need for vigorous statewide planning.

I have personal reason to be grateful for the very strong local support from this area for the Point Reyes National Seashore, led here by the Point Reyes Foundation and the Sierra Club, and spearheaded in Congress by the late Clem Miller. California has always had one of the finest State park systems in the Nation and under the leadership of a conservation-minded Governor, Pat Brown, the State has developed the excellent California Outdoor Recreation Plan. I hope that its recommendations will be carried out and the voters will soon be able to pass the vital park bond issue that failed at the last election.

These are simply local examples of some of the efforts that will be needed on a much larger scale if this country is to "grow right." Unlike many countries of Europe and Asia that have used up all their vacant lands, we still have an option in America. We still have open space and wild lands to preserve--lands that still exist in their pristine splendor--or something close to it. Let us then make the choice intelligently as free men considering the welfare of future generations.

One of America's great contributions to the world has been the national park idea, the wilderness idea, the principle of preserving for all time--future generations willing--the finest of our scenic forests and deserts and mountains and shorelines.

I am suggesting that if this magnificent principle is not to be lost in the chaos of unplanned growth, it is time for us to take a further step. I am suggesting that the United States set an example of how to plan the best relationship of human beings to their environment, that we give solemn attention to the

matter of developing the optimum man-land ratio--the ratio which would result not only in the "highest and best use" of the land but the highest and best development of free men.

We can begin by asking the right questions: What is the ideal relationship of men to nature? What is the optimum population for a given environment? How can we maintain the quality of life and not be submerged by quantity?

The individual who tries to cope with the increasing complexity of our civilization oftentimes faces bafflement and confusion. More than ever we need to escape regularly the confinements and frustrations of urban life and find natural sanctuaries where we can once again see things in their wholeness and become, for a moment, whole ourselves.

Perhaps our greatest contribution to world peace at this fearful moment in history would be to enable men everywhere to heed the counsel of the founder of the Sierra Club and great prophet of the wilderness, John Muir:

> Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

x x x