To President Harry Trehearne
and
The Board of Directors

Subject: Interim Report:
Proposed National Park or Seashore for Mill Creek - Del Norte Coast.

Acting upon the suggestion of several local people, this committee began, about one year ago to make preliminary studies on the subject of this report. The general proposal was that, providing the Division of Beaches and Parks could not, in the near future, begin to develop the vast State Park acreage covering the Mill Creek and Del Norte Coast Redwoods area, the local people should endeavor to have this land transferred to the National Park Service for development as a National Park or Seashore. The idea was probably generated by the publicity and controversy on the Point Reyes and Oregon Dunes proposals nearby.

Following the fall elections and the enunciation of the new administration's policies which pointed toward an outpouring of Federal funds for such public works, this committee concluded that the idea warranted further consideration; accordingly, in the early spring of this year, the matter was submitted to the Board of Directors. The Board, without committing itself to a fixed policy, authorized and directed a complete study and inquiry. This report simply enumerates our findings of facts, attitudes and impressions so far. These are listed without attempt to organize or draw final conclusions.

1. A National Park in Del Norte County would undoubtedly provide the greatest drawing and holding attraction for visitors that could be added. National Parks have become focal points in the planning of vacation travel. Indication of a National Park on Oil Company and Travel Bureau maps would bring more attention than any advertising effort possible.
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2. The Mill Creek-Del Norte Coast area would apparently qualify under the acts of 1916 and of 1936 establishing the National Park Service in that it has "unique characteristics", namely:
   (a) It contains some of the finest coastal redwood groves.
   (b) The unusual combination of Redwood groves and rugged seacoast of Del Norte Coast is not to be found elsewhere.

3. The area appears to be of sufficient size to interest the National Park Service.

4. From Preliminary talks it appears that the National Park Service would be interested. Reasons for this could be that the National Park Service controls practically none of the coastal redwoods. (Muir Woods National monument being the only such spot now held.)

5. Although it has been claimed that no precedent exists for the transfer of Park lands from State to Federal control, there does appear to be an example in the case of Yosemite National Park. In 1865, Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove were acquired by the State of California as the first state park in the nation. In 1905 the legislature transferred the land to the Federal Government to become a part of Yosemite National Park.

6. The provisions included in deeds wherein private land was given to the state to be held forever in trust for its scenic and recreational values (the basic purpose being to preserve the redwoods) might prove a problem. However, as long as the original intent and conditions of the deeds were carried out, working agreements could surely be arrived at between State and Federal interests.

7. Securing agreement of all interested State Agencies would undoubtedly be difficult and involve endless "red tape". A great deal of political pressure and support would be necessary and legislation would probably be required. Determination of all the legal aspects will take much time, effort, and technical knowledge extending far beyond the ability of this committee.

8. It has been emphasized that complete local agreement would be essential. The National Park Service has met intense local opposition in both the Point Reyes and Oregon Dunes proposals. It would probably refuse to involve itself in another such situation as long as there remains doubt as to local attitude. A fair sampling of local opinion has been made and can be expressed substantially as follows:
"We are wholeheartedly in favor providing:

1. That only publicly owned land be utilized and no significant amounts of additional tax-paying lands be acquired.
2. That we first have reasonable assurances of immediate development."

9. Steps to be taken in initiating the plan would be:
   a. Document proof of full local agreement and support, delineating land boundaries and spelling out conditions such as the opposition to inclusion of more tax-paying land.
   b. Secure concurrence of National Park Service, Department of Natural Resources, and congressional representatives in the conduct of a feasibility study.
   c. Through congressional effort secure appropriation of funds for the study. An alternate would be to find private foundation funds to support the study.
   d. Once the completed study reports favorably:
      1. Work through all branches of State Government to secure approval and concurrence in details of agreement.
      2. Work through congressional channels to secure appropriations for development.

Comment:

The proposal is not an impossibility. Although it would involve a great amount of "red tape" it does offer an alternate means of development in case State funds continue to be lacking. The committee's thought is that work should continue at a careful and deliberate pace toward accumulation of facts and information.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles A. Thielen, Chairman
Public Parks and Lands Committee
Del Norte County Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Conrad Wirth, Director
National Park Service
Department of Interior
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Del Norte County Chamber of Commerce is considering the establishment of a National Park or Seashore. They have forwarded me a copy of their interim report along with a map of the land they are considering. I would be grateful if you would have someone in your department assess this report.

Very sincerely,

[Signature]

CM rr

Enclosures
Thank you for your letter of December 1, 1961, transmitting an interim report and map concerning a proposed National Park or Seashore for the Mill Creek-Del Norte coast in northwestern California, submitted by Mr. Charles A. Thielen, Chairman of the Public Parks and Lands Committee of the Del Norte County Chamber of Commerce.

We note in the report that the Public Parks and Lands Committee is collecting facts and information on the proposal but has not yet drawn any final conclusions in this matter. This approach seems very sound.

The suggested proposal of the Del Norte County Chamber of Commerce appears to base its possible support of a National Park or Seashore proposal upon the inability of the Division of Beaches and Parks to develop the area. We are sure that the Public Parks and Lands Committee is aware of the program submitted to Governor Edmund G. Brown by Mr. Will Rogers, Jr., Chairman of the State Park Commission with his letter of January 2, 1961. The report, entitled Program for California's Beaches and Parks, describes the $150,000,000-program which would provide for an increase in day-use and overnight facilities in the State parks over the next five years. Improvements planned for Del Norte Coast and Jedediah Smith State Parks are outlined on pages 67 and 68 of the report. Because the program would not go to ballot before the next general election, June or November 1962, the Legislature decided to wait until 1962 at which time the Governor is expected to place the measure on special call. We understand that hearings have been held to consider proposals for a bond issue to finance such a program.

The National Park Service is aware of the fine combination of values found in the Jedediah Smith State Park-Mill Creek-Del Norte Coast State Park areas. As a part of our nationwide study of outdoor
recreation resources, we expect to review the redwood situation in California to assess the feasibility of assuring preservation of remaining old growth redwoods in public ownership.

Our general thought is that the efforts of the State and Federal Governments should supplement each other to assure the adequacy of the redwood conservation program and public enjoyment of the areas preserved. The interim report of the Del Norte County Chamber of Commerce will be helpful to us in such a review. We would be interested in receiving their subsequent reports on the proposal.

The report and map are being returned for your files.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) BEN H. THOMPSON

Ben H. Thompson
Assistant Director

Enclosures

Copy to: Regional Director, Region Four (2) w/c inc.
        Park Planning w/c inc.

JWBowell: ttk: ts
12/17/61

The National Park Service is aware of the fine qualities of public lands in the Jedediah Smith State Park and other comparable parks. As a part of our nationwide study of outdoor