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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON OFFICE

Oct 19 2 14 PM '64

355 East L Street
Benicia, California
October 12, 1964

L58

*C. J. Jones
Hendee*

The Director
National Park Service
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I realize that you must have hundreds of proposals before you to recommend areas for national parks and monuments. I also realize that the funds to acquire and maintain these areas are not always forthcoming. Of special interest to me is the preservation of the Suisun Marshes, one of the last surviving areas of its type in California.

I have written my representative and senator in this regard and I hope that you have the proposal currently before you. If so, I am sure you can see that such a designation is warranted on the basis of recreational, ecological, scientific, and esthetic considerations. Marshes are all too often considered a drawback by the misinformed and by the promoters of special interests. I am sure that you have run up against the problem of the stereotype time after time in your work, and I can only commiserate with you. As the mind increases in receptivity so does one's awareness of beauty. Not every beauty descends like a rushing cascade or rises like a towering mountain; sometimes we must creep toward it and wait with hushed breath until it unfolds.

I can never express my gratitude at the efforts of those who created the Point Reyes National Monument. Since I first gazed upon it, the West coast of Marin County has been to me an especial gift, a gift which can never be deserved and for which all our thanks can never be enough.

To me, the Point Reyes National Monument will always be associated with the late, great President Kennedy. He gave the project his personal support and the excellence of his expression. I feel that the Park Service should study the rest of the West Marin area from Forts Barry Conckrite, and Baker to Tomales Bay. The area is too precious and too badly needed by the public to fall to the swift strokes of the developer. It is no measure of man's intelligence that he can obliterate in a few minutes the story of a million years of life and death. I hope that the Park Service will see fit to preserve the greater portion of West Marin for the exercise of man's intelligence.

In closing, please allow me to say that although I am not directly concerned with Park Service, I have some awareness of the limitations under which it operates, and I full appreciate the fact, that it cannot preserve areas without initiative from local political representatives and support from local economic and cultural groups. I realize that in bringing along these proposals the Service is more often the capstone than the corner stone, but the influence and responsibility of the Service as looked to by the Congress and the budgetary and planning sectors of the government cannot be denied. My admiration for your splendid handling of a difficult job is here expressed. Your triumph may not be as immediate or spectacular as our military and technological successes but I know that it will be more lasting, more inspiring, and more a tribute to our age, for although we may reach to the stars, we still need the feel of the wind in our hair and the soft fragrance of sage in our nostrils to know that we are men with a place in the world.

Very sincerely,



Bruce Meacham

Davis 11/18

L58-CNP

NOV 18 1964

*Suggested
Interest*

Mr. Bruce Meacham
355 East L Street
Benicia, California

Dear Mr. Meacham:

We have your interesting letter of October 12 urging the preservation of the Suisun Marshes in California.

Since we are not familiar with the lands involved in your suggestion, we are sending a copy of your letter to our Regional Office in San Francisco, which is responsible for conducting studies of new proposals in California and some of the other western states. They will write you further on this subject.

Enclosed is a reprint, The National Registry of Natural History Landmarks, which might possibly be the means of recognizing and preserving the marshes.

Sincerely yours,

Sgd. James W. Howell

James W. Howell, Acting Chief
Division of National Park
System Studies

Enclosure

cc: Regional Director, Western w/C inc.
CNP w/C inc.

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355 East L Street
Benicia, California
November 25, 1964

CNP
Howell
11/24/64
New Files

James W. Howell, Acting Chief
Division of National Park System Studies
National Park Service
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Howell:

Thank you for your letter of November 18, 1964, in response to my proposal about national preservation of the Suisun Marshes. (CALIF.) I was extremely pleased to see that the Park Service has adopted such an intelligent and creative approach to the conservation problem as the National Registry of Natural History Landmarks. Responsible scholars have long recognized the value of these outdoor laboratories which serve the dual purpose of outdoor recreation and research. Although we have acquired immense quantities of data on the form and habitat of terrestrial biota we have as yet to become knowledgeable about the interaction of these biota in the ecological environment.

The marshland habitat is one of the least appreciated areas of the ecological environment. It has long been the target of reclamationists, as witness the Swamp and Overflowed Lands Act of 1830. Among the earliest patents granted in California were those involving swamp and overflowed lands. I believe that the Park Service can do much to extend the appreciation of all the ecological environments. In large metropolitan areas or rapidly growing suburban areas the pressure is often great to blanket an area with development leaving little if any of the area in its true natural state. If the Park Service could step in and preserve small coves, marshes, lakes, woods, or valleys in these areas and "develop" them so that they could be used by grammar school and high school students as an intimate part of their natural history and biology courses it would be developing a human as well as natural resource.

I feel that this is as valid and meaningful a development as the shopping center or the apartment complex. Access to such sites should be as much a part of the "equipment" of a school as the baseball field or gymnasium.

I sincerely hope that you will take this proposal (as well as the one about the Suisun Marshes) under your earnest consideration, and keep up the imaginative, always distinguished work your organization has done in the past.

Very sincerely,



Bruce Meacham

P. S. Could I get about a dozen copies of the article of the National Registry of Natural History Landmarks which you sent me?

cc to: The Honorable Robert L. Leggett
The Honorable Stewart Udall

↑ sent 12/10/64
etc