

final wild and scenic river study

june 1984

YUKON RIVER
(RAMPARTS SECTION)



ALASKA

FINAL
WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY FOR THE YUKON RIVER
(RAMPARTS SECTION), ALASKA

Abstract: The Ramparts section of the Yukon River was studied as a possible addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This study presents findings that the river segment is eligible for the national system, based on its free-flowing condition and outstanding historical significance. However, the study presents the conclusion that the river segment is nonsuitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System as a congressionally designated, federally administered river.

SECTION I

DRAFT YUKON (RAMPARTS SECTION) RIVER WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY

The draft document was widely distributed on and after December 19, 1983. It has not been reprinted and is incorporated here by reference. A limited number of copies are available at the office of the Regional Director, Alaska Region, National Park Service, 2525 Gambell Street, Room 107, Anchorage, Alaska 99503.

SECTION II

CHANGES TO THE DRAFT STUDY REPORT

Page

- 1 The first sentence of the fifth paragraph should read: "The Ramparts section of the Yukon River is approximately 106 miles in length and extends . . ."
- 10 The last two sentences on the page have been updated:

The annual average unemployment rate is 16.3 percent compared to 9.6 percent statewide. The peak unemployment for 1980 was 19.7 percent in April and the low was 11.9 percent in September (Alaska Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 1981).
- 11 First complete sentence on the page has been updated:

Nonagriculture wage and salary employment in 1980 for the Yukon-Koyukuk region was distributed as follows: mining 6.7 percent; construction 2.3 percent; transportation, communications, and public utilities 38 percent; retail trade 7 percent; finance 0.9 percent; services 3.6 percent; government 41 percent; and all other industries 38 percent (Alaska Department of Labor 1980).
- 15 The fifth sentence of the first paragraph now reads:

The 106-mile Ramparts section is contained within this portion of the river.
- 16 The following is inserted between the fifth and sixth sentences of the first paragraph under Streamflow and Water Quality:

The average annual water level fluctuation is about 20 vertical feet at Rampart.
- 16 The following has been added after the last sentence of the last paragraph:

The maximum velocity of the river at Rampart is about 7 miles per hour.

Page

- 19 In the second sentence of the first paragraph under History, the word "Kutchin" should be changed to "Koyukon".
- 20 In the second sentence of the first paragraph under Access/Transportation, the word "Dawson" should be "Dalton".
- 23 Lines 1 and 31 - Change "Dawson" to Dalton"

SECTION III

COMMENTS FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES, STATE AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS, NATIVE AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

MAY 16 1984

Honorable G. Ray Arnett
Assistant Secretary for Fish
and Wildlife and Parks
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

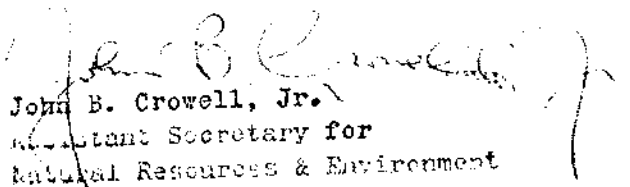
Dear Mr. Arnett:

We have reviewed your draft Wild and Scenic River study report for the Yukon River (Ramparts Section). We are in agreement with your recommendation that this segment of the Yukon River is not suitable for designation to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System at the present time due to the uncertainty of future land ownership and lack of interest by the State of Alaska and the native corporations.

We would also support your recommendation that the entire Yukon River should be given some sort of protection to preserve its outstanding historical values. Coordinated protection activities with the State of Alaska are important in the immediate future. It would also be worthwhile to have an estimate of what impacts will affect the river values in the next 10 or 20 years due to increased use, development, etc.

We have no further comments at this time.

Sincerely,


John B. Crowell, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Natural Resources & Environment



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, DC 20310

2 MAY 1973

Honorable G. Ray Arnett
Assistant Secretary for Fish
and Wildlife and Parks
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Arnett:

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary of the Army, John O. Marsh, Jr., requesting review and comment on the proposed Wild and Scenic River Study on the Yukon River (Ramparts Section), Alaska.

The report indicates that little or no land within the study area is expected to remain in Federal ownership, and that neither the non-Federal landowners nor the State of Alaska are interested in administering the river segment as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Consequently, the study concludes that the river segment is not suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. In view of the study conclusion, we have no further comments to offer.

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the Yukon River Wild and Scenic River Study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William R. Gianelli", is positioned above the typed name.

William R. Gianelli
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)

**Advisory
Council On
Historic
Preservation**

1522 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Reply to:

730 Simms Street, Room 450
Golden, Colorado 80401

ALASKA REGION	
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January 20, 1984

Mr. Roger J. Contor
Regional Director
Alaska Region
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street
Room 107
Anchorage, AK 99503-2892

REF: Yukon River (Ramparts Section) Draft Wild and Scenic River
Study (Study)

Dear Mr. Contor:

We have received and reviewed the above-referenced document. We note with interest the historic significance of the Ramparts Section of the Yukon River as a primary value in consideration of this area for Wild and Scenic River designation. We are therefore concerned that the principal reason for the Study's failure to recommend designation is the impending conveyance of lands in the area to Native Corporations and to the State of Alaska. We find that unless some higher public interest compels resolution of the Wild and Scenic River question prior to resolution of land conveyance questions in this area, recommendation that the Ramparts Section be found unsuitable for Wild and Scenic River designation is certainly premature.

Regarding the Study's proposal of "Options for Preserving the Values of the Ramparts Section of the Yukon River" (pages 7 and 8), we would like to offer the following remarks:

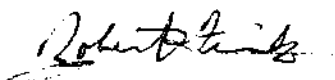
Under "Land Classification" (page 7), the Study states that "The lands may be classified in BLM's land use planning process as suitable for retention, thereby keeping the lands in public ownership to serve public purposes." We are uncertain how it is recommended that this process should relate to pending land conveyances--that is, whether the classification process would supercede transfers of lands out of Federal proprietorship, or would only apply to lands not conveyed, or would have some other bearing on the resolution of conveyance questions.

We would strongly support a concerted "interagency study of the entire Yukon River within Alaska" (page 8 under "Yukon River Historical Theme Study"). We find that such a study (preferably addressing all environmental issues, in addition to the subject of historic significance) should be closely coordinated with the study now underway for the Canadian Yukon as a primary foundation for planning and administering the management of lands and resources along the entire length of the Yukon River. We believe that all recommendations for final disposition of land and resource management along the United States portion of the River should be closely instructed by the results of such an international/interagency study. For this reason also, the present recommendation that the Ramparts Section be found unsuitable for Wild and Scenic River designation is judged to be premature.

In addition, such a study would inform decisions regarding National Register eligibility and nomination for properties either now or eventually to be placed under private proprietorship (as discussed under "Nomination of Potentially Eligible Sites to the National Register of Historic Places," page 8).

We look forward to hearing from you again as decisions on these matters are developed. If you have informal questions or comments which would assist in these considerations, please contact Dean Shinn of my staff at (303) 234-4946, an FTS number.

Sincerely,



Robert Fink
Acting Chief, Western Division
of Project Review



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Soil
Conservation
Service

Professional Center - Suite 129 ALAS
2221 East Northern Lights Boulevard
Anchorage, AK 99504 (907) 276-4246

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January 3, 1984

Regional Director
Alaska Regional Office
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Re: Wild and Scenic River Study for the Yukon River (Ramparts Section),
Alaska

Dear Sir:

We agree with your conclusions. One comment on page 24, 3rd paragraph, the words "and fishwheels" does not fit.


BURTON L. CLIFFORD
State Conservationist





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

State and
Private
Forestry

2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Suite 104
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Reply to 2510

Date: January 3, 1984

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Mr. Roger J. Contor,
Regional Director
Alaska Region
USDI National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street, Room 107
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear Mr. Contor:

I have assumed Hank Hays' responsibilities since his retirement, therefore the draft wild and scenic river study report for the Yukon River has come to my attention.

There are two key considerations to look at in making your final recommendations. First, the landownership is changing from federal to state and private ownership. Second, the new ownership is in the hands of the historical users of the lands and water of the study area. Uses of the resources have been traditional subsistence and there is no reason to assume changes in resource uses will occur with change in ownership.

The people of Alaska place, for the most-part, great importance on their history. The study area has a harsh climate and access is difficult at best. There are no apparent reasons to assume these conditions are going to change either. Under these circumstances, that part of history which should survive, will survive. No amount of money or legislation will change this. Decay of that which is destined to fade away, will do so. Money and legislation may delay its demise but fade it will. Only the desires of the people can change this. And in the case of this section of the Yukon, it must be Alaskans who want to retain it.

In summary, if we were concerned with historical sites readily available to the public in general, now or in the foreseeable future, then designation as National Register Historical sites may be effective. In this situation, I think not. The fate of this section of the Yukon will be best left in the hands and minds of the local people. I concur that wild and scenic designation is not appropriate either.

I hope these comments are much as Hank would have made them. If not, I apologize to Hank for usurping his opportunity to comment, with my own reaction to the facts and assumptions presented here.

Sincerely,

Eugene E. Wheeler

EUGENE E. WHEELER, GROUP LEADER
Forest Resource Management



MORRIS K. UDALL, ARIZ., CHAIRMAN

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ABRAHAM KAZEN, JR., TEX.
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BARBARA VUCANOVICH, NEV.

COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

January 11, 1984

STANLEY SCOVILLE
STAFF DIRECTOR
AND COUNSEL

ROY JONES
ASSOCIATE STAFF DIRECTOR

LEE MC ELVAIN
GENERAL COUNSEL

TIMOTHY W. GLIDDEN
REPUBLICAN COUNSEL

Mr. Roger Contor
Regional Director, Alaska Region
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
2525 Gambell Street, Room 107
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-2892

Dear Mr. Contor:

Thank you for your recent communication regarding the draft wild and scenic river study for the Ramparts section of the Yukon River. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on your proposed recommendation.

I concur with your evaluation that the Ramparts section is free-flowing, but does not warrant inclusion into the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The pending conveyances to the State of Alaska and Native corporations will eventually mean that little or no land within the study area will remain in federal ownership. Knowing of the the National Park Service's strong commitment to non-interference in the affairs of private property owners, it is clear that your decision is a correct one. I fully support your decision, and ask that my comments be placed in the record.

With warm personal regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

Don Young

DON YOUNG

Congressman for all Alaska

DY:dvk

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mosby

STATE OF ALASKA

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

CSU Planning Office
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99502

267-2215

17 February 1984

Roger Contor
Regional Director
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear Mr. Contor:

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The State CSU Contacts have completed their review of the Yukon River (ramparts section) draft wild and scenic river study. Reviewers concurred with the conclusion that this section of the Yukon River is not suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System.

All of the options presented in the document for preserving the values of this section of the river, as well as other portions, have merit and are not mutually exclusive. Some of the state-owned and selected land will undoubtedly be retained and classified for recreation and heritage resource purposes. It is also likely that the State would support the idea of having the federal government retain some of these lands, particularly those containing cultural sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. We also feel that the idea of a Yukon Historical Scenic Study is something worth discussing in the future. All of these things should be listed in the final document as courses of action to be explored and not necessarily as options from which a single choice must be made.

Reviewers commented that the document was well written and summarized the important aspects of the study area. In particular, the authors were commended for acknowledging the importance of fish, wildlife, and plant resources in the local economies of communities in the area. We hope that this is reflected in any further federal planning activities which may occur in the area. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Subsistence Division, intends to conduct studies in one or more of the communities in the Ramparts study area during the next two years. This research will add detailed information on land and resource use patterns by local residents to the record.

17 February 1984

Specific comments on the draft follow:

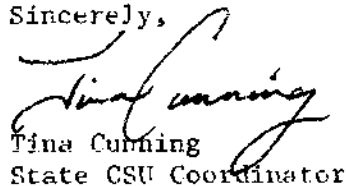
Page 10 - There are some minor errors quoting Department of Labor data: (1) Under "Economy," the annual average unemployment rate for the Yukon/Koyukuk Census Division in 1980 was 16.3 percent not 16.4 percent. The peak that year was 19.7 percent in April, not 20.4 percent in March. (2) The distribution of employment by industry is now available for 1980, not 1978 as stated in the text. The distribution for 1980 was as follows: mining 6.7 percent; construction 2.3 percent; retail trade 7 percent; finance 0.9 percent; services 3.6 percent; government 41 percent; and all other industries 38 percent.

Page 19 and 20 - Koyukon Athabaskans, not Kutchin Athabaskans, are the predominant Native residents of the study area. The attached pages from Elizabeth Andrews' 1977 report (cited in the draft) are provided for your information.

Page 20 and 23 - "Dawson Highway" should be "Dalton Highway."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft study. If we can clarify any of our comments or be of any further assistance, please call our office.

Sincerely,



Tina Cuming
State CSU Coordinator

Enclosure

cc: L. NebeJ, NPS
L. Parker, ALUC
S. Leaphart, CACFA
State CSU Contacts

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF PARKS

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

619 WAREHOUSE AVE., SUITE 210
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501
PHONE: (907) 276-2653

January 5, 1984

Re: 1120-14
1130-9-9

Bill Beaty
Division of Land and Water Management
Pouch 7-005
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Dear Mr. Beaty:

We have reviewed the proposed Draft Wild & Scenic River Study, Yukon River (Ramparts Section) project and would like to offer the following comments:

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

The Ramparts Section of the Yukon River appears to have some unique and significant contributions to Alaska's heritage. We were very pleased to see that the National Park Service is considering various options for preservation of the important values in that part of the River even though the Ramparts Section does not appear suitable for Wild & Scenic River status. In particular, we support the retention of land by the State for recreation, subsistence, and other uses. The Heritage Land Use classification could be used to protect and preserve some known cultural resources sites in the area.

We would also like to see such sites protected by having them retained in federal ownership. As you know, the federal legislation protecting cultural resources is more complete than the State's. Federal retention of lands containing cultural sites, could best be used for those sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. We support that option as well, and look forward to seeing some of those sites listed on the Register.

The Yukon River Historical Theme Study is an excellent idea, especially considering the coordination between Canada and the U.S.

Ty L. Dilliplane
for Ty L. Dilliplane
State Historic Preservation Officer

Bill Beaty
January 5, 1984
Page 2 -

STATE PARK PLANNING

No comment.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND GRANT PROGRAM

No comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Neil C. Johannsen". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "N" and a cursive "J".

Neil C. Johannsen
Director

cc: Roger Contor, Regional Director, NPS

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

Please reply to:

Telephone: (907) 452-1714

Address: Pouch 1601

Fairbanks, Alaska

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ALASKA REGION
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Dear Mr. Contor:

RE: Draft Yukon River Wild and Scenic River Study
(Ramparts Section)

We have reviewed the above referenced study and agree with the conclusion reached that this river segment is nonsuitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System, based on the finding that after pending land conveyances to the State of Alaska and Native Corporations are completed, little or no land within the study area will remain in federal ownership.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Joyce Beelman
Env. Field Officer

JB/dm

175.81.001



*Citizens' Advisory Commission
on Federal Areas*

515 Seventh Avenue
Suite 310
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 456-2012

March 5, 1984

Roger Contor
Regional Director
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Re: Yukon River Wild And Scenic River Study.

Dear Mr. Contor:

The Commission endorses the National Park Service's conclusion that the Ramparts Section of the Yukon River is not suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system as a congressionally designated, Federally administered river.

The report is well presented and succinct. Several statements that were not included that may be of interest to river travelers are:

1. The length of the study portion of the river is about 106 miles.
2. The maximum velocity is about 7 miles per hour, at Rampart.
3. The average annual water level fluctuation is about 20 vertical feet, at Rampart.
4. The types of physical remains which still exist to be preserved at the site of Chief Senatis' village and in the area surrounding the rapids.

A historical theme study for the Yukon River would be one way to more fully identify the historical value of the river to Alaska and to commemorate those values. The Commission would recommend that any coordinated study include the Alaska Historical Commission as a consulting agency.

Sincerely,

Letter Leaflet

Bettye Fahrenkamp, Chairman
Alaska State Senator

Alaska State Legislature



REPRESENTATIVE

POUCH V
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811

ROBERT H. "BOB" BETTISWORTH

February 14, 1984

211 CUSHMAN STREET
FARBANKS, ALASKA 99701

Mr. Roger Contor
Regional Director
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Contor,

I understand the National Park Service has determined that the stretch of the Yukon River often referred to as "The Ramparts Section" is not suitable for inclusion in the federal system of wild and scenic rivers. I wholly agree with this conclusion based on NPS's research and want to commend you and your staff for using good common sense with regard to this particular management issue.

This major avenue of commerce and transportation in interior Alaska must be managed in a less restrictive mode than would be likely under a designation as a part of the federally managed National Wild and Scenic Rivers system.

Once again, I support your determination on the Ramparts section of the Yukon River.

Sincerely,

Representative Bob Bettisworth
District 20A

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Alaska State Office		
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Doyon, Limited

Doyon Building
201 First Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Tel: (907) 452-4755 Telex 090-35340

February 6, 1984

Regional Director
Alaska Regional Office
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street
Anchorage, AK 99503

Gentlemen:

RE: Comments - Draft Wild and Scenic River Study
Yukon River - Ramparts Section

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Wild and Scenic River Study - Yukon River - Ramparts Section.

Overall, Doyon agrees with the findings and conclusions of the Study. Additionally, we feel that while the history of this segment of the Yukon River, as addressed in this Study, is interesting it is not unlike many other areas of Alaska.

Thanks again for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Rodriguez
Vice President, Resources

RGR:GL:mb

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by Wilbur Mills in *Alaska, The Great Land*

RECEIVED
Sierra Club
241 E. Fifth Avenue
Suite 205
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 276-4048

January 16, 1984

Mr. Roger Contor
Regional Director
National Park Service
2525 Gambell St.
Anchorage, AK 99503-2892

Re: Draft Wild and Scenic River Study for the Yukon River
(Rampants Section) Alaska

Dear ^{Roger} Mr. Contor:

It is indeed regrettable that this section of the Yukon River, while qualified for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System, cannot be included for lack of federal lands in the river corridor. It cannot be included because Congress, when it granted the State's land selection "wish list" as part of ANILCA, chose to turn over federal lands in the study river withdrawal to the State.

However, the Sierra Club endorsed Congress's decision to have the Rampants Section studied anyway, under the assumption that the State might consider retaining the lands along the river in (state) public ownership at the very least. Now with some of these state lands being conveyed to the Cook Inlet Region, Inc., the public can anticipate loss of access and probable development. State land disposals of the remaining state land may also be anticipated, and with similar results.

Of your report's "options for preserving the values of the Rampants Section", the Sierra Club recommends all three. In their discussion of an historical theme study, the authors state that the study "should" be conducted by a "multiagency organization" such as the Alaska Land Use Council. This recommendation could be strengthened by a statement in the final report that the Department of the Interior will ask the Alaska Land Use Council to undertake the proposed study.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Hession

Jack Hession
Alaska Representative



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

CHARLES M. CLUSEN
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CONSERVATION

March 27, 1984

Roger Contor
Regional Director
Alaska Regional Office
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street
Anchorage, AK 99503

Alaska Region Office
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Dear Sir:

The Wilderness Society appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft Wild and Scenic River study of the Yukon River (Ramparts Section). The Society is a nationwide non-profit conservation organization founded in 1935 by Robert Marshall, one of the early explorers of Alaska. The Society and its approximately 105,000 members (including 585 members in Alaska) are dedicated to the protection and wise management of America's primeval forests, parks, rivers, shorelands and refuges and fostering an awareness and appreciation of the great values that these lands, in their natural, untrammelled state, hold for all Americans.

The Wilderness Society believes that it is unfortunate that the National Park Service has found this spectacular resource to be unsuitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. Recognizing the difficulties of obtaining designation of this section, we urge the National Park Service to protect the values along the entire Yukon River System in Alaska. The Wilderness Society recommends that the three options outlined (land classification, historical theme study and nomination of areas to the National Register of Historic Places) in the draft be rolled into one option in order to give the fullest protection possible under existing authorities to the entire Yukon River System. Under this option the federal lands within this river system would be retained by federal agencies. The state should be encouraged to classify their lands within the Yukon River System as public recreation land, or wildlife habitat land under the authority of Alaska Statute 38.04.070. The federal, state and native lands should all be examined in terms of an historical theme study and certain historic sites should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Wilderness Society urges federal, state and native protection of the Yukon River System through existing authorities to protect the unique wild and scenic and historic values of this area.

Sincerely,

Charles H. Clusea

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

Publication services were provided by the graphics and editorial staffs of the Denver Service Center. NPS 2222