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REMARKS OF ROY J. KIRK
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AT THE
SECOND ANNUAL LAND USE CONFERENCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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I AM ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO BE WITH YOU TODAY AT THIS SECOND ANNUAL LAND USE CONFERENCE. I THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO YOU AND SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF THE STUDIES THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE HAS AND PLANS TO COMPLETE ON FEDERAL LAND USE POLICIES AND ALTERNATIVES. FIRST HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY COMMENT ON THE ROLE OF GAO. WE ARE A PART OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT AND ALL OF OUR WORK IS VIEWED AS ASSISTING THE CONGRESS IN ITS MISSION. THE OVERRIDING PURPOSE OF OUR WORK IS TO CONSTRUCTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO GREATER ECONOMY, EFFICIENCY, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS. IN THIS CONTEXT, OUR GREATEST CONTRIBUTION IS TO PROVIDE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SUCH AS:

[GAO Studies]

--WHERE ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES TO ELIMINATE WASTE AND THE INEFFICIENT USE OF PUBLIC MONEY?

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--ARE FEDERAL PROGRAMS, WHETHER ADMINISTERED DIRECTLY BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, OR THROUGH STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, ACHIEVING THEIR OBJECTIVES?

--ARE THERE OTHER WAYS OF ACCOMPLISHING THE OBJECTIVES OF THESE PROGRAMS AT LOWER COSTS?

--ARE FUNDS BEING SPENT LEGALLY? AND IS THE ACCOUNTING FOR THEM ADEQUATE?

OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO RECOMMEND WAYS OF MAKING BOTH PROPOSED AND ONGOING FEDERAL PROGRAMS WORK BETTER, TO ASSIST IN THE PROCESS OF PROGRAM CHOICE, AND TO MAKE THE RESULTS OF OUR STUDIES KNOWN BEFORE DECISIONS ARE REACHED.

WE CANNOT AVOID THE SITUATION WHERE CERTAIN OF OUR REPORTS, SUCH AS OUR LAND ACQUISITION REPORT, WILL BE CONSIDERED CONTROVERSIAL IN THE EYES OF THOSE WHO MAY DISAGREE WITH OUR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. THIS SIMPLY UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPING AND PRESENTING OUR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AS FAIRLY, OBJECTIVELY, AND FACTUALLY AS POSSIBLE.

WE DO NOT LOBBY FOR A PARTICULAR LEGISLATIVE OR PROGRAM DECISION. RATHER WE ENDEAVOR TO PROVIDE THE KIND OF OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES THAT CAN BE VALUABLE TO THE CONGRESS IN REACHING ITS OWN CONCLUSION. IN SHORT, WE MUST AVOID A PARTISAN PROGRAM ROLE JUST AS WE HAVE CAREFULLY AVOIDED A PARTISAN POLITICAL ROLE.

GAO REPORTS 1/

DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS, WE HAVE ISSUED A NUMBER OF REPORTS ON FEDERAL LAND USE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS. I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE FOUR OF THE MORE SIGNIFICANT REPORTS.

ALASKA TOURISM REPORT

IN SEPTEMBER 1979, WE ISSUED A REPORT ENTITLED "HOW SHOULD ALASKA'S FEDERAL RECREATION LANDS BE DEVELOPED? VIEWS OF ALASKA RESIDENTS AND VISITORS (CED-79-116, SEPTEMBER 27, 1979).

THE CONGRESS IS NOW CONSIDERING LEGISLATION TO SET ASIDE MILLIONS OF ACRES IN ALASKA FOR NATIONAL PARKS, PRESERVES, FORESTS, WILDLIFE REFUGES, AND MONUMENTS. AS TOURISM GROWS IN ALASKA, FEDERAL AGENCIES MUST DECIDE HOW TO MEET THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, WHILE PRESERVING ALASKA'S LANDSCAPE AND NATURAL RESOURCES. TO HELP THE AGENCIES MAKE THESE DECISIONS, WE MAILED A QUESTIONNAIRE TO 1,291 RECENT VISITORS TO, AND RESIDENTS OF ALASKA. RESPONSES WERE RECEIVED FROM 1,081, OR 84 PERCENT, OF THOSE POLLED.

THE SAMPLE REPRESENTED ABOUT 100,000 ALASKA VISITORS AND RESIDENTS. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT:

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--FROM 75 TO 91 PERCENT OF THOSE RESPONDING SUPPORTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROADS, CABINS, AND LODGES IN NEW AREAS RATHER THAN FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING RECREATIONAL AREAS SUCH AS MOUNT MCKINLEY NATIONAL PARK.

--THE MAJORITY OF THOSE RESPONDING FAVORED EITHER A USER CHARGE SYSTEM--37 PERCENT--OR FEDERAL FUNDING--36 PERCENT--TO PAY FOR FUTURE RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

--UP TO 72 PERCENT OF THE VISITORS RESPONDING SAID THEY WERE NOT AWARE OF PUBLICATIONS ON RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ALASKA PUBLISHED BY FEDERAL AGENCIES. INTERAGENCY FEDERAL VISITOR INFORMATION CENTERS WOULD MAKE RECREATION INFORMATION MORE READILY AVAILABLE AS WELL AS DIRECTING VISITORS TO LESSER KNOWN AND LESS CROWDED AREAS.

SURFACE MINING AND RECLAMATION REPORT

IN SEPTEMBER 1979, WE ISSUED A REPORT ENTITLED "ISSUES SURROUNDING THE SURFACE MINING CONTROL AND RECLAMATION ACT" (CED-79-83, SEPTEMBER 21, 1979). IN THIS REPORT WE CONCLUDED THAT STATES FOUND IT HARD TO MEET THE TIMETABLES OF THE SURFACE MINING CONTROL AND RECLAMATION ACT BECAUSE THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR MISSED ITS DEADLINES FOR ISSUING PROGRAM REGULATIONS. FURTHER, STATES AND COAL MINE OPERATORS CLAIM THAT INTERIOR'S REGULATIONS ARE TOO STRINGENT AND WILL LEAD TO FEDERAL DOMINATION OF THE PROGRAM. HOWEVER, INTERIOR DISAGREES.

WE ALSO STATED THAT INTERIOR HAS COLLECTED OVER \$200 MILLION IN RECLAMATION FEE PAYMENTS FROM COAL OPERATORS TO RECLAIM ABANDONED MINES. HALF OF THE FUNDS EARMARKED FOR STATE RECLAMATION PROJECTS WERE NOT BEING USED BECAUSE INTERIOR WOULD NOT GRANT FUNDS TO STATES UNTIL THEIR SURFACE MINING REGULATORY PROGRAMS ARE APPROVED. WE PRESENTED THREE ALTERNATIVES:

--INTERIOR COULD CONTINUE THE PRESENT POLICY TO ENCOURAGE THE STATES TO ACHIEVE PRIMACY BY PROVIDING A STRONG ECONOMIC INCENTIVE TO INDUCE THE STATES TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS OF GAINING INTERIOR'S APPROVAL OF THEIR STATE REGULATORY PROGRAMS. HOWEVER, THIS PREVENTS THE STATES FROM USING ANY OF THE FUNDS ACCUMULATED TO DATE AND EARMARKED FOR STATE RECLAMATION PROGRAMS WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE ABANDONED MINED LANDS.

--THE CONGRESS COULD AMEND SECTION 405(C) OF THE SURFACE MINING CONTROL AND RECLAMATION ACT TO GRANT INTERIOR THE AUTHORITY TO APPROVE A STATE'S ABANDONED MINE RECLAMATION PROGRAM WHETHER OR NOT THAT STATE HAS AN APPROVED STATE REGULATORY PROGRAM SO THAT THE STATES CAN START RECLAIMING AND RESTORING LAND AND WATER

RESOURCES HARMED BY PAST COAL MINING.

HOWEVER, THIS ALTERNATIVE MAY REDUCE THE INCENTIVE FOR THE STATE TO TAKE THE LEAD IN THE REGULATORY PROGRAM.

--INTERIOR COULD PROVIDE "SEED" MONEY FROM THE RECLAMATION FUND FOR PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING DESIGN WORK ON PROJECTS THAT THE STATES PLAN TO UNDERTAKE. THIS WOULD PERMIT EARLY DESIGN OF RECLAMATION PROJECTS WHILE WAITING FOR STATE SURFACE MINING REGULATORY PROGRAM APPROVAL. INTERIOR CHOSE THIS ALTERNATIVE AND IS NOW MAKING GRANTS TO STATES.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS REPORT

IN MAY 1978, WE ISSUED A REPORT ENTITLED "FEDERAL PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS IS SLOW AND COSTLY" (CED-78-96, MAY 22, 1978). IN THIS REPORT, WE CONCLUDED THAT FEW RIVERS HAD BEEN ADDED TO THE NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM UNDER THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT OF 1968. THE NATIONAL SYSTEM WAS GROWING SLOWLY, AND PROCESSES FOR ADDING RIVERS WERE NOT FUNCTIONING WELL.

WE FURTHER STATED THAT THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE INTERIOR AND AGRICULTURE SHOULD WORK CLOSELY WITH STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ESTABLISH ADEQUATE ZONING CON-

TROLS WHICH PROVIDE LESS COSTLY MANAGEMENT AND SUFFICIENT PROTECTION OF THE WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS. THE DEPARTMENTS SHOULD LIMIT ACQUISITION OF LANDS AND EASEMENTS TO AREAS REQUIRED FOR RECREATION ACCESS POINTS, PICNIC AND CAMPING AREAS, OR WHERE A NONCOMPATIBLE USE THREATENS TO DEGRADE THE RIVERS' SCENIC BEAUTY.

LAND ACQUISITION REPORT

IN DECEMBER 1979 WE ISSUED A REPORT ENTITLED "THE FEDERAL DRIVE TO ACQUIRE PRIVATE LANDS SHOULD BE REASSESSED" (CED-80-14, DECEMBER 14, 1979) IN THIS REPORT, WE STATED THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OWNS OVER ONE-THIRD OF ALL U.S. LAND WITH AUTHORIZATION TO ACQUIRE UP TO \$4 BILLION OF PRIVATE LAND DURING THE NEXT 11 YEARS.

THE NATIONAL PARK, FOREST, AND FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICES HAD BEEN FOLLOWING A GENERAL PRACTICE OF ACQUIRING AS MUCH PRIVATE LAND AS POSSIBLE REGARDLESS OF NEED, ALTERNATIVE LAND CONTROL METHODS, AND IMPACTS ON PRIVATE LANDOWNERS.

WE RECOMMENDED THAT THE SECRETARIES OF AGRICULTURE AND THE INTERIOR

--JOINTLY ESTABLISH A POLICY ON WHEN LANDS SHOULD BE PURCHASED OR WHEN OTHER PROTECTION ALTERNATIVES, SUCH AS EASEMENTS, ZONING, AND FEDERAL REGULATORY CONTROLS, SHOULD BE USED;

--CRITICALLY EVALUATE THE NEED TO PURCHASE
ADDITIONAL LANDS IN EXISTING PROJECTS; AND
--PREPARE PLANS IDENTIFYING LANDS NEEDED
TO ACHIEVE PROJECT PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES
AT EVERY NEW PROJECT BEFORE ACQUIRING LAND.

IN THIS REPORT, WE DISCUSSED MANY LESS-THAN-FEE ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE FOR PRESERVING AND PROTECTING LAND. THESE ALTERNATIVES INCLUDE EASEMENTS, ZONING, FEDERAL REGULATORY CONTROL, PURCHASE SELLBACK, PURCHASE LEASEBACK, PREFERENTIAL TAXES, AND TAX DEFERRALS. HOWEVER, IN CONDUCTING THE REVIEW, WE FOUND THAT AT MOST OF THE 19 PROJECTS INCLUDED IN OUR STUDY, THERE WAS GREAT OPPOSITION ON THE PART OF FEDERAL LAND MANAGERS TO USING ANYTHING BUT FULL-TITLE ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE LANDS. THE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE AND THE INTERIOR RECENTLY HAVE ADOPTED POLICIES REQUIRING THE CONSIDERATION OF LESS THAN FULL-TITLE ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE LANDS SUCH AS ZONING AND EASEMENTS.

ONCE FEDERAL LAND MANAGERS START USING THESE TWO READILY AVAILABLE AND PROVEN ALTERNATIVES, THE USE OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES TO FULL-TITLE ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE LANDS SHOULD BE FULLY EXPLORED.

ON-GOING STUDIES

WE PRESENTLY HAVE IN PROGRESS A NUMBER OF STUDIES REVIEWING FEDERAL ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE NATION'S LANDS. I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY STATE THE SCOPE OF THREE STUDIES.

LAND ACQUISITION PRACTICES

OUR REPORT ON ALTERNATIVE LAND CONTROL METHODS, HAS STIRRED CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST ON FEDERAL LAND ACQUISITION PRACTICES, ESPECIALLY THOSE EMPLOYED BY INTERIOR'S NATIONAL PARK SERVICE. AT THE REQUEST OF SEVERAL SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN, WE ARE REVIEWING THE PARK SERVICE'S LAND ACQUISITION PRACTICES INCLUDING COSTS AND IMPACTS ON PRIVATE LANDOWNERS. INCLUDED IN THIS EFFORT IS A REVIEW OF THE SERVICE'S COMPLIANCE WITH CONGRESSIONAL INTENT AND LEGISLATIVE MANDATES AS WELL AS THE SERVICE'S APRIL 26, 1979, REVISED LAND ACQUISITION POLICY REQUIRING THE CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO FULL-TITLE ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE LANDS. WE ARE ALSO EXAMINING THE ROLE PRIVATE, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS PLAY IN FEDERAL LAND ACQUISITIONS AND THE TRUE COST OF LAND DONATIONS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

ANOTHER AREA WE ARE STUDYING IS WHETHER THERE IS THE NEED FOR AN INDEPENDENT BODY SUCH AS A LAND ACQUISITION COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF FEDERAL, STATE AND PRIVATE REPRESENTATIVES. THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE WOULD BE TO RULE ON APPEALS FROM STATES, LOCAL JURISDICTION, AND PRIVATE LANDOWNERS QUESTIONING THE ACQUISITION OR PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE LANDS BY FEDERAL LAND MANAGING AGENCIES.

WE PLAN TO COMPLETE OUR FIELD WORK THIS SUMMER AND ISSUE OUR REPORT TOWARD THE END OF THIS YEAR.

FEDERAL ROLE IN CONSERVING WILDLIFE

WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A STUDY ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF WHAT SHOULD THE FEDERAL ROLE BE FOR CONSERVING THE NATION'S WILDLIFE. AREAS BEING ADDRESSED INCLUDE:

--HOW EFFECTIVE HAS THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE BEEN IN CARRYING OUT ITS MANDATE TO CONSULT WITH AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO FEDERAL AGENCIES AND STATES ON FISH AND WILDLIFE MATTERS?

--HAVE FEDERAL LAND MANAGING AGENCIES SUCH AS THE CORP OF ENGINEERS, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, FOREST SERVICE, AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE COMPLIED WITH REQUIREMENTS TO COORDINATE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS AFFECTING FISH AND WILDLIFE WITH THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE?

--HOW EFFECTIVE HAVE FEDERAL LAND MANAGING AGENCIES BEEN IN PROTECTING FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT?

--WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE? SHOULD IT BE THE FOCAL POINT FOR CONSERVING THE NATION'S WILDLIFE? SHOULD THE SERVICE CONTINUE TO OPERATE ALL FISH HATCHERIES OR SHOULD IT LIMIT ITS ROLE TO PRODUCING SALMON AND OTHER ANADROMOUS FISH? SHOULD IT CONTINUE TO MANAGE WILDLIFE REFUGES WHICH ONLY INCLUDE RESIDENT OR STATE SPECIES? SHOULD IT CONTINUE WITH ITS ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL PROGRAM?

WE EXPECT TO FINISH OUR FIELD WORK THIS FALL AND ISSUE OUR REPORT EARLY NEXT YEAR.

MANAGING LANDS FOR MULTIPLE PURPOSES

TOGETHER, THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND FOREST SERVICE MANAGE OVER 600 MILLION ACRES OF PUBLIC LAND WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF (1) PROVIDING MULTIPLE RESOURCE USES, (2) SATISFYING THEIR SHARES OF NATIONAL RENEWABLE RESOURCE DEMANDS, (3) CONSERVING SUFFICIENT RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE, AND (4) PROTECTING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY. WE ARE NEARING COMPLETION OF A REVIEW DIRECTED TOWARD DETERMINING HOW WELL PUBLIC LANDS ARE BEING MANAGED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND FOREST SERVICE.

AREAS WE ADDRESS INCLUDE:

- THE ADEQUACY OF ASSESSMENTS OF RENEWABLE RESOURCE SUPPLIES AND DEMANDS.
- THE REASONABLENESS OF LONG-RANGE AND ANNUAL RENEWABLE RESOURCES PRODUCTION GOALS.
- THE ADEQUACY OF LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS AND RESOURCE INVENTORIES.
- THE CAPABILITY TO MAINTAIN FACILITIES, AND TO REGULATE USERS OF PUBLIC LAND THROUGH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SPECIAL USE PERMITS.
- THE ABILITY TO CARRY OUT CONGRESSIONAL MANDATES WITH AVAILABLE STAFF AND FUNDS.

THE DRAFT REPORT IS UNDERGOING FINAL OFFICE REVIEW
AND SHOULD BE OUT IN ABOUT A MONTH.

AS YOU CAN SEE, WE ARE INVOLVED IN MANY WAYS IN ADDRESS-
ING ISSUES ON FEDERAL ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE NATION'S
LANDS.. WE APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS SECOND
ANNUAL LAND USE CONFERENCE AND LOOK FORWARD TO PARTICIPATING
IN THE THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE NEXT YEAR.