

HB

641

April 4, 1984

Representative Richard Schultz
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Subject :HB-641

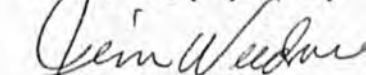
Dear Representative Schultz,

Enclosed is a summary sheet which describes much of land designated in HB-641.

In my judgement HB-641 makes excellent use of the wetlands by designating it for public purposes.

Your support of HB-641 is urged.

Sincerely yours,



Jim Weidner

S/R 50937

Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

March 12, 1984

SUMMARY POTLATCH PONDS

What have agency recommendations been to DNR regarding land classification?

A. Department of Environmental Conservation:

"The Chena River is a major recreational stream in the Fairbanks area and protection of the water quality is of prime concern to the department and public. Agricultural chemicals and siltation will have an adverse impact on the wildlife, fishery and water quality of this important stream. We object to these disposalsrecommend classification of the area as Wildlife Habitat and Public Recreation."

Source: Letter Department of Environmental Conservation, March 11, 1980.

B. Department of Fish and Game:

"The Two Rivers/Potlatch Ponds area contains values such as prime moose winter range and calving areas, waterfowl and sandhill crane nesting, the most important grayling sport fishery in Interior Alaska....the most important sports hunting, recreational area available to the Fairbanks community. We therefore object to the Potlatch Ponds disposals.....recommen.d classification as Wildlife Habitat/Public Recreation."

Source: Letter to Wm. Copeland, March 12, 1980

C. State Department of Parks and Recreation:

"....parks and recreation has supported the Department of Fish and Game's recommendation."

Source: Potlatch Ponds C-NC-80-005, April 28, 1980.

D. Department of Natural Resources

Concerning agricultural development in the area, "It is even more questionable on land that has very severe limitations for agricultural development."

Source: April 28, 1980 Document #C-NC-80-005

What type of land? "...the majority of these are poor quality soils that are wet and/or frozen."

"This area includes innumerable small ponds, lakes, streams, sloughs and other watercourses."

"..... some of the flattest, coldest, wettest soils in the area."

→ Wildlife in the area? "Some moose inhabit the area but small mammals and upland game birds and seasonal waterfowl are abundant." "The entire disposal area has traditionally been used for a variety of recreational activities. Numerous trails exist within the disposal area and much concern has been expressed by members of the general public."

Source: Potlatch Ponds Narrative, DNR Document

Did DNR ever consider the "no disposal" option? "'No sale" was not considered a viable option because of the 100,000 acre quota and the time constraints that would not allow potential alternative sites to be surveyed."

→ "The Northcentral District office has at no time nominated these acres for disposal."

Source: Final Finding (Potlatch Pond Agricultural Lottery) Dated 4-21-80

Citizen testimony: (Mr. Wm.S.)

...15 moose were taken within a three mile radius, of my house.....5 moose were taken on my land. [Note: TS 15 3E Sec. 3 FM contiguous to Potlatch Ponds]

Source: Public testimony before the FNSB Assembly on February 23, 1984. (Citizen's comments by Ag. Advocate)

Citizen testimony: (Mr. C. V)

"I've lived in the area for six (6) years now, the land that they have released is very incompatible to any agriculture. It's cost me almost \$2,000 an acre to clear my 10 acres. It was cleared 15 years ago. This land here is Virgin wet land with hardly any drainage. If you've ever been on the Little Chena, there is no drainage there whatsoever. It's very hard to drain." "I've walked it in the fall and it's just totally wet."

Source: Transcripts Planning Commission meeting 3-18-1980, Page 13.

Citizen testimony: (Mr. B.H.)

"I've been out there [referring to Two Rivers area] since 1949, I've hunted there so much in the Pot-latch Ponds area, that I think it's my private hunting area."

"[Referring to the winter trail through Potlatch Ponds]...."That's strictly---they built the Winter Trail usually on the lowest and smoothest spot and ice. In the summer, it's just bog." "There are on Pot-latch itself is, I would think, very difficult to farm."

Source: Transcripts Planning Commission meeting 3-18-80, Page 18. [Testimony from a part time "farmer"]

DNR'S CONCLUSIONS

DNR's final findings after reviewing agency comment and public input. "The district office finds merit in much of the agency comment regarding the suitability of this land for disposal. If the legislative and administrative quota did not exist, the district recommendation would identify approximately 2,000 acres of land in the Potlatch Ponds area suitable for development."

Source: "Final findings Potlatch Ponds Agricultural disposal" Dated 4-21-80

OTHER DATA

What was the recommendation by comp plan consultant re: Potlatch ponds? Designate the area open/natural.

How much private property is there in the Fairbanks North Star Borough?

Answer: Five hundred thousand acres.

How much of the 500,000 acres has ag. capacity?

Answer: Two hundred thousand acres. (200,000)

How many people in the Fairbanks North Star Borough are gainfully employed in the job classification "farmer"?

Answer: 5

Source: FNSB comprehensive plan Consultant

How many people are there in the State of Alaska gainfully employed in the job classification "farmer".

Answer: about 55

Source: University of Alaska Division of Social and Economic Research Anchorage, Alaska.

Is there better ag. land than Potlatch Ponds?

Answer: Yes

Where?

"South of Radger Road"

Source: Public Testimony U.S.C.S Soil Conservation
Subdistrict representative before FNSB Assembly 3-1-1984

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