



present time the great whooping crane is down to 31 birds, and although there has now been provided ample safe winter range, it seems doubtful that the species has retained the vitality necessary for survival. The ivory-billed woodpecker, largest and most spectacular of its kind, has even now become dangerously rare because of our failure to save suitable environment such as the famous Singer tract of virgin hardwoods in the Tensas River bottoms of Louisiana.

"On the other hand, the prong-horned antelope, the trumpeter swan, the American bison, the great white heron and others have definitely been restored to safe numbers because protection was provided and suitable habitat set aside permanently for their use while they were yet strong and virile.

"So it is with the Key deer at this time, and we are happy to find that efforts to save them have not begun too late...."

The people of today and those to follow owe much to the efforts of these people who aroused the public interest and to the generous contributors to the Key Deer Refuge campaign.

The North American Wildlife Foundations led a campaign to obtain donations of cash and land for the Refuge. Donations in cash and land have amounted to more than \$185,000. The refuge now contains 7,100 acres, more than 6,200 acres of which are leased land. In addition to 523 acres of donated land, we have purchased 240 acres with appropriated funds and cash donations.

Our purpose for being here today is to dedicate this National Wildlife Refuge. In reality, however, this land was already dedicated centuries ago. It was dedicated even before the cabin boy who sailed with Columbus described a diminutive deer. The dedication took place as the physical forces of nature developed this unique ecological niche, which is in its way different from any other area. So different and unique, in fact, it has produced forms of plants and animals to be found nowhere else.

We today merely rededicate this portion of our geography as a cumulative answer to a piercing question Thoreau advanced more than 100 years ago when he wrote...."Who would not rise to meet the expectations of the land?...."

As we face the pressure of an expanding human population in this country, and the world over, an understanding of "the expectations of the land" becomes evermore important.

Through the philanthropic deeds of individuals and dedicated organizations with pure ideals, a portion of the land has been placed in public ownership to be used in fulfilling one of man's greatest physical and spiritual needs, that of retaining an equitable portion of our land in a state capable of supporting those forms of life intended for it by the creative forces. Yes, the Key deer can exist here, side by side with man, to be enjoyed by man, but perhaps just as important, other endemic forms of life will also remain. Forms which require the same complex combination of physical and biological factors producing this unique environment.

Unfortunately, most Americans have taken out-of-doors too much for granted. This same public who has been accustomed to outdoor recreation as a way of life are finding the areas they once enjoyed overrun with a seething mass of humanity. The esthetic advantage of a recreational outing is being lost by the frustration of having to fight another crowd.

It has been said by others and by me before, but it bears repeating again that the creation of a National Park or Wildlife Refuge can no longer be accomplished by the stroke of a President's pen or simple legislative action. Each foot of ground gained in the conservationists' struggle for restoration or preservation of natural environment must be won by strong, concerted effort of individuals and organizations who toil, sweat, and contribute themselves to this conservation cause. They mold the public opinion upon which the legislator must react. And if this reaction is too slow, these land philanthropists and conservation organizations obtain or contribute all or part of the funds necessary to carry out their goal. The goal of planning and landscaping America's face so that it contains for our growing population the proper balance of the works of man and the works of nature.

Florida is adorned with a necklace of wildlife refuges, all of which were made possible when devoted individuals called them to the attention of others who could do something about it. All are dedicated to the same basic purpose, that of retaining a portion of the environment and the animal species it supports in an unspoiled state. Such are the environments where the great white heron, the wood stork, the snowy egret, the roseate spoonbill, and, yes, the Key deer can escape the onslaught of man's never ending thirst for land development. The benefit of this natural environment goes beyond the plants and animals that live here, however. As a bed of colorful flowers in a well-landscaped yard, these areas reach out to man and provide him the balm for a disquieted spirit. Our modern way of life is continually complicated by the growing imbalance between the man-made things and the domain of nature. The far-sighted people and organizations who have made these refuges possible have helped to stem the tide of improper land uses which do not consider man's total needs for the future.

We still have room to grow in this country. As we grow we must establish land-use patterns which will nurture the wilderness or near-wilderness areas--the place where a father can take his boy by the hand to walk and be strengthened by the strength of nature--the place where the boy, alone, can catch a lizard--the place where the public can see, smell, and feel the things we call nature.

"Who WOULD rise to meet the expectation of the land?" Without a doubt, the individuals such as Honorable Charles E. Bennett; the R. E. and Ellen F. Crane Foundation; and organizations like the North American Wildlife Foundation; the Boone and Crockett Club; the National Audubon Society; the Philadelphia Conservationists, Inc.; the Wilderness Club of Philadelphia; and the State of Florida have risen to meet the expectations of THIS land, to be used in the long-range, well-designed landscaping plan for our country and the world.

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