



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

October 1, 1983

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

This year, 1983, has been marvelously successful. It has been: *A Year of Enrichment—Improving the quality of life for all Americans.*

All of the lands (one-third of the Nation) managed by the Department of the Interior are in better condition today than they were three years ago when we took responsibility for them. Because we have cared and exercised stewardship, the parks, refuges, forests, coastal barriers, wetlands and deserts are being better managed. This is also true for the wildlife living on these lands.

Our efforts to bring common sense and balance to the management of our natural resources have been successful, because we have put **people** in the *environmental equation*. People are important; they need jobs, recreation, agricultural products, energy and water, plus all the other values that come from the lands and waters of this country. In addition, they want to be assured that future generations in the 21st Century will enjoy these same benefits. That is why we have worked so hard to bring about the change, progress and enrichment necessary to improve the quality of life for *all Americans*.

Our National Park System is the envy of the world. Unfortunately, funds to restore and improve the parks were cut by over 50 percent from fiscal year 1978 to fiscal year 1981. To reverse that trend, we implemented a \$1 billion Park Restoration and Improvement Program. The Reagan program is a great success. In fact, our program is the largest commitment that has ever been made to the National Park System. In 1956, President Eisenhower initiated Project 66, a ten-year effort of \$500 million to upgrade the parks. Our program far exceeds even that gallant effort.

In the years ahead, we will be able to purchase the additional parklands needed to round out the federal recreation estate. Unfortunately, by fiscal year 1981, appropriations for parkland acquisitions were cut to one-sixth of what had been appropriated in fiscal year 1978. Because of the economic conditions inherited in 1981, we have not yet been able to increase the appropriation requests for parkland acquisitions.

Even at that, because of our commitment to good conservation practices, we have set a remarkable record of increasing protection for the fragile and ecologically important conservation lands of the Nation. In our

three years, we have acquired for the Federal Government more than 1.6 million (1,620,651) acres of land to be managed as national parks and wildlife refuges.

In 1983 alone, we have, through trade, donations and purchase, added more park and wildlife land to the federal estate than any previous Administration added in a single year since Alaska was purchased in 1867. In fact, in this single year, we have added more park and wildlife land to the federal estate than was added from 1977 to 1980. (During that period, management responsibilities for tens of millions of acres were shuffled between various federal bureaucracies, but not as many new acres were added to the federal estate.) Neither Teddy Roosevelt, nor Franklin Roosevelt, nor Lyndon Johnson, nor Jimmy Carter came close to our 1983 record of adding to the federal park and wildlife estate in a single year.

Our stewardship commitment extends to preserving for future generations those historic sites and structures that pay tribute to America's past and the principles upon which our Nation was founded. As a result of the 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act's 25 percent tax credit for private sector restoration of historic structures, in our three years private investment in historic preservation has increased five-fold over the investment from 1977 to 1980.

Preservation is important in improving the quality of life for all Americans. One of the areas of preservation that has received our special attention is the Endangered Species Program. Congress set-up a program requiring the Department of the Interior to identify those plants and animals that are endangered and then develop plans for their recovery. Because of our concern for and commitment to stewardship, we have accelerated the efforts to bring about the recovery of those endangered plants and animals. By the end of this year, we will have approved or reviewed nearly three times as many recovery plans as were developed in the four-year period 1977 to 1980.

Because we have put people in the environmental equation, we recommended or supported additions to our great wilderness system in the Lower 48 States totaling more than 1.8 million acres. We believe wilderness preservation is one of the legitimate multiple uses of the vast public lands. Not one acre of land has been leased for mining or drilling in the national parks or on the wilderness.

Mr. President, when we took office, I pledged to the Governors of the fifty States that the Department of the Interior would be a "good neighbor" in managing the 750 million acres of land spread throughout the Nation. I told the Governors that we would include them in our land use planning and that we would make available isolated, small tracts of federal lands to communities needing land for hospitals, schools, parks, recreation areas or housing projects.

We also stated that we would sell isolated, small tracts of land to ranchers and farmers so that more efficiency could be realized by both the Federal Government and the individuals in managing these lands. Of course, the national parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas and Indian trust lands have never been and are not for sale.

Despite some criticism that we were selling our national heritage, the facts tell a different story. In 1982, we sold 55 tracts of land, the largest one equalling 507 acres. The total sold in 1982 was 1,312 acres. In 1983, we sold 93 tracts totaling 7,981 acres. The largest tract was 640 acres.

Many of the western States were promised title to lands when they joined the Union at Statehood, but, for many years, delivery of those promised lands was "delayed." We promised the Governors that, if they would identify lands they had a right to claim under their Statehood acts, we would make the Federal Government honest. The response from the Governors has been tremendous. As a result, by the end of this year more land will have been delivered by the Reagan Administration to the States to support their school systems than at any time since 1969.

People are important. That is why so much of our effort is on providing for their consumer needs now and into the 21st Century. In order to hold down the cost of housing, we have made changes in the way we manage our forest lands. We want those lands to produce timber in the centuries ahead so that all generations will have an increased sustained yield.

We also have a strong commitment to water resources development. People need water—as a reliable and safe drinking water supply, for irrigation making our Nation the breadbasket of the world, for electric power generation and for enhancement of wildlife habitat.

This year, we have made major strides in implementing a national water policy which reflects State primacy in managing their water resources. We have put in place new Principles and Guidelines for water

project planning which remove cumbersome and burdensome regulations, promote flexibility in planning and encourage water project development. In addition, we have proposed to Congress new water projects. Cost-sharing arrangements will be established on a case-by-case basis, according to the non-federal partners' ability to participate and honoring prior commitments made by the Federal Government.

Most of the future energy needed to heat houses, fuel cars and increase the number of jobs for Americans will come from federally controlled lands and offshore areas. With that understanding, we have aggressively moved to increase energy potential for the decades to come. People need energy. Our efforts to increase the supply of energy sources and reduce our dependency on foreign countries have been carried out with more environmental stipulations, conditions and care than ever before. We know that we can have both an increased energy supply for people and an enhanced environment.

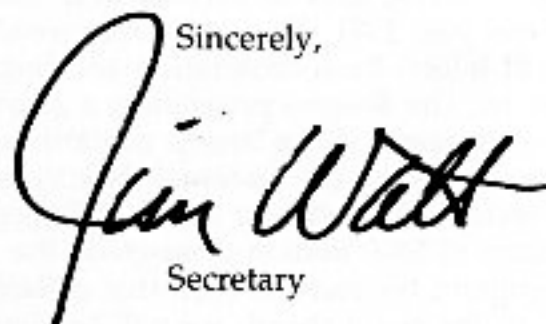
For America to be strong domestically and militarily, we had to reverse the policies and programs of the past. During the 1970s, energy production from federal offshore and onshore lands fell, weakening our economy and increasing our dependency on foreign countries. In that period, the Department of the Interior reduced leasing activities. Reduced leasing hurts consumers, because of the long lead time needed to get oil and gas, coal, geothermal and other forms of renewable and non-renewable energy to the people—the consumers.

Our actions to implement proper environmental safeguards and lease federal lands will not benefit American consumers immediately, but will benefit future generations. In three years, we have leased nearly twice as much *onshore* oil and gas land as was leased between 1977 and 1980; we have also leased more than twice the *offshore* lands; and, 3½ times as much coal land.

Mr. President, our excellent record for managing the natural resources of this land is unequalled—because we put **people** in the environmental equation.

This year, 1983, has truly been *A Year of Enrichment—Improving the quality of life for all Americans.*

Sincerely,



Secretary

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