International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: State Fish and Wildlife Directors

FROM: R. Max Peterson, Executive Vice-President

DATE: May 15, 1996

RE: Fish and Wildlife Management in Wilderness

Last year in a letter co-signed by Jack Ward Thomas, Chief of the Forest Service, Mike Dombeck, Acting Director of the Bureau of Land Management, and myself, we transmitted the guidelines for fish and wildlife management in wilderness which were originally agreed to among the Association, the Forest Service, and BLM back in 1986. A copy is attached for your ready reference.

We frequently find that these guidelines are either not known by Forest Service or BLM people or by state people or both.

Experience since 1986 has been that the guidelines, when used, have been of significant help in working out the practical problems on management of fish and wildlife resources in wilderness.

The root cause of some of these misunderstanding appears to be that many people have not read Section 4(d)(7) of the Wilderness Act which includes the following statement: "Nothing in this Act shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction or responsibilities of the several States with respect to wildlife and fish in the National Forests." The same type of language applies to BLM wilderness (see also Sec. 302(B) of the 1976 BLM organic Act which makes it clear that such Act does <u>not</u> enlarge or diminish the authority of the States for managing fish and wildlife.

Certainly areas that are wilderness which provide some challenges to cooperation between the agencies and the states because it is clear that certain activities such as the use of mechanized equipment except under carefully prescribed circumstances or the construction of facilities is not permitted in wilderness. There also are significant opportunities for the states and the agencies to work together to provide very special challenging fishing opportunities in wilderness that may be difficult to

provide otherwise. Such practical problems as concentration of use around a particular lake can sometimes be alleviated or substantially reduced by such things as changing the fish planting program in the area or by the Federal agency and the State cooperating to provide public information as to areas which are lesser used.

We have, on occasion, helped to resolve problems which could not be successfully resolved using the guidelines.

Attachment

cc: Mr. Mike Dombeck (BLM)
Dr. Jack Ward Thomas (USFS)

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