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Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D-MONTANA)

May 28, 1963

Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range

Mr. President, I have sent to the desk an amendment to the Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill for 1964 which will increase the funds appropriated for the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife by an additional \$787,730. These funds would be earmarked for prompt and orderly development of the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range in eastern Montana. The increase is proposed for three categories -- Operations and Maintenance \$195,730; Soil and Moisture Conservation \$92,000; and Construction \$500,000.

As the able Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations knows, the Department of the Interior recently made several decisions pertaining to management and administration of the Fort Peck Game Range in Montana. This game range was renamed Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range and major responsibility for management was placed in the hands of the Fish and Wildlife Service. These developments took place too late to have additional funds included in the Department's budget requests for fiscal year 1964. My colleague Senator Metcalf and I discussed the need for appropriating funds for a maximum development program with the Committee. Unfortunately, this request was not accepted.

The Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Range is one of the Nation's greatest wildland areas where development of wildlife and recreational potential will greatly enhance public attraction contributing tremendously to the economic and social needs of the State and the entire country. In addition, this work will help relieve a very serious unemployment problem in this area of my State. I also wish to point out that all of this will be done without disturbing existing grazing and livestock operations within the area.

It is my understanding that there was some feeling within the Committee that there were adequate funds to begin the development work. However, in discussing this matter more thoroughly with interested officials, Senator Metcalf and I have ~~determined~~ ^{reached the conclusion} that a minimum program will require some additional funds.

Additional money is required for operations and maintenance because the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife does not have adequate personnel, particularly professional biologists and range and recreational specialists to adequately administer this 951,062 acre area for the benefit of all concerned.

At the present time, only \$8,000 in soil and moisture conservation funds are allocated to this refuge. An annual appropriation of \$100,000 is required, and if made available, the next year's work would be concentrated on the western end of the Range on critically eroding bench and break lands. This work must be carefully coordinated with construction works in the same area.

Lastly, funds are required for a carefully balanced program of land renovation and capital developments. This would include development of fences, roads, waterfowl impoundments, and big game facilities in the western end of the Range. In addition, there must be basic minimum administrative, recreational, and educational facilities at the Lewistown and Fort Peck headquarters areas.

The increases I propose are not extravagant, and they will promote a minimum program of development of these wildlands. I ask for the distinguished Chairman's comments in anticipation that he will accept this amendment and take it to Conference to seek the concurrence of our colleagues in the House of Representatives.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Referred to the Committee on and
ordered to be printed.

AMENDMENT S

Intended to be proposed by Mr. MANSFIELD to the bill (H. R. 5279) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1964, and for other purposes,

viz: On page 24, line 25, in lieu of "\$31,685,400" insert "\$31,973,130".

On page 25, line 8, in lieu of "\$5,898,500" insert "\$6,398,500".

..... CONGRESS }
..... SESSION }

H. R.

AMENDMENT

Intended to be proposed by Mr. _____
to the bill (H. R. _____)
