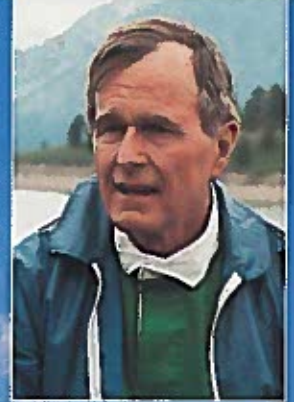


**TL Goes to the White House -
Bush Talks About Recreation, Page 15**



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Recreation Roundtable

Re-emphasizing a point he made many times when he was vice president, President George Bush invited a group of magazine editors and publishers to the White House recently to reaffirm his affection and support for outdoor recreation.

Entering the Roosevelt Room of the White

President George Bush reaffirms his role as an avid supporter of the great outdoors

by BILL ESTES



photo by David Valdez/White House

House from a fishing institute award ceremony conducted in the Oval Office, President Bush said he "enjoys that sort of thing, and anything else I can do to support the great outdoors and recreational use of lands." Bush said he believes there is a good feeling in the country about commitment to fishing, hunting and other forms of outdoor recreation, and a better environment. "I just want to be a part of that," he said.

The president appeared relaxed and confident, having just returned from his European summit conference, and he obviously enjoyed talking about one of his favorite pastimes, fishing. "I would like Hummel to certify that I caught a 13-pound bonefish. No cheating!" George Hummel, Florida sportsman and the president's fishing guide, participated in the discussion.

Referring to his planned August vacation,

the president said, "I guarantee you that in the last two weeks of August, 12 of those 14 days I will be fishing!" He said he has hunted quail in the same place (in Texas) for the past 25 years, and plans to continue.

In addition to personnel from a variety of magazines such as *Trailer Life*, *Sports Afield*, *Outdoor Life*, *Outside* and *Backpacker*, participants in the roundtable discussion included Derrick Crandall of the American Recreation Coalition, a representative of the Outdoor Writers Association of America and Ray Scott of Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, an ally and friend of the president's and recipient of the Sport Fishing Institute's Angler of the Year Award a few minutes earlier.

The president responded to various questions and raised several points that ranged from oil exploration in Alaska to gun control.

Bush said he is careful not to underestimate budget constraints because they affect parks as well as "all kinds of other programs." He expressed satisfaction at having been able to protect the Wallop-Breaux sport-fishing program and the Pittman-Robertson hunting program from a proposal by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that would have restricted funds—if approved by Congress, which was doubtful. Nevertheless, Bush rejected the OMB raid on the two funds, receiving accolades from sportsmen.

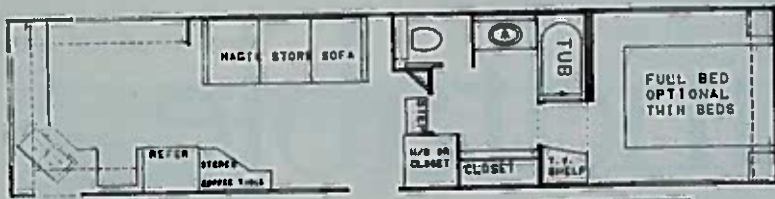
"I do think we should protect funds that were earmarked and committed to a certain purpose, to the degree it's possible," he said. "With this one, we have done that. It has a fairly significant budgetary impact, almost \$200 million. It's the right allocation. I had a letter from a governor the other day, reminding me of its importance to the states—to their facilities, all sports facilities."

Asked if he had any specific feelings about how the managing agencies of national parks and forests have responded to increasing use of recreational vehicles, which has been the dominant change in camping in the last 20 years, Bush mentioned age demographics.

"We have a population that's aging. The demographics are that there'll be more and more retired people living longer, and it would seem to me that there would be a very bright future for that." He added, "Environmentally the



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question is, how do you accommodate it? I think our parks people and others have to be highly sensitive to those requirements. I think it's growing, and I think it should. Mobility of the population is terribly important."

As part of his response to a question about trust funds for wildlife and an endowment for the environment, Bush brought up the Alaska oil spill and its effect on prospects for oil exploration in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, which he has supported.

"We took a couple of shots there with that allegedly drunk captain," he said, "and the result was horrible. But I know that our Coast Guard commandant and our secretary of transportation and Bill Reilly of the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] responded properly.

"Early indications are that nature is pretty powerful," Bush continued. "Mother Nature is showing her strength in that area. I'm not saying everything is fine, because we still have some major aesthetic problems, but I think what I want to do is have an environmental report card, come fall, that shows the degradation, the damage and the future. I do think, in some areas, including protection of fisheries, avoiding of damage to Kodiak Island and the salmon catch—although maybe it's too early to say—there is going to be some reasonably encouraging news."

Bush said he is careful not to minimize what went wrong, "but we have a very delicate problem in this country, and that is our energy base and how do you accommodate nature. I must tell you, I have not changed my view on the need to increase our domestic [oil] production. I don't want to see our country depend more and more on uncertainty—on foreign oil. We're up close to 50 percent now on imports, and that means that, in terms of a prudent, environmentally sound search for energy, we're going to have to do it—talking about oil and gas exploration.

"This environmental disaster in Alaska is very bad, but I simply don't want to see that used to say to me as president, 'You cannot develop any further resources offshore or in Alaska.' I have a responsibility for the energy base in this country. The way to get the American people upset is to let them wait for 20 minutes in a gas line."

more on page 21

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lem of tracking down the people who dump the syringes and needles on the beaches. I take this very personally. We ought to do more about biodegradables—encouraging the use of agricultural products to replace some of the environmentally insensitive articles that simply offend people who love the sea or love the lakes. We can do a lot more, but a lot of it is not legislative. It is using this place [the White House]—as what the great environmentalist Teddy Roosevelt called 'the bully pulpit.' We need a reasonable balance between growth and conservation."

Asked about goals and timetables for reduction of acid rain, President Bush said he was in the final stages of approving a program on reduction of acid rain and on "several other key environmental matters." He said that limits on tonnage of emittants are in lively dispute. "I just had a call from Senator Byrd, expressing his heartfelt traditional reservations about how we treat the high-sulfur coal."

(A week later, in early June, Bush announced a 10-year plan for reducing air pollution, acid rain and toxic emissions. The plan called for the first revision in more than 10 years of the Clean Air Act of 1970.)

"It isn't easy accommodating the various interests here," said Bush. "I don't want to throw America out of work. I don't want to say to the blue-collar bass fisherman who gets off on the weekend that these standards are so strict that his plant's got to fold. But I am committed to the environment, and we're trying to find reasonable answers."

Asked about the allegedly drastic effects on salmon and steelhead populations off the coast of the Western United States, including Alaska, from drift-net fishing by Korean and Japanese squid fishermen, the president said he strongly supports the Coast Guard in vigorous enforcement of existing law.

Bush concluded the roundtable with another reference to fishing: "It might be interesting for you to know that the gift that [West German Chancellor] Helmut Kohl gave me was a beautiful lacquered bamboo fly rod, made for me. It's a very beautiful rod, and I appreciate the fact he gave me that, as opposed to a . . . a bowl or something." TL