

Public hearing
26 September 1973
Des Moines, Iowa

Haus
Bowen
O'Toole
Elmer (Dutton)
Beardsley
Milley

Position of Ames Audubon Society on Saylorville Reservoir
with reference to Ledges State Park

We interpret the data on frequency and duration of flooding to indicate that the flora and fauna of the lower canyon of Ledges State Park will be markedly altered. Trees of substantial size and beauty will be killed by lack of oxygen during inundation of the roots and siltation will kill many other inhabitants of the valley floor and sides. It is not likely that replacement vegetation would be attractive.

Since this valley with sandstone walls is almost unique in central Iowa, and since many people find it a highly attractive, refreshing recreation site, we think every effort should be made to keep it available to the people in its present form. There are ways to reduce its overuse short of removing access.

travelled 48 states
high points
very fast
64%
enjoyed sun
30 hiking that tr.
Σ=400.
70% canyon road
time

haven
rod

Because our members are interested in the study of birds for scientific purposes as well as for recreation, we are particularly concerned that the bird populations of upper Peas Creek not be disturbed. There are seven species of warblers and a thrush now in upper Peas Creek canyon which are rare or found nowhere else in Iowa. These are the cerulean warbler, yellow-throated warbler, blue-winged warbler, Louisiana waterthrush (a warbler), and the hooded, Kentucky, and parula warblers. The thrush is the veery. A few species "spill over" into the lower canyon, but the valley of nearby Davis Creek, which looks similar to that of upper Peas Creek, houses only two of these eight rare bird species. We hope to discover what is so appealing about this one valley.

Destroy bird habitat
40%
Flood damage trees
50+%

31/89

root
tangles

We believe that flooding of the lower valley will affect these populations by forcing movement of predators and competitors, altering the populations of plants and animals which provide the birds' food and nesting material, and changing other habitat factors. Alteration of the park, especially building a road through the upper canyon, by the State Conservation Commission in response to the Saylorville Project, could drive out most of these species under observation.

Of the alternatives so far proposed, the channel change barrier dam appears to be the only one that will prevent drastic change to the natural flora and appearance of the lower canyon. While practicable water release plan alone might prevent prolonged water storage during many smaller floods, it is foreseeable that emergency high water conditions would produce a conflict between loss of the trees in the Lower Ledges and loss of lives and property downstream. The Corps of Engineers should be in command of the technology to solve that conflict.

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