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The question of wilderness status for Point Reyes National Seashore will soon be considered by Congress, in hearings on HR3003, a bill introduced by John Burton (D. Calif.). The National Park Service, in its wilderness study, has deferred taking on affirmative action on lands bounded by and cornered by water because of California's reservation of mineral and fishing rights in those areas. An affirmative statement from the Resource's Agency that wilderness status is not inconsistent with the reservation of the State's rights accompanied by support for wilderness in the area, would remove this as a reason for not including these areas for wilderness designation.

Wilderness status accomplishes one specific goal--the protection of an area from development. There has been little dispute that the water areas are considered "wild" and that they are deserving of wilderness status. These include the ocean along the Great Beach, Abbott's Lagoon, Drakes and Limantour Estero and Point Reyes Headlands.

The State relinquishes none of its rights by agreeing to wilderness status for these waters. In all instances, the right to control fishing is reserved to the State. The Wilderness Act did not abolish state jurisdiction over fishing rights and the wilderness areas. Park Service memoranda recognize both the right to continue fishing control and marine resource management. Wilderness status merely enhances the protection given to the marine resource and perhaps simplifies management. The presently existing natural research areas can continue under wilderness status. Although it has been noted that these research areas offer protection equal to wilderness status, the designation as wilderness is more enduring, surviving any fermentation of the waters as a research area.

The State's rights to mineral resources in these waters will not be compromised by wilderness designation. From the legal standpoint, wilderness does not prevent the continued taking of mineral resources until after 1984. Practically speaking, little mineral value can be expected to be found in these waters. Mining operations could not be readily performed in the waters along the Great Beach. Mining activities in Abbott's Lagoon or in the Estero's would be egregiously incompatible with wildlife in the area, assuming minerals were present which