

**STATEMENT OF GENE WILLIAMS  
OWNER AND OPERATOR OF THE SANDHILLS RESORT  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION, & PUBLIC LANDS  
HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
FOR H.R. 2818  
APRIL 16, 2002**

First, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today on H.R. 2818. I am in full support of H.R. 2818, as it enables me to purchase land that I have already developed into my resort. I own land adjacent to the Saint Anthony Sand Dunes, which is called the Sandhills Resort. I purchased this land in 1972. In 1981 the Bureau of Land Management conducted a Wilderness Study and included portions of what I thought was my property.

When I purchased this site, the current owner and the original owner of the land, Freemont Fulmer, who purchased the land in 1953 from the Department of the Interior, confirmed the property boundaries. However, in 1995 a new survey was taken and the new property lines went right through our home and excluded our garage, the driveway, resort facilities, and improvements to the land. The Bureau of Land Management has been working to sell the acreage in question back to me, but because of the wilderness study area that surrounds it they have not been able to. I am unable to sell, refinance, or make improvement to the land because of encroachment and wilderness study issues. I am left without any of the things I had built for the last 20 years. The title to my property is clouded and I cannot sell, get a loan on the property or make any improvements due to the wilderness study area crowding me in.

My family and I have worked all our lives to build this resort. We have made improvements and beautified the area for recreationalists. Under the 1995 survey, my land extends into the middle of the sand dunes instead of where I have built facilities, which is entirely useless. It is imperative to our livelihood and the livelihood of this resort that I am able to purchase this land that I have worked on, lived on, and improved all my life.

This park has been in public use for many years and due to its location proximity near two rural towns and en route to the Island Park – Yellowstone area, it has become a familiar and popular family

vacation area. As you can see from the pictures, I have maintained and improved the integrity of the park to coincide with the wilderness surroundings. It is an easily accessible safe place for families to come and play on the sand.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity to testify about the purchase of land. This parcel of 10.23 acres as it now stands is useless as a wilderness study area and full of use for many multiple use recreationalists, my family, and me. It is a win-win situation for the Bureau of Land Management and the citizens of Idaho. This land was included in the Wilderness Study Area of 1981 by accident and should not be held captive because of that mistake. Your time, effort, and vote on this matter are appreciated.

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