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Interior Secretary Cecil ·D. Andrus said today that the proposed Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will provide a more orderly process for deciding which Federal land will be developed and which will be protected as wilderness.

Andrus said the current Federal organization makes it difficult to assemble and fully analyze the information choices available.

"Until we have the organizational framework to assemble this data, to analyze this data, and to propose comprehensive policies and programs based on these findings, we will continue to literally wander through the wilderness, our fate left to uncoordinated decisions based sometimes on fact and sometimes on emotion, but lacking relevance to the total needs of man, society and nature," Andrus said in remarks prepared for the Wilderness Resource Distinguished Lecture Series at the University of Idaho in Moscow.

The proposed Department would consist of all agencies now in the Department of the Interior, the Forest Service which would be transferred from the Department of Agriculture, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration from the Department of Commerce.

"We would have coordinated, consistent and efficient programs and policies to decide which areas should be designated as wilderness," Andrus said in describing benefits of a DNR. ''We would eliminate situations where actions by one agency on land it manages impairs the wilderness potential of adjacent or nearby land administered by another Federal agency. We will be able to actually manage our Federal lands and resources rather than to continue playing a guessing game with each agency pursuing its own goals."

The Secretary noted that both industry and environmental groups have criticized the Federal government for its wilderness program.

"With DNR we will have a focal point; we will have one department were we can establish a policy and a rationale for it," Andrus said. If the policy displeases industry, industry will know where to place the blame. And just as industry has a "target to draw a bead on if it feels shorted, so do conservationists, preservationists, environmentalists and the like.”

The Secretary said that this still would amount to only 5 percent of the total gross area of the United States.

"Five percent is precious little to set aside for the regeneration of the natural world essential to maintain a planet worth living on," Andrus said.