

REMARKS OF SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STEWART
L. UDALL ON RAINBOW BRIDGE INSPECTION TRIP,
APRIL 29, 1961, INCLUDING PRE-TRIP BRIEFING
SESSION REMARKS IN THE HANGAR AT PAIGE, ARIZONA,
AND EVENING DISCUSSION CONFERENCE AFTER DAYLONG
INSPECTION TRIP

MR. CONRAD L. WIRTH: May I have your attention, please.

This is a new experience for the Director of the National Park Service to welcome you at a Reclamation Headquarters, but with the generosity and close cooperation of the Reclamation Service we have had the privilege of starting out from here and going to see the Rainbow Bridge country, which I for one have not seen before.

However, my main purpose in talking to you now is to express our thanks for you showing up here and also to ask Secretary Udall, who is the real instigator of this project, to speak to you and to brief you on what he wants us to see today. Stu.

SECRETARY UDALL: Thank you very much, Connie. And this day, I want you to know we put a special order in a week ago and it came just as we ~~ordered~~ it. I am sure it is going to be a marvelous experience for all of you.

All of us here today are dignified. There are two or three or a half-dozen special dignitaries that I want to

introduce so you will all know them and treat them with special kindness.

Senator Frank Moss of Utah, whom you just saw in the red here.

Congressman Rutherford, this Navajo-looking character here in Western attire, is the Chairman of the House Parks Subcommittee. We are particularly delighted to have him. He has brought a goodly group of his colleagues with him.

Congressman Dave King. Raise your hand, Dave.

Congressman Taylor of North Carolina. Congressman Berry of South Dakota. We have really got the whole country represented here. Congressman John Kyl of Iowa. I think that embraces the House group.

We have some administrative assistants here and Jerry Verkler of the Senate Committee are here. I won't introduce them, but be kind to them if you find out they are Senate people. We want to give them special care.

Now, Floyd Dominey, raise your hand. We're his guests on the flight today. All these "birds" that are whirling around, he's picking up the tab on it, which we appreciate very much.

The other people that really are your hosts today, they haven't arrived yet, except one of the -- Ned says they are coming in.

Ned Atavole, would you step forward, of the Navajo Tribe.

Ned is one of the young Navajo leaders. And Paul Jones, the Navajo Tribal Chairman. Maurice McCabe, Ed Plummer and Sammy Day, the head of their Parks Department, will be here very shortly and you will get acquainted with them.

We are going to be almost entirely, other than at the bridge itself, on their land, and they are very important, of course.

Now, before I give you a summary of what we are going to do today -- and we hope to wear you all out before we are through, let me say -- the basic purpose of this trip, as I think most of you know, is to conduct an on-the-ground survey of the Rainbow Bridge area, No. 1, to inquire into this problem which exists as a result of the passage of the Upper Colorado Project Act.

In that Act Congress asserted, and asserted very plainly, that adequate protective measures were to be taken to protect Rainbow Bridge. Subsequent geological studies showed that the bridge itself in the sense that the abutments of the bridge were not endangered by water seepage when the lake was at its high level. But the question still remains, and this is a very serious question, whether or not something should be done to prevent the waters that will come up this arm of Bridge Canyon from entering the National monument. That has caused a great deal of discussion among conservation people in this country and in the Congress, and the thought

that the Department of the Interior had was that it would be most useful because we are at the point where decisions must be made, that it would be most useful if we could go out and see this on the ground.

And we have here today not only, we have some spokesmen today for some of the leading conservation organizations. And I hope that there can be some conclusions that we can reach both individually and perhaps as a group.

But the other thought that the Department had is that because of the outstanding scenic qualities of this area, certainly in all this fantastic Colorado Basin, and I flew from Flaming Gorge and right down the river yesterday, and I have known because I have seen much of it on the ground before, that this was an extraordinary area. But I tell you there's nothing like it in the United States. And certainly the crown jewel of the whole Colorado is Rainbow Bridge itself. I think it's the most magnificent piece of sculpture anywhere in the world.

But it sits in a setting with Navajo Mountain as a backdrop in this fantastically eroded area, and what Congress did when it was set aside as a National monument was to simply arbitrarily take a little 160-acre area and plank it down in this square around it.

And yet this is not in my view the park. I think the park is a whole broad area.

So we are here today also to see irrespective of what we decide on this dispute and in relation to it whether out of this dispute might come a new National Park. So the first thing we are going to do today before I get onto this -- Paul, come on over, will you, I want to introduce you. You are the host today, you know. This is Paul Jones, the Chairman of the Navajo Tribal Council. (Applause)

How are you, Paul?

MR. JONES: Fine.

SECRETARY UDALL: Fine. Very nice to have you with us here. Who'd you bring with you?

MR. JONES: I got--

SECRETARY UDALL: Come on, Mrs. Jones. I want everyone to meet you.

Did Maurice come?

MR. JONES: Maurice could not come.

SECRETARY UDALL: He couldn't come.

All right. Well, you and Ned can hold it down.

This is Mrs. Jones. Is this your daughter? Fine. How are you? Nice to see you again.

So here is what we are going to do today.

Now, as you may know, the Colorado River, this is the Arizona-Utah border. The Colorado River is the boundary of the Navajo Indian Reservation. The area we are standing on now, the townsite that Page itself is on, was on the

Navajo Reservation. We traded with the Navajo Indians a large area of I think about 20,000 acres here for some land over in Utah at the time this project was started. But the river is the boundary of the Navajo Indian Reservation.

Then you come on up here and the Navajo boundary follows the San Juan. Rainbow Bridge itself, this little area that is now the National monument is located right here. We're presently here at Page and looking out across here you can see Navajo Mountain, of course, which dominates the area. It's 10,300 feet high and has been and is one of the sacred mountains of the Navajos because it's the only large mountain mass in this entire area.

Between here and Navajo Mountain is Cummings Mesa. Dr. Cummings of the University of Arizona was with the original group in 1909 that discovered Rainbow Bridge. And the bridge itself being located here, the potential area that we are considering, and there was a reconnaissance group in here about six weeks ago.

Let's hold this up, if you would. There was a reconnaissance group that came in here, the National Park Service people and the Navajo, went in with helicopters, which investigated this area to determine what parts of the area might be included as a National Park. They came back with three alternative proposals and suggestions.

And, of course, I want to quickly add that if we are

going to do anything at all, we are going to have to do some bargaining with some very tough bargainers, the Navajos, because it is a matter of a land swap. In other words, we'll take these lands, whatever we decide upon as a park, and we will give them other lands that are suitable for their own purposes.

Proposal No. 1 by this reconnaissance team is the black line. And this would follow around here. Now, Page itself is located over here. It would begin here at Navajo Creek, follow it up all the way up Navajo Creek. Now, Navajo Mountain is right here. This would embrace Navajo Mountain. We don't know whether the Navajos will go along with that if we wanted to do it that way. And the line would go to the east of Navajo Mountain. That area would include nearly a half-million acres, a very large area, 496,000 acres.

Proposal B is outlined in red. It would also follow up Navajo Creek. It would then cut to the north here just about where it reaches the mountain, skirt around the foothills of the mountain, and then cut north here at Chow Canyon. That would not take in the mountain. It would take in some of the foothills, as you can see. This is the mountain itself. Proposal B would have 264,000 acres in it. 425 square miles.

The other one is 750 square miles.

Proposal B -- now, Cummings Mesa, which you will see --

if there is anybody here who doesn't know what a mesa is, you will learn very shortly. That is the flat tops. This mesa is a large area in here. On our way in you'll see it.

This would, Proposal C would come up here and would take in Cummings Mesa. Then it would follow this same line and would cut in a little bit short of the other boundary. Proposal C would have 140,000 acres and 219 square miles.

Now, what we're going to do today, they will take us in on the helicopters. And may I say we are going to have to be arbitrary and we have a larger group than we had planned, so there will be two groups go in and some of us will be there an hour before the second group arrives. But that shouldn't cause too much inconvenience. And we have just arbitrarily assigned you on the first flight. So don't anyone be offended if you have to wait for the second trip.

But they'll fly us in, we will go over the area of the bridge and they have it marked, then downstream. Here, this will illustrate. Now, there is just above Rainbow Bridge a high mesa here. Here is the bridge itself. Downstream is a proposal for a barrier dam called Site B. This has been marked, I understand, and will be pointed out to you. You can see some kind of market at that point.

Further on down towards the river, now these are downstream, towards the river is Barrier Site C. And they will swing down here all the way down to the river and back so

that you can see the canyon, Bridge Canyon, which goes into Forbidden Canyon later. And then we will land on the high mesa at a landing point. The small helicopters will drop us down into the canyon at this point.

And I think in order to get the real feel of this area-- in fact, I think these barrier dams and whether they should be constructed, this is one of the key points. I would like those who are interested in seeing it -- you are all free to do what you want, of course -- but those who are interested, I'm going to lead a group after we get landed and hike down about two miles to Barrier C. We will look at B and we'll look at C on the ground.

When we return, either before or after lunch -- you can't hike up around here -- you have to come up and around down on top of the bridge. This is a hike, it will take about 45 minutes to go up. If you have any intimations of heart trouble, I would suggest you don't go.

But it is something, having gotten in there -- and, incidentally, all of you are going to be, those of you who haven't been there, you're in a very exclusive club. This was discovered in 1909. There are only 12,000 people that have ever been in there. And it is one of the only true wild parks and wilderness parks in the park system.

So we can all go up on top because you get a magnificent view from there of the surrounding area and also of this

immediate problem.

Later after we have looked the area over, we'll be taken back to Mimesa Bar area. Move that, Connie. And the 'copters then will swing us around on the escarpements of Navajo Mountain and over in this area back around the river and then back across Cummings Mesa here and on into Page.

As to what we are planning for the rest of the day, we are just going to sort of play it by ear as far as how long it takes us out here. We are going to have lunches--- you can have lunch there out in the field.

But this evening we will have a movie. Frank Maslin, who is the Chairman of the National Parks Advisory Board -- Frank's here. Frank, hold your hand up, will you. Frank has probably, with Christy Turner, who is also here, done more exploring of most of this area out in here, and there are many of these areas and canyons probably no white man has been in, unless it is Frank Maslin and his people. And this is just how wild and inaccessible this area is. Frank is familiar with it. He has taken movies of it and he will show a movie that he has taken of this area tonight which will give you an idea of some of its wonders.

Now, there are several other natural bridges. They're not as big as Rainbow. There's Owl here. What's the name of the one over here? Hawkeye. Hawkeye Bridge is over here at Deshu Canyon, right in here.

And this area, as you'll see, is a fantastic area of Navajo sandstone formations. So that this evening in addition I hope that we can have a sort of general discussion, a bull session on what conclusions some of us have reached. And we have invited you all here to help us look at this specific problem because we want your judgment concerning what a proper area would be if we are going to create a new National Park. We want a group recommendation on this particular question. You are here, we have asked you here because we want your judgment.

The members of Congress, we have asked them here because they ultimately will have the final say and they will have to pass on anything that's done, and we are delighted that we could have as good a representation as we have here.

Now, this will give you an idea of what we have in mind. Tomorrow morning -- incidentally, they have stopped pouring, but we will have a trip either tonight or tomorrow morning early or sometime to see Glen Canyon Dam, the construction work, if you want to see it, those who want to go. And it is, as most of you know, the most immense and the biggest dam building project under way in the United States at the present time. Indeed, this is one of the biggest structures that has ever been built by the Reclamation Bureau in its entire history. And this itself is a trip that people are coming from all over the world, engineers and others, to see.

Tomorrow morning we will have another trip in to see parts of the area. We will give you information on that later.

Now, this is a quick sketch of what we have in mind. Does anybody have any questions?

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY UDALL: Yes.

QUESTION: Have you taken any position or do you take a position now on whether this barrier dam should be built?

SECRETARY UDALL: Well, we'll discuss this tonight. I have taken a position but I think that we can discuss it more intelligently this evening after we have seen what's involved.

Now, incidentally, one of the problems, as you would realize, to give you some idea of this whole area in here -- and some of the people that know it better than I do can correct me -- there is a lodge, this is an area that is privately owned in here on the edge of the mountain. And over here there's a trading post on the reservation. Over in here there is a school and everything. This is the Navajo Mountain area. And there are trails that lead into these two points. There are no roads that I know of -- in fact, most of these areas, you can get into some of these places part way by jeep. The only ways to get into Rainbow Bridge itself at the present time are to hike in from in this area or

to come in around the mountain by hiking or on horseback.

So this whole area that we are talking about here, there are no roads in it. And the only way, the price of admission to this park, this is the reason that so few people have got in, is to come down the river and hike up this six miles up in here. Or to come in from either of these ways. So you are getting a cheap, quick ride today and we want you to appreciate that fact.

DR. WOODBURY: Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY UDALL: Yes.

DR. WOODBURY: Would you entertain one modification of this for consideration. Take this around here and then pass there and take this?

SECRETARY UDALL: Well, this is -- of course, what we are considering. As a matter of fact, I recited the recommendations of our reconnaissance study, not to say these are the alternatives. We could, as Dr. Woodbury suggests here, we could take the blue and follow around here to the black line. We could take the red and pursue it over here. In fact, Frank Maslin and his people -- we'll see a lot of this area tonight on the movie -- have a very clear conception of the values over in this area.

Now, there are some archeological studies, some archeological sites -- there were Indian people 700 or 800 years ago lived in here and the remains of their dwellings

and the artifacts and the other things that they left are still in this area and in this area indeed all up the river.

So you are seeing what I think is one of the really choice parks of the National Park system and I think this certainly is a unique opportunity for all of us today to participate in this study so that we can get some kind of joint judgment when we are through with regard to this area. Yes?

DR. DANSON: You might say that if they see some digging on Cummings Mesa, it's not scavengers, it's authentic work of the Park Service.

SECRETARY UDALL: All right. Dr. Danson reminds me that his people on Cummings Mesa, as you go across it, they are engaged in some archeological excavation work there at the present time.

QUESTION: This National Park idea, does it mean that you would eliminate the dams for the protection of the monument?

SECRETARY UDALL: Well, this is, this is the question, whether the dams should be built. And in lieu of the dams being built, of course, we could create a new National Park or we could simply leave the monument the way it is and build the dams or not build the dams.

There also was a proposal -- I didn't point this out, because if you build a barrier dam down below, when there's

runoff from the mountain down this cree, it would catch the waters and that would create a lake, also -- that there be a tunnel across from here to Forbidden Canyon at this point up above. And we can if we want to look at that site, also.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, is the area being used for grazing now?

SECRETARY UDALL: I would have to ask the Navajos on that. I would say probably my understanding is that most of this area is quite rough but there are Navajo dwellings, you will see some particularly around in this area and there are Navajos that live around in here.

Some of it is usable but it's such rugged country that particularly I would say in this area here probably very little of it is used for grazing.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Stuart, there is grazing in Navajo Canyon and there's grazing over here, there is some---

SECRETARY UDALL: There is grazing in here?

SAME UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: There is some grazing in here, but in this area here there's practically none.

SECRETARY UDALL: That's right.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Let's go.

SECRETARY UDALL: Somebody says, "Let's go." Shall we? Now, just a moment. Mr. Caruthers here and the major here will handle the loading and they will read the names of those who are going to load the first trip out.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I would like to brief them on a point or two.

SECRETARY UDALL: The major also wants to brief you with regard to your behavior on loading. (Laughter)

Mr. Caruthers will call out the names on the first flight.

EVENING DISCUSSION CONFERENCE

SECRETARY UDALL: By the way, has anybody seen Lucy?
I want you to know she made it up on top of the bridge anyway. (Laughter)

I don't want to keep you much longer. Incidentally, we have let the helicopters go, feeling that we got a pretty good picture of the area.

There will be from about nine o'clock in the morning for an hour and a half or so, those of you who want to see, go all of the way down and have a real Cook's tour with Glenn Riley, to see Glen Canyon Dam. It will be quite an experience.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think we better have an indication of how many want to do that so we can line up the transportation.

QUESTION: About how long will this take?

SAME UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It will take about an hour and a half or two hours to really get down in there and look around.

SECRETARY UDALL: We'll leave at nine.

SAME UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: About 20.

QUESTION: From where do we leave?

SAME UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: From the office. Come to the Bureau office at nine o'clock.

SECRETARY UDALL: I don't think there is any point in a group this large, as tired as we all are, in having any

lengthy discussion.

I was interested in getting (tape inaudible for about 30 seconds) * * * the National Park, about its eligibility as part of the National Park system.

I will ask for negative reactions if you have any strong ones. This is, I think, an extraordinary area whatever we decide to take in over there.

One can think, of course, all of our different National Parks have different features. There are different things that constitute the main attraction; there are different things that give them a distinction and stature.

I think one thing about this area is that you have such great variety and that you have capping it all Rainbow Bridge itself.

What would be your thoughts? We will invite a few of you to comment, those of you that feel strongly about it, with regard to the park boundaries?

(Tape inaudible for about two minutes)

* * * * What do you do, do you develop trails?

SECRETARY UDALL: Frank Maslin has pointed out to us that we do need some trails. That's obvious. Personally -- and, of course, these decisions, each Congress and each Secretary of the Interior and Park Director who make these decisions make these decisions on a long-term basis. This is the reason it's necessary that there be friends of the

parks who are here all the time to protect park standards.

But in dollars it would be tremendously costly. I think it would violate the essential sense of this park to be building roads of any kind to get vehicles in there. As far as I'm concerned, I'd like to see it left as it is as far as vehicles or helicopters are concerned. But I do think as far as trails are concerned, to provide for people, that this is where you would make your main effort, probably even getting some trails over to some of these tremendous overlooks. I think this is the part that we would want to develop.

And since the Navajos have all of these commanding approaches, it would probably be logical that they would be the people who would -- normally, we have concessionnaires who handle it, all of the commercial end of it. I would think that with their skills they are developing in park management and so on, all over here in this valley, they could handle that very nicely.

So it would be relatively one of the primitive parks. I think we need more primitive parks like this.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think you ought to point out that the access roads would undoubtedly be improved so that people could get to the edge of the park.

SECRETARY UDALL: Yes. I think you have brought that out. Now, presently as you can see, we are now constructing as part of the, as part of a major highway program, Route 1,

(?)

which comes up to Peaceful Valley, here to Tuba City. This is a secondary type road, black-top, and runs up through Kayenta here and will go on across the reservation and come out at Hip Rock, New Mexico. But the roads from here are primitive. You can't, this is the point Wells was making-- and I think one of the things that the National Park Service would want to do is to have good roads in from both sides of Navajo Mountain so that there would be access in by normal means. And I think this in itself would make it much more available and accessible to those people who want to hike or like to ride a horse or want to go on a pack trip or something like that.

But I think one of the finest things about it, with all of the other tremendous pressures there are on other places, would be that this would be a primitive one. It would be one where it would be hard to get to and it would only be there for the hardy.

As I said early this morning, all of you got the cheapest price of admission I've heard of for Rainbow Bridge. As a matter of face, Joe Caruthers and this girl that lined it up on top, won't get over there again. That's an easy way to get up.

But should we shoot for a relatively maximum area, a small area? Or is most of this area I showed you this morning that the reconnaissance group recommended, does it

strike you as fitting into a unit, does it fit together? Should we shoot for a large park or a small park? What's the thought? What are your thoughts on it?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, it makes some difference, Mr. Secretary, what the Navajos think about it, too.

SECRETARY UDALL: It makes a great deal of difference. I'm at pains to point that out.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think that is the key to it.

SECRETARY UDALL: But what we're thinking in terms of it-- of course, we will be wanting your judgment, your opinion as to the area. We don't want to put certain sections in if it doesn't really qualify. But the Navijos are going to have the final say. And our ability to work out an agreement with them will be the decisive factor. But, of course, since we are going to or hope to exchange lands with them, the larger the area, the tougher it will be. But at the same time a greater opportunity for both them and for us.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Dave Brower has a suggestion there.

MR. BROWER: I was just going to say what I thought we have been saying a little bit earlier. This is extraordinary country. We have glaciers in this country; we have them in Europe. We have water falls here; we have them in Europe. But there is only one Colorado province and one kind of terrain like this in the world. We are moving now to make a reservation for all of the world. We hope for all time.

And I am impressed also with the fact that Navajo Mountain is an important part of what made this terrain. This high mountain brought the erosion that gives these extraordinary erosional features. And I hope that the Navajos themselves will be willing to help this be set aside as one of the great national parks.

That idea of the Navajo Rainbow National Park seems to me to have a nice ring to it.

And I would hope also that the Navajos who are in that terrain around Chow Canyon and David Canyon would stay there and would not be disturbed. If they like it, if that's home, if they could stand a few visitors now and then, that would be one of the greatest pleasures of a trip to this country.

SECRETARY UDALL: I have been discussing that very thing with Paul Jones, Ned, and I think that might be one of the features of it.

Incidentally, this gives you some idea. How many miles of shore line, did you say?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 1,800, shore line on the lake.

SECRETARY UDALL: This lake above Glen Canyon dam, if this is ever filled, if we get some runoff, will be really one of the most extraordinary lakes in the whole country. How many miles, did you say?

SAME UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 1,800.