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**PUBLIC HEARINGS SET FOR MID
JUNE TO DISCUSS PROTECTION AND
DEVELOPMENT OF GREAT SMOKIES**

The National Park Service's plan for the protection and development of Great Smoky Mountains National Park becomes the subject of public hearings June 13th in Gatlinburg, Tenn., and June 15th in Bryson City, N. C.

The hearings on the Smokies Park are the first to be scheduled by the Park Service under the terms of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Park was established as essentially a wilderness park 35 years ago. The chief feature of this park has been its mountain wilderness, forested from valleys to the summits of the highest peaks. This is the attraction. . . which is followed closely by the problem.

Wilderness proponents contend that at least 350,000 acres of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's total 512,674 acres are suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The National Park Service proposes to protect 247,000 acres of the park as wilderness.

Where conservation groups and wilderness proponents differ greatly is in the western half of the Smokies, west of U. S. 441. Rather than one overall wilderness area, the Park Service has proposed four separate areas in the western half of the Park: Abrams Falls Area, Blockhouse Mountain Area, Meigs Mountain

Area, and Clingmans Dome Area.

The Wilderness Society, D. C. (the problem has assumed national proportions) observes that the Park Service, by splitting the western half of the Smokies into four proposed areas, has ignored those areas its preexisting master plan has pre-empted for roads, buildings, and other development in the future.

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**22 GRADUATE FROM HIGHLANDS
HIGH SCHOOL**

At the Commencement exercise held on June 1st at the Highlands School Auditorium, twenty-two seniors received diplomas: Lamar Billingsley, Tommy Mehder, Bobby Zoellner, Steve Lamb, Curt Shuler, Billy Tate, Robert Dendy, Larry Reese, Steve Pierson, Larry Chastain, Kay Johnson, Ann Waller, Emalee Talley, Margaret Vinson, Dorthy Wilson, Jeanette Reed, Wanda Hedden, Ethel Hedden, Carol Lamb, Beverly Billingsley, Kathryn Chastain, and Vivian Ledford. The Rev. Gale D. Webbe, rector of Highlands Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, delivered the commencement address. Several members of the Youth Choir provided music for the evening.

Annual awards were presented to students at the exercise. Miss Margaret Vinson and Bobby Zoellner were recipients of the Masonic-Eastern (NUMBER 3, PAGE 22)

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