

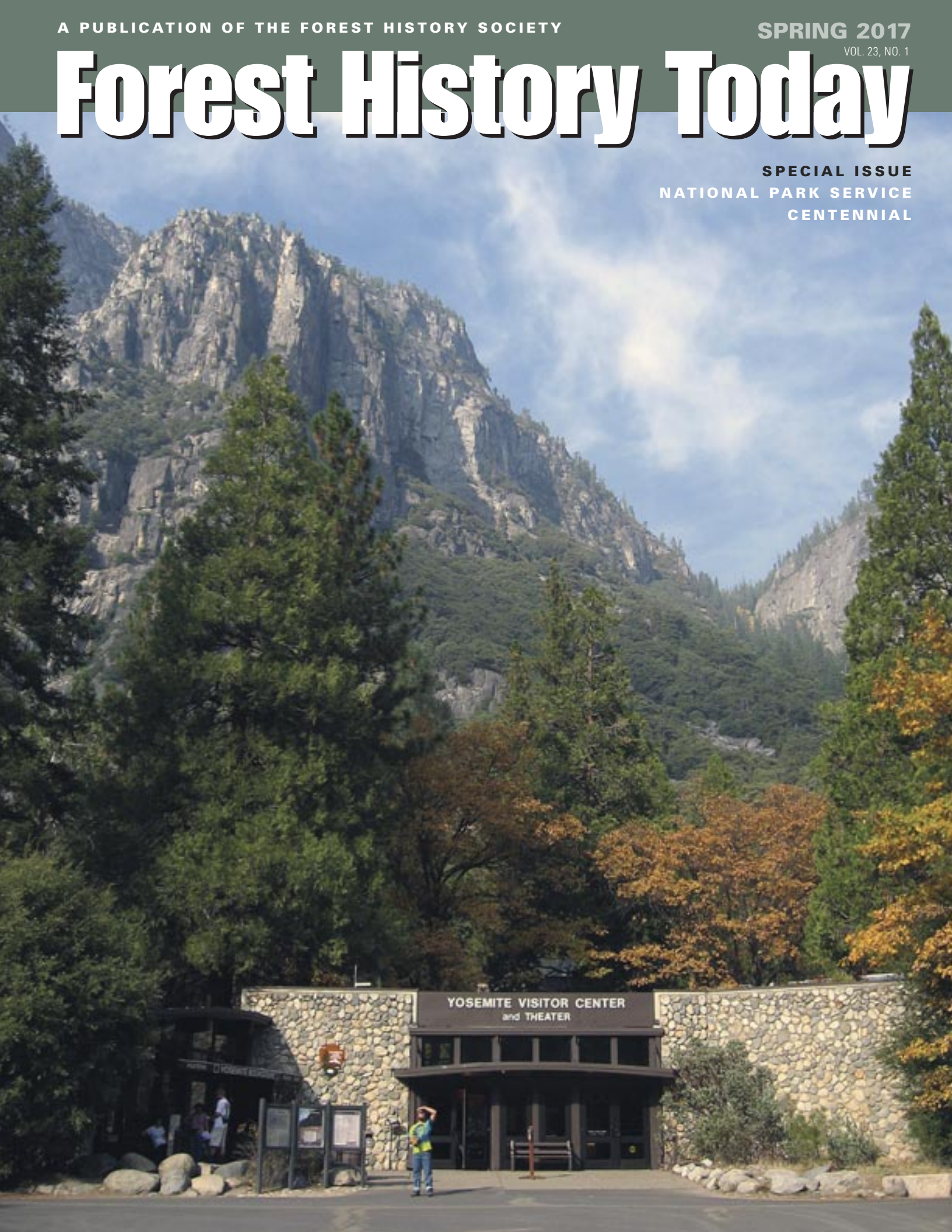
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SPECIAL ISSUE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
CENTENNIAL



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In Recognition of the Centennial of Our National Parks

STEVEN ANDERSON

In 1946, when the Forest History Society began, collection and interpretation of materials about the national parks was incidental to preserving records of the forest products industry and the federal agency tasked with ensuring a timber supply, the Forest Service. The Society's focus on working forests and forest products naturally led to a strong relationship with this agency.

The National Park Service, on the other hand, initially presented fewer opportunities. Its mission, as defined in its organic act, was "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner...as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." To interpret those "natural and historic objects" for the public's enjoyment, in 2000 I estimated the Park Service employed some 180 historians, whereas the Forest Service, even at its height in the 1970s and 1980s, never had more than five at the national office. That number dropped to only one full-time historian by the end of the century. The Park Service simply had less need of the Forest History Society's services.

Although interactions evolved more slowly with the Park Service, the Society nevertheless has long had interest in documenting the national parks and the National Park Service itself. In 1959, two years after launching the *Forest History Newsletter*, the Society published an article about the Park Service's archival collections on lumbering in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. After the newsletter became the *Journal of Forest History*, scholarly articles included "The Army and the National Parks" (1966), "Mount Rainier National Park: First Years" (1966), and "The National Park Service and the First World War" (1978).

In 1990, the aligned interests of the Park Service and the Society were made explicit in a special issue of the journal, by then called *Forest & Conservation History*. The issue explored how public and private interests have overlapped from the earliest days of the national park system, including the challenge of managing concessions in the parks, a concern the Park Service continues to grapple with today. The clash of values between protecting scenery and managing tourist access explored in the 1990 special issue would be a central theme in future scholarship.

By that time, the Forest History Society had formalized its ongoing relationship with the Park Service by electing agency professionals to its board of directors. Since 1988, there has been nearly continuous Park Service representation on the Society's board. Directors included Park Service historians Barry Mackintosh (1988–1991), Richard Sellars (1993–1999), and Janet McDonnell (2005–2006). Others who have served include John Dennis, Deputy Chief Scientist (2006–2009); David Louter, Chief



of the Cultural Resources Program for the Pacific West Region (2009–2013); and Nora Mitchell, Director of the National Park Service Conservation Study Institute (1999–2005). Donald Stevens, Chief of History and National Register Programs for the Midwest Region (2013–present) was instrumental in making possible the issue you are reading today.

In 1996, the Society's journal merged with that of the American Society of Environmental History to become *Environmental History*. Articles related to national parks continued to be periodically published, notably Rolf Diamant's "Reflections on Environmental History with a Human Face: Experiences from a New National Park" (2003).

Diamant, then the superintendent of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, Vermont, aimed to provoke reflection on the management of historic places and the challenge of making them exciting, relevant centers of learning. He has contributed a thought-provoking article to this issue as well.

National parks have also been highlighted in the Society's membership magazine, *Forest History Today*. In 2007, the magazine reprinted a column by historian Hal Rothman (the first editor of *Environmental History* and author of numerous Park Service–focused histories), titled "Why the Nation Needs National Parks." The magazine has explored other Park Service–related topics, publishing pieces on wildfire and the wildland-urban interface, the national parks and road construction, and individual parks—Grand Canyon, Great Smoky Mountains, and Haleakala.

Since the 1950s the Forest History Society has conducted more than 300 oral histories of workers and leaders in forestry and conservation, some of whom have addressed the national parks and National Park Service administration. Our historic photograph collection has numerous images from the national parks, including the first photograph of Yosemite, taken in 1855. Ken Burns used our images in his documentary *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. Before-and-after images of several national parks can be found in our new Repeat Photography portal, at www.repeat-photography.org.

Photos are not the only searchable items in our online databases, of course. A recent search on the phrase "national parks" yielded references to 632 books, 943 articles, 133 dissertations and theses, and 378 archival collections. More than 50 collections housed in the Society's archives have information related to the national parks.

This special issue of *Forest History Today* is another way the Forest History Society can help diverse audiences learn about the national parks and our most treasured landscapes. We are proud to provide this collection of articles in recognition of the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. □

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ON THE COVERS

Front: Yosemite National Park, 2007

Back: Mount Katahdin, Maine, 2014

Photos by James G. Lewis

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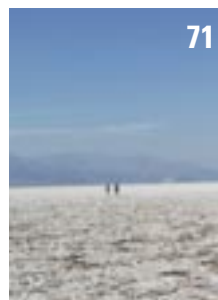


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EDITOR'S NOTE

by James G. Lewis

In 2016, it was hard to escape the news that the National Park Service was celebrating its centennial. It seemed to be the only positive news during a divisive presidential election year, and visiting a national park offered respite from the increasingly nasty campaign. I took a month-long cross-country driving trip in the weeks surrounding Election Day and escaped the campaign in part by taking walks or bike rides in the woods whenever I could. Although at the start of the year I was dismissive of the Japanese practice of “forest bathing,” by December I had become a true believer in *shinrin-yoku*. Time spent in the woods certainly reduced my stress levels in November and after.

Enticement to do so was everywhere. Advertisements and stories touting the national parks and the centennial blanketed the country. Print ads and roadside billboards (I wonder, what would Lady Bird Johnson think of the latter?) presented alluring images—of not just iconic landscapes like Yosemite, Yellowstone, and the Grand Canyon but also battlefields and monuments to historic figures and events—that reminded (or perhaps informed) the public of what can be found on Park Service lands. The marketing firm Grey, New York, which developed the “Find Your Park” campaign, deserves an award. How ingenious, melding one of Yosemite’s rock formations with the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, as if the statue had been carved from it à la Mount Rushmore. This was just one of many eye-catching ads the firm developed. The campaign worked on me: I visited two national seashores, three presidents’ homes, and several national parks and national monuments on my literal “History on the Road” trip. In addition, seemingly every publication with the most tangential connections to national parks took advantage of the heightened interest. Even the National Baseball Hall of Fame’s membership magazine devoted an issue to baseball’s connections to national parks.

Given all that interest and excitement surrounding the centennial, who were we at the Forest History Society not to jump on the bandwagon? The Society’s connection to the National Park Service and its history is a natural one. For starters, most of the early national parks—which include several Civil War battlefields—protected forested landscapes, though that may not be explicitly why they were created. I won’t list the many other tie-ins, but you can expect more articles about the national park system and the Park Service in upcoming issues.

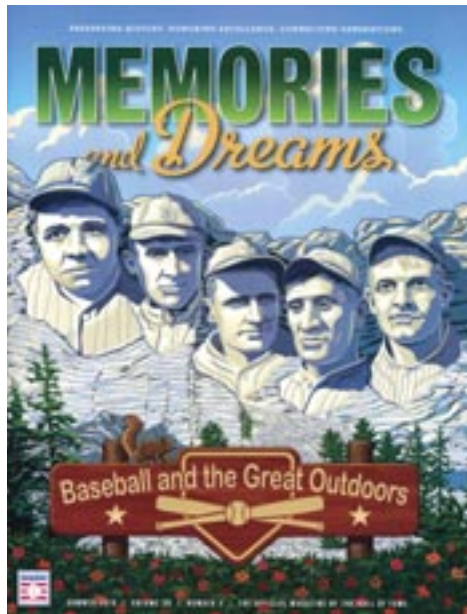
This special issue is a result of our growing relationship with the Park Service, a relationship that has blossomed in part because of the diligence of Don Stevens, chief of the Park Service’s History and National Register Program for the Midwest Region. To prepare

this issue, Don and I had several conversations about what topics and authors to consider. Thinking broadly about the park system, we agreed to include topics not explicitly about forests. Including young scholars was a conscious choice on my part, made easy because I found their topics fascinating. It’s merely coincidental that the two articles not about forests per se are by them. And that’s why you’ll find Kevin Brown’s work on a tiny fish in the middle of the Nevada desert (“The ‘National Playground Service’ and the Devils Hole Pupfish”) and Jackie M. M. Gonzales’s piece about the establishment of national seashores (“The National Park Service Goes to the Beach”). Fairly soon you’ll be able to read these scholars’ book-length treatments of their topics.

Of the other contributors, three are new to these pages and three ought to be familiar names. Did you know there was a riot in Yosemite National Park in 1970? I didn’t, not until I read Michael Childers’s “Stoneman Meadow and Law Enforcement in Yosemite National Park.” Ohio’s Cuyahoga Valley saw no riots in the mid-1800s, but according to William Hunter, in “Forests and Fields: Reconsidering the Rural Landscape in Cuyahoga Valley National Park,” the criminal activity of one farmer’s brother and father led him to initiate sustainable agricultural practices, which included how he managed his woodlot. Perhaps not as exciting as a story that begins with counterfeiting and corruption, but nonetheless of great relevance to our future, is how the media write about climate change in the United States and Peru, a topic Mark Carey examines in “The Trouble with Climate Change and National Parks.”

I’m sure you’ll recognize the names of the three authors who have graced our pages before. Rolf Diamant discusses how the Park Service perhaps fumbled away an opportunity to set the historical record straight during the centennial celebration in “Public Lands and the Fault Lines of a Democracy: Reflections on a Second Century for National Parks.” Stephen J. Pyne revisits a turning point in the history of the Park Service in “Vignettes of Primitive America: The Leopold Report and Wildland Fire.” America’s park system is always expanding and not exclusively carved from existing federal land, as Char Miller reminds us in “The Maine Chance: Conservation Management and the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.” My thanks to all three for their wise counsel on this issue.

As always, many thanks to Sally Atwater for her outstanding editorial work and Kathy Hart of Zubigraphics for her artwork and vision. I can always count on them to help make my job enjoyable and to make the magazine look great. □



The National Park Service has two creation myths, neither of which will serve the agency well as it enters its second century of service. Instead, argues the author, Park Service leaders should use current scholarship to help shape a founding narrative for the twenty-first century. First delivered as the Lynn W. Day Lecture in Forest and Conservation History three weeks prior to the 2016 presidential election, the text appears here with a new prologue.

BEYOND THE CAMPFIRE

*A FOUNDING NARRATIVE FOR A
TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM*

The year 2016 may be as pivotal a year for America’s national park system as 1916. That, of course, was the year when Congress finally established a professional bureau to manage the nation’s growing portfolio of national parks and monuments. A century later, the recently concluded National Park Service centennial

celebration was largely defined by an ambitious campaign to rebrand the agency’s image to reflect fundamental reforms. Intended to realign the agency to appeal to a younger, diverse, and more urban demographic, the reforms had three general aims: (1) developing resource stewardship strategies, based on scholarship and science, that acknowledge and manage for continuous change; (2) vigorously promoting the agency’s role in formal and informal education and lifelong learning; and (3) making the park system as a whole more welcoming, inclusive, and representative of all Americans.

Since the days of the New Deal’s emergency conservation programs, no single issue has galvanized the National Park Service as much as climate change. Recent policies recognize that the National Park Service faces “environmental and social changes that are increasingly widespread, complex, accelerating, and uncertain.”¹ By the end of 2016, it seemed as if nearly every national park and program had a climate response plan or action agenda. Programs were in place to advance climate literacy, climate resiliency, landscape connectivity, alternative energy, and scaled-up collaborative conservation.

Concurrent with the centennial and the emphasis on climate change, the social contours of the national park system were also significantly expanded with the creation of a record number of national monuments. The Obama administration used the Antiquities Act of 1906 to establish 15 new monuments and enlarge 19 others. Many of the proclamations sought to make the system more representative of the nation as a whole, with monuments associated with the stories of Hispanic farmworkers, interned Japanese Americans, women’s history, gay rights, and the civil rights movement. “There was a time when we only focused on men on horseback, with swords,” explained Alan Spears, the National Parks Conservation Association’s cultural resources director in an interview with the *Washington Post*. “That was a different time. We’ve expanded the definition of... what’s nationally important.”²

But 2016, of course, was also the year of a contentious national election. And though it may be some time before many of the election’s consequences for the Park Service are clearly understood, there is little doubt that the agency’s political authorizing environment has radically changed, and that the future of many

BY ROLF DIAMANT

centennial-related reforms is uncertain at best. Office of Management and Budget directive M-17-22 calls for workforce reductions and cost savings that stretch far into the future. *New York Times* columnist Eduardo Porter warned that deep cuts to domestic discretionary spending would leave government as “little more than a heavily armed pension plan with a health insurer on the side.”³

Ominously, the directive also calls for a government-wide reorganization, clearly intended to eliminate, offload, or privatize many public services and responsibilities.

For this reason it is increasingly important for people who care deeply about national parks to share a common understanding of the modern national park system and how it came to be. Such



an understanding should also accurately reflect the cumulative changes and reforms that have shaped the Park Service into the organization that it is today. This baseline knowledge will better position people to challenge abrupt program and policy reversals and, looking to the future, retain a common vision of a national park system that can remain relevant and useful in a rapidly changing world. This is a vision of a National Park Service that is inclusive and committed to engaging diverse constituencies in cooperative stewardship and real-world learning. It is a vision that embraces the best current science and scholarship. It is a vision that recognizes and values national parks and programs for their many contributions to climate resiliency, ecosystem services, and the public health and well-being of the nation.

Public perception and understanding of the national park system, however, is fragmentary at best. Largely shaped by iconic imagery and stereotypes, the system's origins and evolution are poorly understood. As historian Ronald Foresta observed more than thirty years ago, "The reality beneath the image is that neither the national parks nor their keepers stand apart from our times; they are very much subject to the problems and dilemmas of modern American life."⁴ Although the recent Park Service reforms have been a response to the growing diversity and complexity of our society, they are also aligned with progressive movements that historically played a pivotal role in the early philosophy and creation of the Park Service and national parks reaching all the way back to the Civil War. Unfortunately, the Park Service has obscured these connections, past and present, by perpetuating unsubstantiated narratives about its own creation and the early history of national parks in America.

Agency-sanctioned stories and myths have been subject to contestation and revision since the agency's launch in 1916. There is, however, a clear risk today that confusion and misunderstanding about agency history and its larger historical context may endanger many recent Park Service reforms. This is a particular concern if the Park Service is pressured to return to a "core mission" predicated on an outdated, simplified, or idealized image of the national park system that willfully overlooks a century of accumulated responsibilities and legislative mandates. As former Park Service chief historian Dwight Pitcaithley pointed out, "The National Park System today is vastly different from the one envisioned and managed by Stephen T. Mather and Horace M. Albright one hundred years ago."⁵ Current circumstances, therefore, add a sense of urgency to revisiting and retelling National Park Service history, and why now, more than ever, it is important to get the story right.

■ ■ ■

FIRST CAMPFIRE STORY

We live and operate in an ever more complex world, and we desperately need a better understanding of the context of our decisions and the nature of forces that continue to shape our history. It was therefore disappointing that the National Park Service's approach to its centennial commemoration was largely ahistorical even in regard to the agency's own origins and philosophical roots. The Park Service has always been recalcitrant in correcting myths associated with its story. For almost a century now, two "creation narratives" have helped shape the image of national parks and the National Park Service in the public eye. Both narratives (perhaps not surprisingly) involve campfires.

When I first joined the service in the 1970s, many people still believed the long-discredited story that the idea for national parks was first discussed, one hundred years earlier, by a group of western explorers around a campfire near the end of their expedition reconnoitering the Yellowstone region. This creation myth for the national parks, which historian Richard West Sellars called the "virgin birth," was a fiction that had nine lives.⁶ In 1917, Horace M. Albright, then acting director, included the story in the National Park Service's first annual report, retelling Nathaniel P. Langford's 1905 account of the purported 1870 Yellowstone campfire discussion, which Langford claimed to personally remember. The narrative was largely unquestioned by Park Service leadership for the next sixty years.

"The process by which the campfire story became institutionalized in the annals and consciousness of the National Park Service was a simple one," wrote Paul Schullery and Lee Whittlesey in their book, *Myth and History in the Creation of Yellowstone National Park*. "It was published, it was believed, and it was loved." Even in the 1970s, by which time the National Park Service's own historians had concluded that the campfire story was likely an invention of Langford, no one in the agency's hierarchy seemed prepared to contradict octogenarian founder Horace Albright, still revered throughout the agency. Yellowstone National Park historian Aubrey Haines had, in fact, begun to raise serious doubts about Langford's veracity as early as the 1960s. "We are a federal agency," Haines cautioned his superiors, "from which the public expects literal truth. We should not engage in...propaganda." A high-level National Park Service official responded, "If it didn't happen we would have been well advised to invent it."⁷ This was, in effect, what Park Service publicists had done. E. T. Scoyen, associate director under director Conrad Wirth from 1956 to 1962, praised the campfire story, even as agency historians were debunking it. Scoyen, who was not inclined to allow scholarship to get in his way, stated, "I, for one, will not be satisfied with mere confirmation as a reason for throwing this valuable National Park asset out the window or degrading it in any way."⁸

Historian Edward Linenthal has written about "the power of the first narrative" and how difficult it can be to dislodge these foundational stories once they have become embedded with organizational values and traditions. In the years that followed Yellowstone's centennial in 1972, however, it was clear the Park Service could not hold on to the Langford story forever. When this "valuable asset"—the original campfire story—could no longer be defended against the weight of historical evidence, a second campfire creation narrative conveniently emerged to take its place.

SECOND CAMPFIRE STORY

This replacement creation story at least had some basis in fact. In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt, while on a tour of Yosemite Park, insisted on camping alone with John Muir, the famed naturalist who was the park's self-appointed advocate. It is highly likely that during this outing Muir encouraged Roosevelt to support the eventual inclusion of Yosemite Valley into the larger Yosemite National Park. However, it has gradually become accepted in the popular imagination that the idea for national parks and even creating a national park service came from Roosevelt and Muir. The fact is, national parks had been in existence for more than thirty years prior to Roosevelt and Muir's camping trip, and the National Park Service would not be established until 1916, thirteen years later, long after Roosevelt had left office and John Muir had died.

This misconception gained momentum in the late twentieth century as Muir’s popularity grew among a new generation of environmental and wilderness enthusiasts, thus creating a receptive audience for this second creation narrative. It was also a story made for television. Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan’s PBS television series on the national parks, first broadcast in 2009, devoted part of an episode to the camping trip in Yosemite, further canonizing John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt, in the public’s eye, as the principal architects of “America’s best idea.” The Park Service has made no official effort to present an alternative founding narrative, even though a growing body of scholarship both inside and outside the Park Service has pointed in other directions.

The 2016 centennial commemoration should have been an ideal opportunity for this scholarship to be acknowledged, but instead, the Park Service doubled down on the second campfire creation narrative. John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt are united once again, this time on the Park Service’s centennial webpage, as the “The Early Leaders” of the Park Service idea.

Muir and Roosevelt are identified along with Stephen Mather, the agency’s politically adroit and charismatic first director, as the visionaries. Together they are credited with “groundbreaking ideas preserving America’s treasures for future generations”—with John Muir getting top billing as “Father of the National Park Service.”⁹

I am not questioning the very significant contributions Muir, Roosevelt, and Mather made to conservation and national parks. But the story being told is too neat and woefully incomplete. This was just what the Organization of American Historians’ report *Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service*, issued in 2011, five years before the centennial, cautioned the Park Service to avoid interpretation that is “less

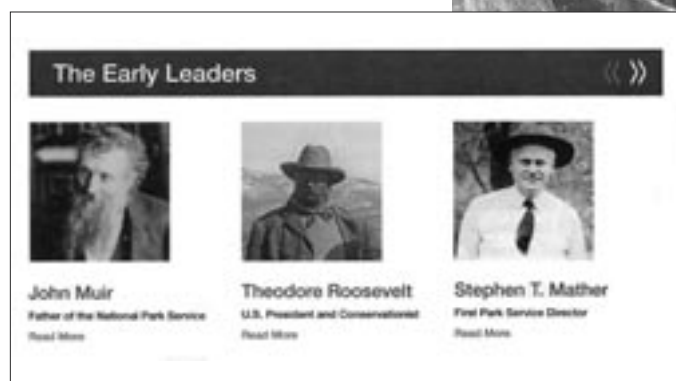
the product of training and expertise and more the expression of conventional wisdom.”¹⁰ What is most striking about this official web feature is not only who is being given all the credit but also who is being erased, in effect, from this high-profile Park Service history.

WHO IS MISSING?

Given all the national monument proclamations in the past few years, one might have expected the agency’s centennial webpage biographies to make room for a line or two about Iowa congressman John F. Lacey (1841–1913). Lacey was the principal sponsor of three landmark conservation laws—two that protect wildlife and one that, in some respects, is the National Park Service’s first “organic act.”¹¹ The energetic Iowa congressman, a member and later chairman of the House Committee on Public Lands, sponsored and championed the Antiquities Act of 1906, which has thus far provided “authority for the initial setting aside of more than half of the total



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The National Park Service’s own website perpetuates the myth that Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir were the principal architects of the national park idea, and that they developed their ideas while together in Yosemite Valley in 1903.

acreage in the national park system as it exists in the early twenty-first century,” according to historian Richard Sellars. Moreover, “In the realm of historic and natural preservation on the nation’s public lands no law had ever approached the scope of the Antiquities Act. The Act made explicit that preservation of historic, archeological, and other scientific sites on lands controlled by the federal government was indeed a federal responsibility.”¹²

J. Horace McFarland (1859–1948) also appears forgotten by history, at least on the Park Service centennial webpage. McFarland, a Pennsylvania businessman and progressive reformer, was the long-time leader of the American Civic Association, a major opponent of the damming of Yosemite’s Hetch Hetchy Valley in the early twentieth century, and an advocate for a national park service. In the words of his biographer, Ernest Morrison, McFarland pursued these goals with “single-minded perseverance.”¹³ Between 1908 and 1916, McFarland, backed by his association, was the driving force behind 16 bills introduced into Congress to establish a national park service.

Another person missing from the webpage is Mary Belle Sherman (1862–1935). She became known as “the National Park Lady” because she was instrumental in the formation of six national parks. Sherman spearheaded the General Federation of Women’s Clubs’ crusade on behalf of the national park service legislation and mobilized the federation’s three thousand clubs and rallied its nearly one million members to the cause. A national park, Sherman said, “supplies the better, greater things of life.” Looking many years into the future, Sherman envisioned the value of national parks to American civic life and education, asserting that parks possess “some of the characteristics of the museum, the library, the fine arts hall, and the public school.”¹⁴

Perhaps the most striking omission on the centennial webpage is the absence of any recognition for Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. (1822–1903) and his landmark Yosemite Report, or of his son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. (1870–1957), who penned the compelling statement of purpose for the 1916 Organic Act. The elder Olmsted’s 1865 park plan for Yosemite Valley presciently called for the “establishment by government of great public grounds for the free enjoyment of the people”—a prescription for a future system of national parks.¹⁵ In 1864 President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation setting aside Yosemite Valley and the adjacent Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias for “public use, resort, and recreation...inalienable for all time.”¹⁶ These federal lands were initially protected as a land grant by Congress to the state of California, and Olmsted, a co-designer of New York City’s Central Park then working in California, was called on to provide an overarching vision for this new experiment in public park making. The establishment and stewardship of these public lands, Olmsted argued, were no less than a fundamental duty of government, based on republican principles of “equity and benevolence.”¹⁷ The government had an obligation to provide for the protection of all its citizens in their pursuit of happiness against all obstacles, including the selfishness of individuals and organized groups. (For more on the Olmsteds, see “Biographical Portrait” on page 68.)

FAULT LINES RUN BACK TO THE CIVIL WAR

The bloodiest war in American history ended up being fought over those very principles of “equity and benevolence” and the nature and function of constitutional government. The future of national parks such as Yosemite and Yellowstone, as well as federal forest reserves, were all inexorably linked to sweeping

changes brought about by the Civil War. To understand the effect the war had on federal conservation lands established in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it is instructive to examine the nature of the opposition to an earlier land grant proposal.

The Morrill Land-Grant College Act was first introduced in Congress in 1859, just prior to the Civil War. The legislation proposed making grants of federal land to states to support a nationwide system of public colleges for advancing agricultural technology and higher education. Like the subsequent reservation of federal lands for national parks and forests, the legislation also sought to use federal land for achieving a defined public benefit, in this case education.

The bill was met with a storm of opposition, mostly coming from southern Democrats in Congress. One objecting congressman denounced the proposed legislation as “one of the most monstrous, iniquitous and dangerous measures which have ever been submitted to Congress.” Another congressman declared, “If the people demand the patronage of the federal government for agriculture and education, it is because they have been debauched and led astray.” Yet another warned that a dangerous precedent would be set and predicted that the national government would soon be “feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked and one day building schools and supporting those schools.”¹⁸

Despite those apocalyptic predictions, the land grant bill narrowly passed Congress, only to be vetoed by President James Buchanan. In his revealing veto message, Buchanan elucidated his preference for selling off federal lands rather than granting them for a public purpose, and that he championed states’ rights over national interests, declaring the bill would “break down the barriers which have been so carefully constructed in the Constitution to separate Federal from state authority.”¹⁹

A SECOND REVOLUTION

Historian David Blight has described the Civil War as “our second revolution.” The war represents “the destruction and death of that first American Republic and the invention and beginning of the second Republic.”²⁰ The eleven southern states that left the Union in 1861 no longer stood in the way of a Republican Party that believed, according to Blight, “in energetic, interventionist government.” By the spring of 1862, Lincoln and a war-hardened Congress embarked on this “second American Revolution” by passing a sweeping Republican legislative agenda. This agenda represented a profound change of direction for the U.S. government. The government would intervene on a transcontinental scale, on behalf of emancipation and free labor, agrarian opportunity, national improvements, and public education.

Over a period of just three months in 1862, a remarkable legislative agenda was passed: on May 15, Lincoln signed legislation establishing the Department of Agriculture; on May 20, Congress passed the Homestead Act; on July 1, Congress authorized the Pacific Railroad Act and the construction of a rail link to California; on July 2, Congress passed the Morrill College Land-Grant Act; and on July 22, Lincoln showed a first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet.

As the war progressed, the United States was transformed into a modern, centralized nation-state—reinvented to win an all-out war. It would create new governmental bureaus, nationalize its currency, and establish a national banking system. Environmental historian Mark Fiege wrote, “Lincoln did all he could to turn the conflict to a higher end. Improvement in its various forms became



PENNSYLVANIA STATE ARCHIVES



FOREST HISTORY SOCIETY



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



From left to right, the National Park Service's website fails to acknowledge the contributions of John Lacey, Horace McFarland, the Olmsteds, and below, Mary Belle King Sherman (pictured, from left, with Robert Sterling Yard, Enos Mills, F. O. Stanley, Congressman Ed Taylor, and Governor George Carlson at the dedication of the Rocky Mountain National Park in 1915).



the means by which he prosecuted the war and preserved the Union.”²¹ So when in May 1864, California Senator John Conness introduced his land-grant bill to preserve Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove for public use “inalienable for all time,” Congress passed the legislation with relative ease and Lincoln signed it. Much like the Morrill Act, this wartime measure to protect Yosemite was consistent with Lincoln’s overall effort to justify the terrible sacrifices called for on the battlefield by redefining and expanding the rewards of American citizenship and promising what he called in his Gettysburg Address “a new birth of freedom.”

There can be little doubt that government support for any public parks or reservations would have faced an uphill battle in the political environment of pre-Civil War America. A land grant, such as the one for Yosemite, would likely never have been authorized by the antebellum Congress and, even if it had, it would have certainly been vetoed by a president like James Buchanan. Abraham Lincoln and four years of civil war upended the political status quo. For the first time in America’s history there existed an opportunity to align formative conservation and recreation objectives, starting with Yosemite, with the greatly strengthened and expanded capacity of government.

THE PATH TO YELLOWSTONE

The conventional historical perspective on the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 is ably summed up by Chris Magoc in his book *Yellowstone: The Creation and Selling of an American Landscape, 1870–1903*: “Buttressed by the language of cultural nationalism, compelling romantic imagery, and a cadre of railroad friends and boosters, both houses of Congress swiftly passed the Yellowstone Park Act.” However, many historians, Magoc included, have overlooked the profound changes in American governance in the years following the Civil War that played a significant role in preparing the ground for the Yellowstone legislation. In 1867 Congress passed a series of military reconstruction acts allowing biracial state governments to be elected in the South and supported ratification of the Fourteenth (1868) and Fifteenth (1870) amendments to the Constitution, all affirming federal rather than state protection of civil rights. Some of the same Republican congressmen who supported this Reconstruction agenda, such as Senators Lyman Trumbull and Samuel C. Pomeroy and Representative Henry L. Dawes, were also principal sponsors of the Yellowstone legislation.

The rise of a nascent conservation movement, even with the support of railroads and other interests, would not have had the traction it did without major constitutional reforms, the assertion of federal authority over domestic policy, and a much larger national government—all direct outcomes of the war and Reconstruction. Congress, still controlled by an activist Republican postwar majority, was prepared to accept in principle the idea of establishing Yellowstone as a national park, in Olmsted’s words, as a “duty of government.” Historian Adam Wesley Dean wrote, “After the war, many Republicans felt that the federal government could solve problems when state governments failed.”²² The *New York Times* declared that if Yellowstone became a national park, “it will remain a place which we can proudly show to the benighted European as a proof of what nature under a republican form of government can accomplish in the great West.”²³ Or as historian Lisa Brady explained, “The establishment of federal authority over states’ rights to determine citizenship and other civil rights also established increased federal power to decide what

elements in the natural treasury would become permanent fixtures of the national landscape.”²⁴

WHY THEN THE CAMPFIRE STORIES?

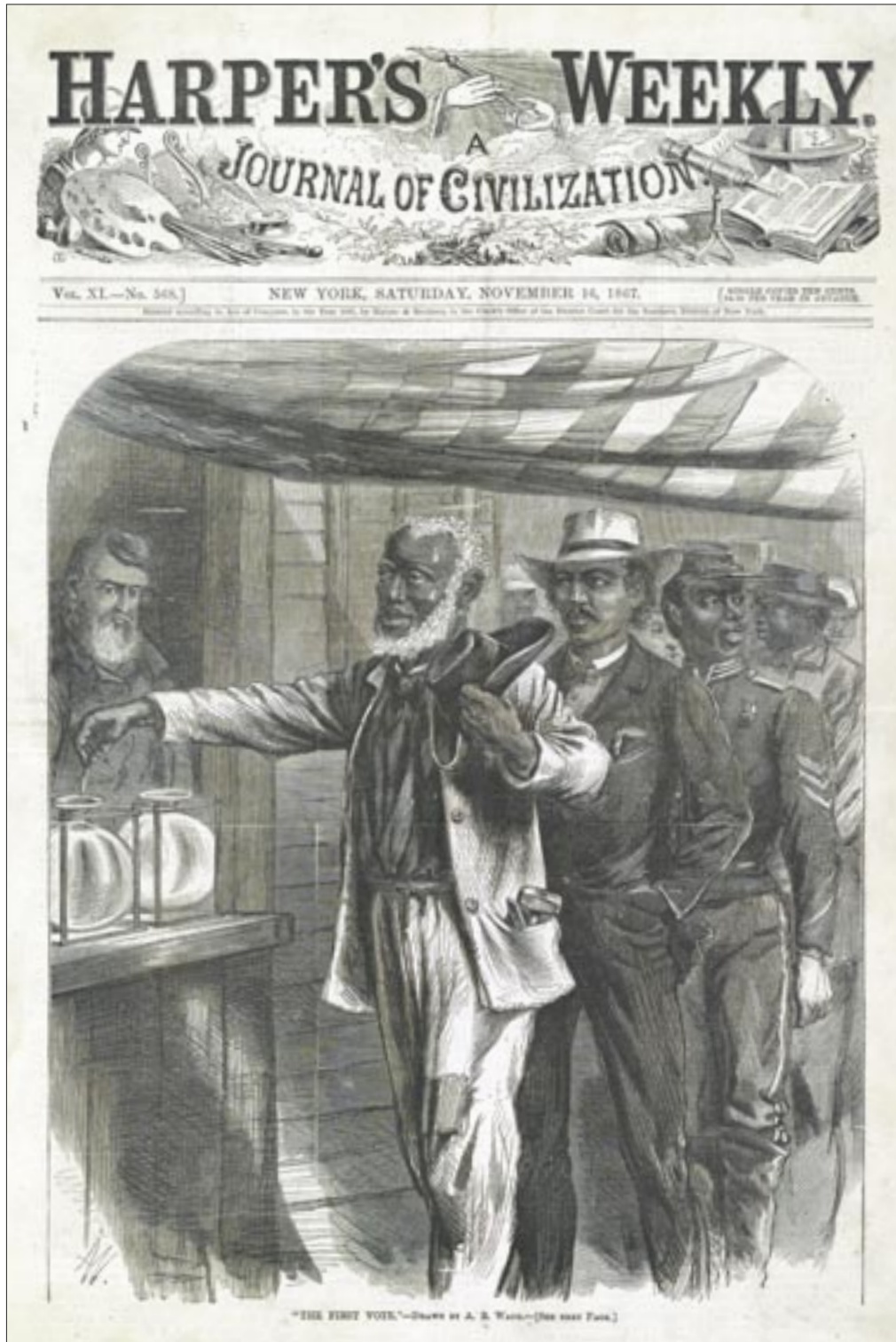
So why, we might ask, has the National Park Service, starting in the early twentieth century, presented to the American public a history of the national parks largely disassociated from Olmsted, Yosemite, and the formative influence of the Civil War era? For one thing, by the early twentieth century, when political momentum was building to establish a national park service, North-South reconciliation was a priority and many civil rights gains of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras had been or were being systematically rolled back. No attention was being given to the underlying cause of the war—slavery—and the struggle for freedom that followed, even as Congress was setting aside commemorative reservations on former battlefields, later to become national parks. In the years immediately leading up to the passage of the Organic Act of 1916, national park service boosters, seeking support from southern legislators and Virginia-born President Woodrow Wilson, chose a national park creation narrative that avoided historical connections with Olmsted and the Civil War era. Olmsted was a problematic figure in several respects: he was closely associated with older, eastern urban parks when the national parks were being marketed as a new concept born in the West, and Olmsted had also been a supporter of the Fourteenth Amendment as well as the author of several influential antislavery books published prior to the Civil War. Langford’s Yellowstone campfire story, on the other hand, carried no such baggage and served as a comfortable substitute story.

There was a vigorous rearguard defense of the campfire myth waged by Park Service leaders in the second half of the twentieth century aligned with a Cold War-era ideology that projected American cultural exceptionalism. “From the White House down,” wrote historian Alfred Runte, “the United States took pride in the knowledge that it was both the inventor and exporter of the national park idea.” During Yellowstone’s centennial, Runte pointed out that “the inconsistencies of the Washburn Expedition aside, major newspapers, magazines, television networks, and government reports told and retold its story literally in heroic terms. The explorers ‘could not have anticipated,’ one said, ‘that their idea would flower into a new dimension of the American dream and would capture the imagination of men around the world.’”²⁵ As Park Service senior official E. T. Scoyen explained, it was highly desirable to credit the birth of national parks with “a wonderful and interesting group of rugged western pioneers.”²⁶

FAULT LINES PERSIST

It is important to point out that Native Americans were not beneficiaries of Lincoln’s “new birth of freedom” and that most of the first western federal parks, forests, and refuges were established on the homelands of Native peoples. All too often the occupants were forcibly displaced. So any founding narrative must also acknowledge this painful legacy as part of the story.

For other reasons as well, the fate of our national landscape has never been a chronological narrative of progress, with one legislative landmark following the next. Efforts to establish national parks have nearly always been met by resistance and, even when successful, subject to undermining and reversal. When Congress did pass legislation creating a park, it rarely had the political will to appropriate funds to adequately staff and manage these lands.



It took Congress nearly eight years after establishing Yellowstone to appropriate funds for the national park's basic operation.

Congressional ambivalence over funding has not been the only challenge for national parks. Every now and again fault lines emerge that run through the foundations of our political system, calling into question the legitimacy and efficacy of government institutions from public schools to public lands. These fault lines have been with us since the Civil War and they remain with us today. States' rights, private property rights, and antigovernment attitudes echoing back to the Civil War era surfaced again in 2016 with the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in

have always been a fundamental benefit of public land stewardship. And let us not forget Horace McFarland, who repeatedly emphasized that public lands are the heritage of all Americans and are essential to the health and well-being of our democracy, or as he said, "a plain necessity for good citizenship."²⁷

It is also time to recognize the principal sponsor of the embattled Antiquities Act, Congressman John Lacey. Lacey made profound contributions to American conservation and reminds us all that the Park Service cares for places with multiple values and layers of meaning. Other landmark legislation that Lacey sponsored includes the Yellowstone Park Protection Act of 1894,

The Civil War and the subsequent fight for civil rights, which resulted in constitutional amendments providing citizenship and the right to vote for African Americans, affected how the founding narrative of the national parks was told a half-century later.

Oregon. Terry Tempest Williams reflected in her book, *The Hour of the Land*, "I am just beginning to understand how the Civil War shaped our ideologies and identities as Americans."

That is one more reason for paying attention to history. History reminds us never to become complacent. What has been authorized can also be deauthorized. Given the unraveling of historical bipartisanship on issues related to the environment and public lands, it is not inconceivable that more than a century of landmark environmental legislation, from the Antiquities Act to the Endangered Species Act, might be reversed. The continuation of our public land systems as we know them today cannot be taken for granted. Weakening these systems will make progress on climate resiliency, and related progress on large landscape conservation, increasingly difficult, if not impossible.

MOVING TOWARD A MORE INCLUSIVE NARRATIVE

It is a good time to revisit the words of Mary Belle Sherman, who clearly saw how central national parks could be to continual lifelong learning—so critical in our current age of destabilizing climate and global changes. Public education and civic engagement

which protects wildlife in the park, and the Lacey Act of 1900, which prohibits trafficking in wildlife nationwide—two laws that ensure that national parks are not landscapes devoid of buffalo and bald eagles, the two iconic animals that represent the National Park Service and the United States, respectively. (If Lacey had lived a few more years and remained in Congress, one can only speculate whether the final legislation that established the National Park Service in 1916 would have been named for him as well.) In our current era of scaled-up landscape conservation, there are lessons to be learned from the way Lacey brought natural, scientific, cultural, spiritual, recreational, and ethnographic interests together in a big conservation tent.

And finally, we would be wise to pay more attention to the Olmsteds. Frederick Jr. called for an agency with the highest ethical and professional standards and understood and consistently promoted the advantages of a strong and unified system of national parks. Fifty years earlier, Frederick Sr. wrote his landmark Yosemite Report, one of the most instructive documents of American conservation. His words remind us that the idea of protecting special places for the benefit of all people, not only a privileged elite, has always been an idea worth fighting for. Meaningful change does not arise from a campfire conversation. The country's early conservation measures were associated with what Abraham Lincoln once described as a "remorseless revolutionary struggle" for a renewal of American democracy.²⁸ The conservation gains that have been made over time have been sustained only by public vigilance and determination.

Expanding the founding narrative of the National Park Service beyond Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir may also help the Park Service with its centennial goal of "reintroducing" itself to a broader cross-section of the American public. This is the time to recognize and incorporate a more inclusive narrative that harks back to Lincoln and emancipation, to a larger American conservation movement, and to the fundamental responsibility of government to advance, as Olmsted hoped, the pursuit of happiness against all obstacles, for all people. □

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Issued in 1963, the Leopold Report reshaped the management goals and purposes of national parks across the board. In this excerpt from Between Two Fires: A Fire History of Contemporary America, Stephen J. Pyne explores its impact on the role and place of wildland fire in national parks.

VIGNETTES OF PRIMITIVE AMERICA

THE LEOPOLD REPORT AND FIRE POLICY

The movement began in Yellowstone, which was how Yellowstone liked matters, and as with everything Yellowstone, the action seemed to hinge on its megafauna, specifically, its elk. There were too many. For decades the park had coaxed and cajoled more elk into being by feeding them and by killing

predators, and now the elk were eating the park raw. Over the winter of 1961–62, rangers shot 4,283 elk in an effort to cull the herd to something that Yellowstone, vast though it was, could accommodate. The public outcry did for the National Park Service what clearcutting would do for the Forest Service. Interior Secretary Stewart Udall responded, as administrators instinctively did, by establishing a committee.

The Advisory Board on Wildlife Management was an august group, chaired by A. Starker Leopold, then a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and a son of Aldo Leopold. The Sierra Club noted that those who would challenge the board's credentials or conclusions faced a formidable task. The Leopold Report, as it became known, was powerful because, in evaluating methods by which to cope with Yellowstone's elk herd, it based its analysis on a rereading of the ultimate goals and fundamental purposes of national parks. Most readers and commentators quickly forgot its strenuous insistence on active management and its specific recom-

mendations (which ironically included the need for in-park culling) in favor of its rhetorical rechartering of national park purposes.¹

The First World Conference on National Parks had convened in July 1962 in Seattle, and the Leopold committee accepted its report "as a firm basis for park management." To that report the advisory committee added a healthy dose of American nationalism. In memorable language the report declared that a national park should as its primary goal "represent a vignette of primitive America" and should ensure that "the biotic associations within each park be maintained, or where necessary recreated, as nearly as possible in the condition that prevailed when the area was first visited by the white man." The moment of European contact became a baseline for "naturalness."²

The implications of this "seemingly simple aspiration," the report concluded with calculated understatement, were "stupendous." The problem was, the biotas of America's parks were "artifacts, pure and simple." They were the progeny of complex

BY STEPHEN J. PYNE



COURTESY OF THE ALDO LEOPOLD FOUNDATION, WWW.ALDOLEOPOLD.ORG

Starker Leopold served as chairman and primary author of the Leopold Report, issued in 1963. The report's insistence on active management contributed to a rethinking of the Park Service's wildfire policy as part of a broader reconsideration of ecological principles. Leopold is seen hunting chukkar partridge in San Luis Obispo County, California, in 1955.

ecological histories, not necessarily patches of primitive America. Among the more spectacular examples the report cited was the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. When the forty-niners had spilled over its crestline, it had boasted a montane forest of large trees widely spaced and routinely burned. By 1963 it displayed a “depressing” vegetative tangle, a “dog-hair thicket of young pines, white fir, incense cedar, and mature brush—a direct function of overprotection from natural ground fires.”³

That primitive scene needed to be restored. This was a task neither easy nor fully possible but an undertaking that called for active measures informed by scientific research and conducted by a competent corps of Park Service personnel. The mangled fire regime was both a paradigm and an obvious point of departure because fire was the most comprehensive means to reform the habitat that underlay wildlife management. Among possible techniques considered by the Advisory Board on Wildlife Management, “the controlled use of fire is the most ‘natural’ and much the cheapest and easiest to apply.” But so profound was the ecological deviation from historical conditions that fire could not do its proper work—would most likely blow up—until the wildlands that fed it were reconstructed; even chainsaws might be needed. What could emerge at the end was “a reasonable illusion of primitive America.” Would such interventions succeed? The Leopold savants would not say. “We cannot offer an answer.” They were wildlife biologists, not fire scientists. The necessary skills did not exist. They insisted only that the job “will not be done by passive protection alone.”⁴

From the moment it was released on March 3, 1963, to the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, the Leopold Report was a sensation. Most commentators cherry-picked its striking phrases. They ignored its cautionary warnings about historical complexity, ecological ignorance, and the absence of skilled managers and instead seized on its call for the wild. What excited them most were variants of the phrase “naturalness above all.” The transformation was identical to what happened at the same time with the legacy of Aldo Leopold, whose *Sand County Almanac* was subsequently reissued in 1966 and read less for its messages about patiently and humbly restoring debased land than for its championing of a land ethic and its celebration of wild nature. So it happened also with fire.

A simple narrative began to congeal, a narrative of how, with European contact, the natural process of fire had been driven to near extinction along with bison and grizzlies. Here was the dark side of America's story, the national creation myth that told how a civilized Europe had encountered a primitive America and spawned a new society. Just as national parks had been established to preserve the memory of that encounter, so those historic fires had to be reinstated. It was a matter of mythic as much as ecological integrity. Reclaiming fire was less a radical innovation than a restorative act, even a penitential one. The narrative turned on its head what had been considered a legal and moral duty—an obligation to control fire. The charge now was to restore it.

Secretary Udall, then completing a book that told the saga of American environmentalism, *The Quiet Crisis*, received the report enthusiastically. He instructed National Park Service director Conrad Wirth to “take such steps as appropriate to incorporate the philosophy and the basic findings into the administration of the National Park Service.” That the report granted so much space to fire was both a problem and a prescription: there existed no more daring symbol of the commitment to a new order or one potentially more damaging. By comparison, loosing wolves seemed almost domesticated. A single wolf could not transform an entire park in an afternoon; a fire could. Everything might, as ecologists like to proclaim, be connected to everything else, but fire burned everywhere and could be seen by anyone. No one might know whether rangers shot a few elk in the deep snow of a Yellowstone winter, but everyone could see the smoke from a fire lit or left to burn.⁵

A MIXED BLESSING

That the National Park Service should be the first federal agency to break ranks had a certain symmetry. The national parks had invented modern wildland firefighting beginning in 1886, when the U.S. Cavalry assumed the administration of Yellowstone and then extended that regimen to the California parks. Now, 80 years later, they led a revolution to devise a replacement.

It seems both odd and inevitable. Begin with the agency’s assets to promote so daring a change. The Park Service was prepared to split from the Forest Service on fire because of the two agencies’ long-running rivalries, notably over scenically choice lands and responsibility for outdoor recreation. The Park Service did not share in the fraternal order of foresters. It had long seen itself as distinct in mission and esprit, a chip off the block of American exceptionalism. Historically it had known pockets of light-burners, notably in the Sierra Nevada parks. It had accepted controlled burning at Everglades. And, scattered into hundreds of small units, it simply lacked the heft and infrastructure to match the Forest Service in firefighting; not a few parks relied on neighbors to suppress wildfire. Politically, the national parks were less an integrated system than a daisy chain of semi-autonomous fiefdoms, which made discretionary experimentation at local parks possible.

As the separate parks were to the system, so the Park Service was to the national infrastructure of fire protection: it could be remarkably self-contained, even self-referential. The National Park Service had more cultural cachet and political clout than the Fish and Wildlife Service, which was quietly expanding prescribed fire along the Gulf Coast, and less anxiety about proving its mettle than the adolescent Bureau of Land Management (BLM), eager to take on the Forest Service at its own game. The agency’s founding charge to maintain its holdings “unimpaired” for future generations disposed it to see natural events as part of the scene and to let nature take its course. The parks had interest groups from the National Parks Conservation Association to the Sierra Club ready to lobby on its behalf. Apart from shooting elk, the public was willing to grant Park Service rangers political space. On most controversial issues the public granted the National Park Service wide tolerance.

But those assets could as easily flip into liabilities. It was difficult to scale up what happened in a particular park into a service-wide policy. A failure to hammer fire aggressively could be turned to the old charge that the Park Service was weak on defense, that it simply was not up to a tough, gritty job like fire suppression. While its ranger corps did not kowtow to forestry, it had no alter-

native professional identity to counter forestry’s guild; there was no program of study or apprenticeship of technical skills that led someone into status as a park ranger. Like the ranger’s uniform, his role had evolved out of its cavalry era. What its ranger corps had were camaraderie and cohesion. (The standard joke was that there were two organizations you never left: the Mafia and the National Park Service.) The United States had no national park organic act, only an act creating a National Park Service and a letter of instructions from Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane to its first director, Stephen Mather, which was widely regarded as the agency’s Magna Carta. The variety and independence of its units could lead equally to enlightened experimentation or administrative anarchy. It was an arrangement that favored personalities and high-value holdings.

The Leopold Report was, in this sense, a mixed blessing. It gave the agency a new charter, but the Park Service, unlike the Forest Service with the Multiple-Use Act, had not asked for one. It came while Mission 66, a \$1 billion investment in infrastructure primarily to support the boom in visitors, was at full throttle; the agency was not interested in other initiatives that might divert attention. Its baron superintendents hated any check on their sovereign powers. If adopted—and Secretary Udall was keen to translate proposals into written policies—the tenets of the Leopold Report would enact a universal standard for the management of natural areas, the agency’s true crown jewels. And it would likely compel the National Park Service to intervene in the landscape rather than let nature unfold in its own way. Some of those active measures would be distasteful, both to the Park Service and to the public. It meant shooting animals. It meant starting fires.

Yet the Leopold Report also offered an anchor point from which to survive the impending firestorm of environmental reform that would consume the federal land agencies over the next 15 years and for some prove schismatic. A few agencies such as the BLM acquired an organic act for the first time; some, notably the Forest Service, had their statutory authority rewritten; others, like the Fish and Wildlife Service, were granted fundamental new powers. But they all had to cope with the National Environmental Policy Act and assorted legislation that affected how they did business. By adopting the Leopold Report the Park Service avoided those imposed recharterings. It reformed more or less internally, it kept control within its own constituencies, and it even acquired, for the first time, its own research program in the natural sciences. Most especially, the Report bequeathed a working alternative to the strictures of the Wilderness Act. The park as vignette of primitive America granted more freedom to maneuver than a place untrammelled by humans. It left to the agency the discretion over what the phrase actually meant and how to manage it. It expanded and refined the notion of “unimpaired for future generations,” a vision the Park Service was comfortable with.

Alone among those new charters, the Leopold Report directly addressed fire’s presence and possible uses. Other agencies had to interpret how to adopt new fire practices (and purposes) within their changed contexts. The Wilderness Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act, the National Environmental Policy Act—none included fire’s management specifically in their directives. The Leopold Report did. It identified fire’s removal as a problem, urged fire’s restoration as a solution, and proposed controlled burning as a treatment of choice. Once codified into administrative guidelines in 1968, it left fire’s management in the national parks with the National Park Service, and it positioned a fulcrum



This group at Yosemite National Park was in the vanguard of allowing prescribed natural fires to burn. Standing (left) is Bob Barbee, who made a reputation as head of resource management at Yosemite Park and later served as superintendent of Yellowstone during the 1988 fires. Next (standing) is Harold Biswell, then Norm Messinger, Wawona District naturalist. Fourth from left is Biswell student and long-serving fire researcher Jan van Wagtenonck. Kneeling (from left) are Don Taylor and Bill Jones (chief naturalist).

that allowed the agency to leverage its influence outward rather than being moved by outside pressures. The report received enthusiastic attention at the next (third) Tall Timbers conference, whose attendees instantly recognized a fellow traveler.

THE BIG TREES NEED FIRE

Principles are easy, practice hard, and policies without money are, as Director George Hartzog observed, “just talk.” However favorably situated the Park Service appears in retrospect, the factious agency hesitated, stalled, ignored, and moved fitfully. The concerns the Leopold Report addressed, particularly regarding fire, had not bubbled up from the bottom; they were imposed from the top and were better understood intellectually than emotionally. This was a revolution from above. Not all fire officers converted to the new doctrine; after all, many had fashioned their careers by fighting fires. Nor was it obvious how to reinstate fire on the ground. The act more resembled restoring a vanished predator species than it did constructing a new visitor center. It was not simply putting something back that had been lost, because restoring that something would alter the dynamics of everything else. And unless it had the right habitat, fire might turn feral—might misbehave and damage what it was intended to enhance. If the agency was to change course, it needed a proof-of-concept test. It found one in the Sierra parks.⁶

Margaret Mead once observed that successful movements—she had in mind American anthropology under Franz Boas—needed a charismatic patriarch to announce it, a sugar daddy to fund it, and young acolytes to proselytize its message. The fire revolution had all that: Herbert Stoddard (segueing into Ed Komarek), the Tall Timbers endowment, and youthful partisans of burning ready to discard the shackles of failed doctrines and practices. But flaming Florida was too idiosyncratic and easily isolated to shake the national establishment. California could do it, though. It symbolized the hopes and horrors of the 1960s, and it quickly created a West Coast counterpart to the Florida agenda. In Harold Biswell it had its patriarch; in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park it had its research station; in a generation of new recruits, particularly University of California, Berkeley, students, who had studied under Leopold and Biswell, it had a corps of enthusiasts who did for fire (though with far greater discipline) what Yosemite’s Camp 4 covey did for rock climbing.

Harold Biswell—“Doc” to his students, “Harry the Torch” to his critics—was the linchpin. Like many of the pioneering naturalists of his time, he had grown up on a farm in the Midwest. He earned a doctorate in plant ecology at the University of Nebraska, still aglow with the triumphs of the Grassland Lab, amid the environmental (and for grassland scientists, intellectual) trauma of the Dust Bowl. The Forest Service hired him for its Pacific Southwest Experiment Station at Berkeley, California. In 1940 he transferred to the Southeast Experiment Station at Asheville, North Carolina, where he learned the regional fire scene. He stayed until 1947 when he joined the University of California, Berkeley, faculty; there he remained until his retirement in 1973. He and Starker Leopold became colleagues, co-taught graduate seminars, and reinforced their predilections toward fire. He found landowners in Northern California (including Hoberg’s Resort and Teaford Forest, in the heartland of the old light-burning controversy) to allow him to create demonstration plots, but real traction required something that could propagate fire through the public estate of the West. More precisely, it demanded the alliance of a premier research university with a high-visibility federal agency on a landscape of supreme public interest. For fire it just did not get any better than California’s giant sequoia groves.⁷

Here external and internal pressures converged. The outside forces were those identified in the Leopold Report. The pressures interior to the parks concerned the paradox that despite intense protection, some of the Park Service’s most prized treasures were deteriorating. Most spectacularly, the fabled Big Trees of its Sierra Nevada parks were doing poorly, and the suspicion was rife that people were the reason. The effect of trampling and other accommodations to visitors lay behind the doctoral study that Richard Hartesveldt had conducted in 1962 at Yosemite’s Mariposa Grove; when it was completed, Sequoia-Kings Canyon commissioned additional research. Begun in 1963, the studies continued until 1970 (with an extra summer in 1974). After serial progress reports, *The Giant Sequoias of the Sierra Nevada* was submitted in 1971.⁸

It confirmed that people were in fact behind the decline of the giants not simply because of what they did but also what they did not do. The Big Trees needed fire. They could thrive amid frequent burns; most bore scorch scars, and a few boasted fire-excavated cavities. But their cones were semiserotinous, and their seeds germinated best in ashy beds temporarily freed from

competitors. Sequoia seedlings survived most exuberantly, in fact, in places that burned intensely. What threatened these patches of Pleistocene megafauna was less root damage by visitors than an altered habitat in which fire-sensitive competitors such as fir and cedar flourished, sequoia reproduction was impossible, and overgrown understories threatened even mature sequoias with fires unlike any they had known. Instead of scurrying around the forest floor like mice, flames could soar upward through the latticed canopy of intrusive trees and incinerate the otherwise fire-immune sequoia crown. If the Big Trees were to survive, the old fire regime would have to return. Advocates argued then, as William Everhart would in 1983, that “those who still want the Park Service to put out fires might ask themselves how the wilderness managed to survive for so many millions of years without rangers.” Listening to locals explain how they had “saved” the Big Trees from fire 29 times in the past five years, Gifford Pinchot in 1891 had wryly wondered who had saved them the “other three or four thousand years of their age?”⁹

The sequoia research advanced as the Leopold Report percolated through the Park Service. In 1964 Harold Biswell proposed to transfer his demonstrations to Whitaker’s Forest, a University

of California, Berkeley, experimental site on Redwood Mountain adjacent to Sequoia-Kings Canyon. For the next decade he directed trials with cutting, piling, and other strategies to ease fire back into the groves. The park began similar exercises on its side of the fence, as students of Leopold and Biswell staffed positions and created a cadre of partisans for prescribed burning. Redwood Mountain became an experimentum crucis for the fire philosophy urged by the Leopold Report. In 1967 Tall Timbers staged its annual fire ecology conference in California in honor of Biswell and other western pioneers such as Harold Weaver. In October, Park Superintendent John McLaughlin and his staff met with Leopold in Berkeley to quicken a plan for fire’s reintroduction (Forest Service researchers from the Pacific Southwest Station might also have been present—the record is unclear). When skepticism threatened to stall the project, when the fire and forestry clique began to pile up qualms and queries, Leopold calmly informed them that the issue was not whether the park would restore fire, but how.¹⁰

The breakthrough came in 1968. It was a year made notorious by assassinations, riots, social mayhem, and political turmoil throughout the Western world. It also marked the culmination of a quiet



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revolution for fire. It helped that two fires in Glacier National Park the summer before had forced the Park Service to reconsider the limits of suppression. Before the next fire season could begin, the National Park Service published a set of administrative guidelines for natural areas that formally recanted the 10 a.m. policy.¹¹

With the right ingredients, gently stirred by modest fire seasons and public enthusiasm, the program launched boldly. In the summer of 1968, Sequoia-Kings Canyon ignited an 800-acre prescribed fire on Rattlesnake Ridge and allowed a lightning fire on Kennedy Ridge to burn freely. As Bruce Kilgore recalled, there seemed no difference between the two fires, and it appeared “that the simplest way” to reinstate fire would be “to let lightning fires burn.” In 1969 Sequoia-Kings Canyon designated 129,331 acres of upper-elevation landscapes (15 percent of the park’s holdings) for “let-burns” and deliberately fired 6,186 acres under prescription. Even when one of the kindled fires on Redwood Mountain burned more ferociously than anticipated (or desired), even after a large burn had to be contained with bulldozers, and even after administrators recognized that prescribed fire in the West was expensive (and would probably prove as costly in the long run as a traditional program) and might someday cause public relations blowups, the effort soldiered on.¹²



By then, though, Sequoia-Kings Canyon had passed the torch to Yosemite where, under Robert Barbee and with Biswell as mentor, a similar program gathered steam and earned the approbation of Harold Weaver on an inspection tour. The Park Service had its proof of concept.

THE GREEN BOOK AND GREEN FIRE

Between the 1967 and 1968 fire seasons, the agency utterly overhauled its administrative policies. A shelf of manuals was condensed down to three slim books, each known by the color of its cover, one for natural areas (Green), one for recreational holdings (Red), and one for historical sites (Blue). The Green Book had 67 core pages that opened with a long preamble of purposes, policies, and principles, then discussed their application according to various topics, and concluded with another 99 pages of appendices that ranged from Lane’s 1918 letter to Mather to the procedures for public review of master plans. Rather than specify meticulously what a superintendent ought to do under every imaginable circumstance, it granted extraordinary leeway to adapt the general to the local.

The policy on fire came directly from the Leopold Report. It opened by declaring that “the presence or absence of natural fire within a given habitat is recognized as one of the ecological factors contributing to the perpetuation of plants and animals native to that habitat.” Accordingly, it acknowledged that fires resulting from natural causes are “natural phenomena and may be allowed to run their course” within limits, and it approved prescribed burning as a valid substitute for natural fire. Fires that threatened lives, infrastructure, or cultural assets would be suppressed. Forty years after they had been condemned as anathema, light-burning and let-burning were not merely to be tolerated but actually promoted.¹³

The Green Book’s fire passages were an attempt to reformulate America’s relation to nature. Its sentiments leaped ahead of popular opinion, much as the Civil Rights Act had with racial attitudes. The reform stated an ideal: it did not allocate funds to make it happen or reconstruct Park Service organizational charts or establish a national-level staff to assist, much less specify how to execute the new regime. As Bruce Kilgore observed, the “individual parks were on their own.” It took another three years before operational guidelines established working parameters and parks beyond the Sierra Nevada (and of course Everglades) joined in. From then on it was a case of letting a hundred fires bloom.¹⁴

That bald observation, however, glosses over what was within the agency a tough sell. Not everyone agreed. Those who favored the natural landscape—resource managers, scientists—wanted more fire. Those who had risen through the protection division, which embraced both visitors and landscapes, hesitated. The parks were more overwhelmed by visitors than by fires and more dazzled by the sparkling infrastructure of Mission 66 than dismayed by overgrown woods. The agency drew its managerial caste mostly from its ranger corps, and its rangers rose through the protection division, which increasingly meant servicing visitors. The agency’s solution was to partition. Resource Management division would be responsible for fire’s restoration and a Protection

Prescribed burns like this one in 2016 in Sequoia National Park will begin the process of restoration for a healthier forest and watershed. This area had not seen natural fire in approximately 100 years. Fuels involved were mixed conifer composed of red fir, white fir, and Jeffery pine.

division for its removal. They were separate and unequal. Resource Management (and prescribed fire) had a small budget. Protection (and fire control) had access to big emergency funds.

That decision established an institutional chasm that the Park Service did not begin to close for another 20 years. The fissure could be finessed in the early years when the workforce was small, when nearly everyone knew everyone else, and when almost everyone had some fire experience or background. It became a fault line as the ranger corps was sucked into the widening maelstrom of law enforcement and, later, after big money poured into the fire program following the 1988 season, a “professionalization” of fire management that isolated it from the rest of the Service. For all its ideological swagger, the fire program depended on personalities—the personalities of superintendents and chief rangers, the personalities of those within a park who had to reconcile differing career paths and institutional purposes. The outcome favored bold superintendents like the progressive McLaughlin, but it allowed equally bold skeptics to stall. The Park Service could not do what came so readily to the Forest Service: it could not apply a common standard across a wide spectrum of settings. The Green Book freed parks from simple suppression without imposing a standard appropriate to the new era or without fashioning at a national level the enabling tools they would need. It made fire restoration desirable but not obligatory. Although scientists were catalysts, the Green Book based its doctrine not on science but on a standard of “naturalness.” By choosing not to dismantle the old fire-suppression organization, it left the new fire practices without a firm institutional home. The Leopold Report had argued that “controlled burning is the only method that may have extensive application,” but when pressed how, actually, to apply fire for restoration, its authors confessed that “we cannot offer an answer.”¹⁵

Fire fighting remained with the Protection division while fire lighting migrated into newly invented Resource Management divisions, which absorbed what foresters the parks still retained and added wildlife biologists. In this way fire’s management in the parks had two co-serving tribunes alternating their command. Because of emergency funding availability and sheer inertia, the deep power remained with suppression. It had the engines, the crews, the infrastructure, the heritage, and the connections with its counterparts across the park border. The fire restorers, like the fire-restoring parks, were on their own.

Green fire’s attractiveness to most observers—its appeal to naturalness—also compromised its ability to use all the tools in the fire cache. There was a clear bias for natural fire and against prescribed fire. Even an advocate like Superintendent McLaughlin wanted the term “prescribed burning” banished in favor of “restoring a natural process.” Controlled burning was costly, was not always controlled and specified culpable agents if something went wrong, and was tolerated only as a surrogate for nature’s fire. Lightning fire was the true vestal fire on America’s virgin lands. The drip torch was a grimy expedient useful only until lightning could reclaim its rightful place. The Tall Timbers agenda built on humanity’s long use of fire, the California agenda on fire’s ecological antiquity. To skeptics, the Green Book’s guidelines looked like Star Trek’s prime directive, in which nonintervention was the norm and intervention was allowed only to correct the perturbations caused by past intrusions.

The national parks broke the national unity of fire purpose and practice. The National Park Service could claim it had no choice—its mandate was to preserve the natural scene, and fire was an indis-

pensable part of that order. The Park Service was not the Forest Service. It did not have a mission to assimilate as many uses as possible. Buried in the Leopold Report was the revealing comment that “purely from the standpoint of how best to achieve the goal of park management, as here defined, unilateral administration directed to a single objective is obviously superior to divided responsibility in which secondary goals...are introduced.” The old all-purpose fire commons was being broken up and parsed into special uses, each of which would have its own fire protocols. The Green Book commenced that bureaucratic enclosure movement.¹⁶ □

Stephen J. Pyne is the author of numerous books on the history of wildfire around the world. This excerpt is from Between Two Fires by Stephen J. Pyne. © 2015 The Arizona Board of Regents. Reprinted by permission of the University of Arizona Press.

NOTES

1. “Above All...Naturalness’: An Inspired Report on the Parks,” *Sierra Club Bulletin* (March 1963): 3.
2. U.S. National Park Service, *Compilation of the Administrative Policies for the National Parks and National Monuments of Scientific Significance (Natural Area Category)*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970): 100–102; hereafter, Green Book. The report was reproduced in many venues; a useful, accessible version is available in *Sierra Club Bulletin* (March 1963).
3. *Ibid.*, 5–6, 102.
4. *Ibid.*, 6, 9.
5. Memorandum, from Secretary of the Interior to Director, National Park Service, May 2, 1963, reproduced in Green Book, 97.
6. Hartzog quote from Tom Nichols, comments to the author, October 13, 2013.
7. Many accounts of Biswell and his career exist, but begin with his own autobiography, Harold H. Biswell, *Prescribed Burning in California Wildlands Vegetation Management* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). Admirers and students organized a Festschrift with useful memorials: David R. Weise and Robert E. Martin, technical coordinators, *The Biswell Symposium: Fire Issues and Solutions in Urban Interface and Wildland Ecosystems*, General Technical Report PSW-GTR-158 (Berkeley, CA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Pacific Southwest Research Station, 1995).
8. For the chronology, see H. Thomas Harvey, Howard S. Shellhammer, and Ronald E. Stecker, *Giant Sequoia Ecology: Fire and Reproduction*, Scientific Monograph Series no. 12 (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1980: xvii).
9. William C. Everhart, *The National Park Service* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983): 55; Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, repr. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1947; New York: Island Press, 1998), 44.
10. See Bruce M. Kilgore, “Origin and History of Wildland Fire Use in the U.S. National Park System,” *George Wright Forum* 24, no. 3 (2007): 92–122; McLaughlin episode on p. 102. In broad terms the essay follows Hal K. Rothman, *Blazing Heritage: A History of Wildland Fire in the National Parks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), although much of Rothman’s material comes from interviews with Kilgore, but the essay provides useful details and stands as the best single summary of what happened. For a condensed 30-year history of natural fire endeavors, see Gary Cones and Paul Keller, “Managing Naturally-Ignited Fire: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow” (Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center, 2008).
11. The 10 a.m. policy was the standard of trying to extinguish or control a wildfire by 10 a.m. the next day. It had been policy for all federal agencies since shortly after Forest Service promulgated it in 1935.
12. Kilgore, “Origin and History,” 103–4; Rothman, *Blazing Heritage*, 112–13, 115–18. I am indebted to Tom Nichols for his perceptive comments on the institutional rifts that have plagued the National Park Service fire program from its origins.
13. Green Book, 17–18.
14. Kilgore, “Origin and History,” 102.
15. Green Book, 105, 103.
16. *Ibid.*, 105.

America's four national lakeshore and ten national seashore areas total just over 826,000 acres combined, or about one percent of the National Park System's total acreage. Yet those lands are some of the most visited in the entire system because of their proximity to major urban areas. Understanding how and why they were created provides insights into the National Park Service's history as a whole.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

GOES TO THE BEACH

In 1955, National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth issued a grave warning to the American people. “One of our greatest recreation resources—the seashore—is rapidly vanishing from public use,” Wirth wrote. “Nearly everyone seems to know this fact, but few do anything to halt the trend.”¹ More Americans were

building homes on the shore than ever before, and most of the country's coasts remained unregulated. Gone were the days when a youngster could “go five miles from the city of Boston, spend the day combing the beach or digging mud clams in the estuaries, and seldom see another human being within shouting distance.”²

To reduce threats of privatization, the National Park Service proposed the purchase of 437 miles of shoreline along U.S. coasts. The crown jewels of America's beaches would become national park sites, and smaller jurisdictions would protect and manage the remainder. The seashore was a “priceless scenic and scientific resource for which there is no substitute,” the Park Service reminded Americans. “Once subdivided and developed, it is lost forever.”³

The Park Service then embarked on a twenty-year push that led to the creation of thirteen of the nation's fourteen national seashores and lakeshores. The shoreline initiative, though often overlooked,

is crucial to understanding the Park Service's expansion, recreational development, approach to cultural landscapes, and land acquisition in the mid-twentieth century. This article examines the origins of the shoreline national park idea and how in the 1960s, after fifty years of stagnation, the U.S. government undertook the most comprehensive coastal conservation initiative in its history.

FLAT NATIONAL PARKS?

The first national parks in the United States were vast, mountainous landscapes. Early parks like Yellowstone, Yosemite, Sequoia, and Mount Rainier all featured breathtaking topography, with jagged peaks and deep valleys on a massive scale.⁴ Even the first national park on a coastline, Acadia National Park in Maine, had vertical landscapes where rocks and trees shot from the water's edge to elevations high above the ocean.⁵ Yet as early as 1916, Stephen

BY JACKIE M. M. GONZALES

Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, entertained the notion of a flat national park. In the same year that saw the establishment of the federal agency, Mather pushed for a national park whose highest elevation reached just 130 feet above the surrounding terrain in a state famed for its flatness: Indiana.

Mather led an initiative to create the Sand Dunes National Park on Lake Michigan's southern shoreline, a place called the "birthplace of American ecology."⁶ Sand dunes historically occupied all of Indiana's forty miles of shoreline. But as heavy industry moved into the state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, steel companies mechanically removed sand dunes to establish steel mills, ports, and refineries in cities like Gary, Whiting, and East Chicago. Even as Indiana's dunes were becoming a steel production center and facilitating Chicago's growth, both outward in the form of suburbs and upward in the form of skyscrapers, University of Chicago botanists were pioneering the science of ecology. Henry Chandler Cowles, considered "America's first professional ecologist," studied the sand dunes' rich biodiversity and geologic variety to develop notions of ecological succession.⁷

Cowles and other scientists wanted a national park that would protect Indiana's sand dune ecosystems. Advocates for establishing such a park for ecological reasons had a difficult time convincing Congress that a national park could be, well, flat. When midwestern landscape architect Jens Jensen pleaded that Indiana's coast merited protection, even he relied on the trope of vertical landscapes, confident such arguments would persuade a fledgling Park Service to preserve it:

Just think of us poor prairie folks, who have not the Adirondack Mountains, as our good friend from New York, and who have not the mountains of California, as has our good friend Mr. Mather. In fact the only thing in the world that we have that has any similarity at all to the Adirondacks and the Rocky Mountains is our dunes over in Indiana. The 200 feet of Mount Tom look just as big to me as the Rocky Mountains did when I visited them some years ago, and bigger to me, in fact, then did the Berkshires when I made my pilgrimage to those wonderful hills of Massachusetts.⁸

Jensen essentially argued that in Indiana, a sand dune *could* qualify as a vertical landscape. He and others did not attempt to shift the paradigm of what constituted a national park; rather, they tried to fit coastal dunes into the existing model.

Jensen's effort to make a mountain out of a sand dune did not impress Congress, which passed on Mather's Sand Dunes National Park proposal. The onset of World War I stalled any further legislation on the matter, and by the 1920s, Park Service leaders felt that new

industrial development now made Indiana's dunes "unacceptable for National Park status."⁹ The state of Indiana found a much smaller section of dunes worth preserving and bought just over 2,100 acres for an Indiana Dunes State Park in 1926.¹⁰ Still, the federal attempt to create Sand Dunes National Park left lingering questions: could beaches ever be nationally significant landscapes, and if so, would the Park Service take the initiative to protect them?

Park Service leaders abandoned coastal park plans for twenty years following the failure of the Sand Dunes proposal. In the interim, Congress considered, with controversy, another flat national park: the Everglades.¹¹ The very idea seemed revolutionary to a public introduced to national parks through mountainous



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

On October 31, 1916, Steven T. Mather led supporters through the Indiana Dunes a day after attending hearings to gauge public sentiment on a "Sand Dunes National Park." Another fifty years would elapse before the area was set aside as a national park.



Managing national seashores means the Park Service has to consider the humans who live within their boundaries. After Hurricane Isabel removed parts of Hatteras Island in Cape Hatteras National Seashore in 2003, coastal geologists objected to replacing the sand and rebuilding the road because doing so affects the long-term ecological health of the barrier islands. Residents prevailed and the island was restored within two months.

western landscapes: how could a swamp be worth preserving? Again, however, botanists and ecologists argued that special natural features merited federal protection. “Why not,” asked John K. Small of the New York Botanical Garden, “also have a unique area exhilarating by its lack of topography and charming by its matchless vegetation and animal life?”¹² Everglades National Park, approved in 1934, represented the Park Service’s first, reluctant foray into parks with horizontal landscapes. Ecologists and conservationists were delighted.¹³

“THE SEASHORE HAS A STRANGE APPEAL”

While the Park Service hemmed and hawed over whether flat landscapes merited federal protection, Americans hit the beach.¹⁴ Seaside vacations had been popular among the wealthy since the Victorian era, but the automobile democratized tourism and allowed families in the growing middle class to leave the city for a quick day trip to the shore.¹⁵ Before the automobile and asphalt, sandy roads and harsh weather had made even beaches near major cities difficult to reach. When Henry David Thoreau visited Cape Cod in the 1850s, traversing the peninsula from one end to the other took several days, and his carriage had trouble navigating the “heavy” roads until a rain firmed the sand. Asphalt laid in the 1920s shortened the journey across the Cape to only a few hours, making a day trip for Bostonians more feasible.¹⁶

As more Americans visited beaches, federal, state, and local governments wondered how best to accommodate them. Department of the Interior officials in the 1930s acknowledged that “the seashore has a strange appeal to a wide range of the population” yet was not “adequately represented” in the National

Park System. Beachgoers had few choices: less than one percent of the U.S. coast was in public ownership and available for recreational use in 1937.¹⁷ As of 1935, the Park Service administered no sandy beaches. Its only coastal parks were Acadia, the Everglades, Hawaii Volcanoes, and Katmai and Glacier Bay in Alaska—none of which facilitated, let alone encouraged, an easy day at the beach for a family.¹⁸

To address the deficit, in the mid-1930s the Park Service commissioned several surveys on potential coastal parks. Conrad Wirth, who oversaw Interior’s Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) operations (and who would become the agency’s director in the 1950s), pushed to include coasts in overall conservation and recreation planning. Wirth secured New Deal program money—through the CCC, the Public Works Administration, and the Works Progress Administration—to fund studies.¹⁹ Park planners surveyed the nation’s coasts with an eye for beaches that might merit inclusion in the national or state park systems. The resulting studies of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and the Pacific coast soon after that, were published in various reports of the decentralized New Deal programs that funded them. Because no comprehensive report was ever published, many of the separate studies have been lost. Surviving reports include detailed information on acreage, land acquisition costs, projected visitation, and administrative priorities of potential coastal parks.²⁰

As the Park Service finished its shoreline surveys, Congress passed the Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area Study Act of 1936, which directed the agency to increase its recreation efforts. The act’s authorizing language “significantly expanded the range and type of land areas that could be preserved and managed” by the

Park Service.²¹ New parks could now be added for their recreation potential alone. With this new mandate to provide recreational resources for the millions of urban Americans, beaches—especially those near large metropolitan areas—were now eligible for inclusion in the National Park System.²²

Despite the new mandate, Congress authorized only one coastal national park site before World War II: Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina. Cape Hatteras legislation was passed in 1937 thanks to the lobbying of Conrad Wirth, who was especially familiar with Cape Hatteras because of its large CCC camp.²³ Nevertheless, Cape Hatteras National Seashore was not actually established until 1953 because the legislation required the state of North Carolina to acquire, either through purchase or donation, a certain acreage of nonfederal area within the designated seashore boundaries, which the state would then turn over to the Park Service.²⁴ Although Cape Hatteras set a precedent as the original national seashore park, the lag between authorization and establishment was not a model that the Park Service wanted to follow when establishing future seashore parks. On the next go-around, the Park Service would bring money to the table, even if its leaders had to do it themselves.

Conrad Wirth would make sure of that. His vision of beach parks had propelled the 1930s coastal park studies, and he continued his advocacy in the postwar period. When later asked who came up with the seashore idea, one of Wirth's colleagues said the concept originated "pretty much in-house, a Connie Wirth contribution."²⁵ When Wirth became director of the National Park Service in 1951, he resurrected his seashore idea.

BACK TO THE BEACHES

During the war years the Park Service's budget was slashed. In 1942, the agency even lost its national offices: its headquarters were moved from Washington to Chicago to make room for war-related agencies.²⁶ Like civilians, civilian agencies were expected to tighten their belts and do their part. By 1945, the Park Service budget had dropped to \$4.74 million—less than one-seventh its budget in 1940.²⁷ Even if it had been well funded, few Americans could visit national parks during the war years because of gasoline and rubber rations. After the war ended, young families—newly elevated to the middle class thanks to the GI Bill and a strong economy—flocked to national parks...and found them in a state of disrepair.²⁸ After decades of little to no funding, these exponential increases in visitation left the Park Service searching for some way to breathe life into the system again.

Park Service leaders developed a long-term plan that captured the imagination of Congress and the public. They called it Mission 66.²⁹ The Mission 66 initiatives would pump \$1 billion into national parks over a ten-year period culminating in 1966, the golden anniversary of the Park Service, and address recreation, automobile tourism, built infrastructure, and accommodation of huge postwar crowds of tourists.³⁰ Wirth wanted recreational development of beaches to be an integral part of Mission 66. He wanted to commission new surveys of U.S. coasts, since heavy development had rendered the 1930s shoreline reports outdated "ghosts of departed opportunities," but he lacked funding.³¹

Then in 1952, Paul Mellon, son of wealthy industrialist and banker Andrew W. Mellon, initiated a conversation with Wirth about a piece of land in North Carolina that the family hoped to conserve. When that effort fell through, Mellon asked what other

land in North Carolina might be of interest. Wirth quickly suggested the Cape Hatteras project, stalled because North Carolina still lacked funds to purchase the land that would trigger establishment of a national seashore.³² The Mellon family foundations contributed more than \$600,000 for land purchases at Cape Hatteras, making possible Cape Hatteras National Seashore.³³

It was then that Wirth described the out-of-date seashore studies as another opportunity for the Mellon foundations' conservation work. Wirth recounted that Paul Mellon had shown "great interest" in seashore conservation, even before Mission 66,

at a time when the Park Service was suffering low budget problems that resulted from the costly cold war. At Paul Mellon's request we presented to the Old Dominion and Avalon foundations an estimate of the cost of making a restudy of not only the Atlantic and Gulf coasts but also the Pacific coast. The foundations provided the funds for this study and also for a study of the shores of the Great Lakes.³⁴

The Mellons hoped to keep their funding of shoreline studies quiet, especially after news of their Cape Hatteras donations ended up in the headlines despite attempts to keep it under wraps.³⁵ It is now clear that ample funds from the Mellon foundations enabled seashore studies to proceed with renewed vigor and greater momentum than their publicly funded 1930s counterparts. Mellon was continuing a tradition of wealthy industrialists: just as the Rockefeller family had purchased and donated land for early national parks, the Mellon foundations' funds for surveys, studies, and minimal purchases of shorelines enabled the realization of the seashore initiative.³⁶

With funding secured, the Park Service commissioned a comprehensive report on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts in 1955; surveys of the Pacific and Great Lakes coasts followed in 1959.³⁷ The surveys recommended for protection as local, state, or federal seashores 66 areas along the Great Lakes, seventy-seven areas along the Pacific Coast, and fifty-four areas along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Of these, the surveys recommended twenty-six shorelines with nationally significant characteristics for inclusion in the National Park System: sixteen areas on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, five on the Great Lakes, and five on the Pacific.³⁸ Each survey stressed the importance of providing recreation opportunities while also conserving important biological resources, including beaches, marshes, and uplands.³⁹

The Park Service distributed a summary of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts survey aimed at the public. Published in 1955 in an easily understood, illustrated booklet, "A Report on Our Vanishing Shoreline" was distributed in coastal towns across the United States and helped shape public opinion—both support and opposition—for protecting seashores in the late 1950s.⁴⁰ Newspapers published articles and op-eds on the findings of the report, bureaucrats started work on feasibility plans at certain sites, local advocates of particular shorelines asked to see it, and Interior officials rushed to get copies in the hands of politicians with potential seashore parks in their districts.⁴¹

With the press coverage of seashore proposals, residents of affected coastal areas began writing to their elected officials. They wrote of their love for beaches, what some saw as a great need for public coastal land, and their concerns about private property inside proposed parks. Some individuals wrote to request legislative action to establish a coastal park in their backyards—while sparing



About Cape Cod, a visiting Henry David Thoreau opined: “All the aspects of this desert are beautiful, whether you behold it in fair weather or foul, or when the sun is just breaking out after a storm, and shining on its moist surface in the distance, it is so white, and pure, and level, and each slight inequality and track is so distinctly revealed; and when your eyes slide off this, they fall on the ocean.”

their own backyard. Many advocates of seashore preservation referenced “Our Vanishing Shoreline” explicitly, even adopting its language. For example, Maurice Barbash of Fire Island, New York, wrote that “our rapidly vanishing shoreline” was part of “our irreplaceable natural heritage,” and James Randall of Cape Cod wrote to then Senator John Kennedy that “one need only look at our vanishing shoreline with its ever increasing abundance of neon signs, hot dog stands, and other misplaced vulgarity to know that a bill of this nature must take the highest precedence if such natural beauty sports are not to be lost forever.”⁴² The vague but powerful term “our vanishing shoreline” became a catch-all, a way to describe changing economies of coastal towns and a yearning for the past, whatever past that might be.

The 1950s shoreline studies also prompted community activism both for and against national seashores and national lakeshores. The Save the Dunes Council in northern Indiana, which had begun as a women’s group in the early 1950s, pushed forward with renewed energy, capitalizing on the publicity that the shoreline studies generated.⁴³ The national outdoors organization the Izaak Walton League started a “Save Our Seashore” campaign, at the direct request of Kennedy.⁴⁴ The Sierra Club devoted an entire issue to supporting establishment of a Point Reyes National Seashore in 1959, and then three years later published one of its first coffee-table books on Point Reyes.⁴⁵ And the *Cape Codder* newspaper published editorials in favor of a Cape Cod National Seashore Park. In some coastal communities, however, “Our Vanishing Shoreline” galvanized local constituencies against a public park: ranchers opposed Point Reyes, for example, and summer homeowners opposed Sleeping Bear Dunes in Michigan.⁴⁶ The bureaucracy, the public, and private funders all had beaches on their minds. It was time to bring in the politicians.

CONGRESS CONSIDERS SEASHORES

Although the Department of the Interior can study and propose potential park additions, national park units can be created only by an act of Congress or by presidential designation as a national monument. In response to Mission 66, Congress churned out national park legislation in bipartisan fashion: from 1957 to 1972, it authorized more than eighty new Park Service units and the study of countless other potential areas.⁴⁷ Congressional proposals for seashore parks flooded the House and Senate floors a few years after the release of “Our Vanishing Shoreline.” Bills for approximately ten new national seashore or lakeshore units were introduced in the Eighty-fifth Congress (1957–1958), to be followed by dozens more in the Eighty-ninth.⁴⁸

In Washington, Interior officials drove the seashore and lakeshore legislation effort. From their vantage point, the federal government needed to buy coastal land to create parks, and quickly. They fed legislators early bills in a one-size-fits-all format. Legislators also introduced individual bills for seashores in their own states, confusing and potentially slowing a process that Interior wanted to control and expedite. To prevent legislative chaos, Interior asked Senator Richard Neuberger, a noted conservationist, former journalist, and an enthusiastic proponent of the Oregon Dunes National Seashore, to draft an omnibus bill that would both establish several seashores and order the study of others.⁴⁹ S. 2010, which Neuberger introduced in 1959 on behalf of Interior, authorized \$15 million for the acquisition of land for no more than three national seashores, not to exceed 100,000 acres, which the Secretary of the Interior would select after further study.⁵⁰

Residents of potentially affected coastal areas rallied against Neuberger’s bill, protesting application of a one-size-fits-all legislative plan to their varied communities: what was appropriate on Cape



When establishing Point Reyes National Seashore, the federal government had to account for and work with owners of historic dairy farms like this one that dated back to the mid-1800s.

Cod would not necessarily work for Point Reyes' cattle ranchers, and what worked in Indiana's industrial sand dunes might not be amenable to communities on Fire Island or Padre Island in Texas. Neuberger encountered so much opposition to the omnibus approach championed by Interior that he soon opposed his own bill. To ease a constituent's angst over Neuberger's bill, John F. Kennedy reassured him,

The bill has generated no visible support as yet, though it has had no active consideration. Senator Neuberger himself is not a proponent of this legislation and merely introduced it on request by the Department of the Interior.⁵¹

Other omnibus bills for creating national seashores followed. S. 543, introduced in 1961, when several individual seashore bills were already under consideration, would have funded studies of twelve possible coastal national parks and national forest coastal lands that could be suitable for recreational uses.⁵² Like Neuberger's bill, S. 543 never made it out of committee.⁵³

Differences in land use, power structures, local politics, and jurisdiction over beaches versus inland areas made any omnibus bill on seashores politically difficult. A park-by-park legislative approach held more promise. Elected officials began responding to constituents' concerns when drafting the bills, taking some power away from Interior. By the early 1960s, Interior had yielded to a park-by-park approach to creating national seashores, even as agency leaders continued to see the push for buying up coastal land as a concerted national conservation effort.

MISSION 66 ACCOMPLISHED

Seashores played a prominent role in the expansion of the federal park system over the next decade: between 1961 and 1975,

Congress authorized the addition of thirteen national seashores or lakeshores to the National Park System.⁵⁴ Of those, four were within a two-hour drive of major metropolitan areas: Cape Cod (Boston), Fire Island (New York City), Point Reyes (San Francisco), and the Indiana Dunes (Chicago). Although their individual stories merit more than the few paragraphs,⁵⁵ a brief mention of how these four national seashores came into being is nonetheless enlightening for understanding Park Service history as a whole.

Cape Cod was the first national seashore Congress established as a result of the 1950s studies. After years of drafting legislation that would protect homeowners, with the help of many politically connected Cape Cod residents, Congress authorized Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961, and President John F. Kennedy signed it into law in August. In his prepared remarks given at the signing ceremony, Kennedy reinforced the idea that Cape Cod was part of a larger federal seashore effort, stating,

I join the Congress and hope that this will be one of a whole series of great seashore parks which will be for the use and benefit of all of our people... I think we are going to need a good deal more effort like this, particularly in the more highly developed urban areas, where so many millions of people now live... I know that the government and the Congress will work together in seeing how they can carry on similar projects in other parts of the country.⁵⁶

Kennedy's careful mention of how Cape Cod would serve as a model for other parks near metropolitan areas helped propel Interior's actions on other seashore parks.

In 1962, Congress passed legislation authorizing Point Reyes National Seashore, located only a few hours' drive from the booming Bay Area.⁵⁷ Here, dairy farmers owned a good deal of the land slated for acquisition. Arguments among ranchers, Bay Area



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residents, and Interior turned on whether a national seashore could include continued agricultural use, whether suburban development really threatened the area, and how much buy-in Congress needed from residents of the affected area.

Back on the East Coast, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall publicly squared off with New York's powerful planner Robert Moses over Fire Island.⁵⁸ In 1964 the barrier island became a national seashore rather than a scenic highway, as Moses had wanted, thanks in large part to the strength of the wilderness movement and the desire for more conservation-oriented, roadless parks during the formative years of the environmental movement.⁵⁹

And in 1966, fifty years after establishment of the National Park Service and fifty years after Stephen Mather held hearings on a proposed Sand Dunes National Park, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the act establishing the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.⁶⁰ Heavy industry had continued to encroach on Indiana's biologically unique sand dunes in the intervening half century; by the 1960s, the state of Indiana had its eye on a public port at a sandy ditch in the dunes, a location that would surely require constant dredging but looked newly attractive with the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959. In a deft realpolitik move, Illinois Senator Paul Douglas crafted a last-minute legislative compromise in which the state would get federal funding for a port only if the remainder of Indiana's sand dunes became a national lakeshore.⁶¹ The scheme worked, and Indiana got both

a new port and a 15,000-acre national lakeshore only an hour's drive from downtown Chicago.

An effort that started in the most unlikely of places—an industrial zone in the Midwest—grew to encompass lands favored by some of America's wealthiest and most influential citizens that is now accessible to tens of millions of taxpayers. As Americans' values changed as the nation became more urbanized and cities grew in the first half of the twentieth century, attitudes towards beaches and seashore landscapes changed with, or as a result of, this growth. Efforts to include beaches in the national park system began with a fleeting whim of Park Service director Stephen Mather, gained traction in the mid-1930s, and then became a realistic goal in the 1960s because of the interest of Conrad Wirth, wealthy philanthropists, and an agency flush with Mission 66 funding. The personal interest of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in particular seashores (Cape Cod and Padre Island) and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall's recreation- and conservation-focused leadership made seashores and lakeshores a reality. The rapid and extensive federal coastal land acquisition in the 1960s and early 1970s represents the largest concerted coastal conservation initiative in U.S. history. The story of how it happened is vital to understanding not only National Park Service history, but how the United States came to protect and manage its complex and shifting shorelines.

Thus a whim of Director Mather that targeted Indiana's industrialized sand dunes in the 1910s gained traction in the mid-1930s and then became a realistic goal in the 1960s because of the efforts

National Seashores and National Lakeshores

Park	State	Signed into Law	Officially Established	Total Acreage	Federal Acreage
Cape Hatteras NS	NC	August 17, 1937	January 12, 1953	30,350.65	30,350.10
Cape Cod NS	MA	August 7, 1961	June 1, 1966	43,607.14	27,548.99
Point Reyes NS	CA	September 13, 1962	October 20, 1972	71,055.41	65,234.35
Padre Island NS	TX	September 28, 1962	April 6, 1968	130,434.27	130,355.46
Fire Island NS	NY	September 11, 1964	September 11, 1984	19,580.42	6,241.95
Assateague Island NS	MD, VA	September 21, 1965	September 21, 1965	41,346.50	18,928.27
Cape Lookout NS	NC	March 10, 1966	March 10, 1966	28,243.36	25,173.62
Pictured Rocks NL	MI	October 15, 1966	October 5, 1972	73,235.83	35,728.86
Indiana Dunes NL	IN	November 5, 1966	November 5, 1966	15,347.13	11,040.90
Apostle Islands NL	WI	September 26, 1970	September 26, 1970	69,377.43	42,160.70
Sleeping Bear Dunes NL	MI	October 21, 1970	October 21, 1970	71,210.15	57,472.53
Gulf Islands NS	MS, AL, FL	January 8, 1971	January 8, 1971	138,305.52	99,779.27
Cumberland Island NS	GA	October 23, 1972	October 23, 1972	36,346.83	19,524.92
Canaveral NS	FL	January 3, 1975	January 3, 1975	57,661.69	57,647.69

Source: U.S. National Park Service, *The National Parks: Index 1916–2016*

of Director Wirth, the support of philanthropists, federal funding for Mission 66, and the environmentalism of Secretary Udall. The 36-page report “Our Vanishing Shoreline” precipitated a broad federal coastal land acquisition program, and the personal interest of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in Cape Cod and Padre Island, respectively, propelled congressional action on seashores and lakeshores. This rapid, extensive federal coastal land acquisition in the 1960s and early 1970s represents the largest concerted coastal conservation initiative in U.S. history. The story of how it happened is vital to understanding not only National Park Service history, but how the United States came to protect and manage its complex and shifting shorelines. □

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NOTES

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2. “Our Vanishing Shoreline,” 7–8.
3. “Our Vanishing Shoreline,” 15.
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5. For more on the Park Service’s inclination toward vertical landscapes, see Runte, *National Parks*, 197, 210–11; Paul Sadin, *Managing a Land in Motion: An Administrative History of Point Reyes National Seashore* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2007), 40–41. On Acadia, see George B. Dorr, *Acadia National Park: Its Origin and Background* (Bangor: Burr Printing Co., 1942).
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Ecological Study of the Sand Dune Flora of Northern Indiana” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1898).

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9. Quote is from Horace Albright, cited in Kay Franklin and Norma Schaeffer, *Duel for the Dunes: Land Use Conflict on the Shores of Lake Michigan* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 36; on industrial development, see 34–36, 40–42.
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11. Runte, *National Parks*, 127–34.
12. Runte, *National Parks*, 136; on the Everglades, 130–36.
13. Robert Sterling Yard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 21, 1924. Folder “FDR: Family, Business and Personal, Subject File. National Parks Association,” Box 30, Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt Family, Business and Personal Papers. Subject File. Miscellaneous Memorabilia—Naval Matters. Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, NY. On the increased influence of biologists on agency policy in the 1930s, see Richard Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), chap. 4.
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15. Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 17–24.
16. Henry David Thoreau, *Cape Cod* (1864; repr., New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1893), 20; Christopher Wells, *Car Country: An Environmental History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 201–27.
17. Oscar L. Chapman, Acting Secretary of the Interior, to Honorable Rene L. DeRouen, Chairman, Committee on the Public Lands, July 19, 1937. Report to accompany H.R. 7022, *Establishment of Cape Hatteras National Seashore. August 9, 1937*. Calendar No. 1247, 75th Congress, 1st Session, Senate, Report No. 1196.
18. Larry Dilsaver, *Cumberland Island National Seashore: A History of Conservation Conflict* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 77.
19. Cameron Binkley, *The Creation and Establishment of Cape Hatteras National Seashore: The Great Depression through Mission 66* (Atlanta: National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, 2007), 4; Douglas W. Doe, “New Deal Origins of the Cape Cod National Seashore,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 25(2) (Summer 1997): 144–45.

20. Emerson Knight, *Point Reyes Peninsula, CA: Study of a National Seashore Recreation Area 1935*, 1935, Box 5, Folder 12, Emerson Knight Collection, BANC 79/2 C, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Thomas H. Desmond, "A Proposed Seashore and Historic Parkway on Cape Cod, Massachusetts," commissioned by the National Park Service (Simsbury, CT, 1939), 3–4.
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26. John C. Miles, *Wilderness in National Parks: Playground or Preserve* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 115; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 151.
27. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 318. The 1940 budget was \$28.8 million.
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29. Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2000), 1–6.
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31. "Our Vanishing Shoreline," 9, 23.
32. Wirth recounts his version of this back-and-forth in his memoir, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 55–56.
33. Binkley, *Creation and Establishment of Cape Hatteras National Seashore*, 99–101.
34. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 58. The two foundations merged to form the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in 1969. See Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, "History," <https://mellon.org/about/history/>, accessed April 18, 2017.
35. Sadin, *Managing a Land in Motion*, 46; Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 55–58, 193; and Binkley, *Creation and Establishment of Cape Hatteras National Seashore*, 109–112.
36. Even early leaders were industrial giants and philanthropists: Mather, who had made a fortune in borax mining, supplemented Park Service funding in its early years. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 31, 94; Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 49, 54; Mackintosh, *The National Parks*, 23, 49. After this, the Mellon Foundation continued seashore conservation work: in 1970, it donated \$6 million toward land acquisition at Cumberland Island National Seashore. Dilsaver, *Cumberland Island National Seashore*, 101–02.
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38. "Our Vanishing Shoreline," 27, 35–36; "Report on the Seashore Recreation Area Survey of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts"; "Pacific Coast Recreation Area Survey," 11; "Our Fourth Shore," 6.
39. "Our Fourth Shore," 7–8; "Pacific Coast Recreation Area Survey," 8–10, 13; "Our Vanishing Shoreline," 18–19.
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41. Letter, Hatfield Chilson, Undersecretary of the Interior, to John F. Kennedy, September 16, 1957, Box 620, "Cape Cod Canal, Cape Cod National Park, 6/11/57–9/16/57" Folder, Pre-Presidential Papers, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston (hereafter, JFKL); Letter, Leslie Moore, Executive Editor, *Worcester Telegram—The Evening Gazette Sunday Telegram* to Senator John F. Kennedy, March 12, 1957, Box 663, "Cape Cod Canal, Cape Cod National Park, 1/31/56–4/9/57" Folder, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL. Letter, E. T. Scoyen, Acting Director, Department of Interior, to Mrs. Adrian Murphey, May 1959, Box 687, "Cape Cod National Park, 4/1/59–6/29/59" Folder, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL.
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48. Franklin and Schaeffer, *Duel for the Dunes*, 159; Derek Larson, "Preserving Eden: The Culture of Conservation in Oregon, 1960–1980" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2001), 44; "Fire Island National Park Wins Support," *Suffolk County News (Sayville)*, March 8, 1957, 1; Francis P. Burling, *The Birth of the Cape Cod National Seashore* (Plymouth, MA: Leyden Press, 1978), 11.
49. "National Parks Shouldn't Be Set Up by Decree," editorial, *Saturday Evening Post*, July 18, 1959, 10.
50. 105 Cong. Rec. 8549 (May 20, 1959); Dilsaver, *Cumberland Island National Seashore*, 85–86.
51. John F. Kennedy to Nathaniel Saltonstall, June 29, 1959, Box 713, "Cape Cod National Park, 4/1/59–6/29/59" Folder, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKL.
52. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Subcommittee on Public Lands, Shoreline Recreation Areas: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Public Lands on S. 543, 87th Cong., 1st sess., March 8 and 9, 1961, 2.
53. Dilsaver, *Cumberland Island National Seashore*, 85–86.
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In 1970, tensions between young campers and National Park Service employees in Yosemite boiled over and turned violent. The series of confrontations led to changes in how the Park Service viewed and handled law enforcement in the popular national park.

THE STONEMAN MEADOW RIOTS

AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

The buzz of voices filled the air as people gathered in small knots scattered across the eastern end of the Yosemite Valley, waiting expectantly for the darkness to come. Dozens sat in front of the stage at Camp Curry, frequently glancing up from their conversations to Glacier Point. Others had found

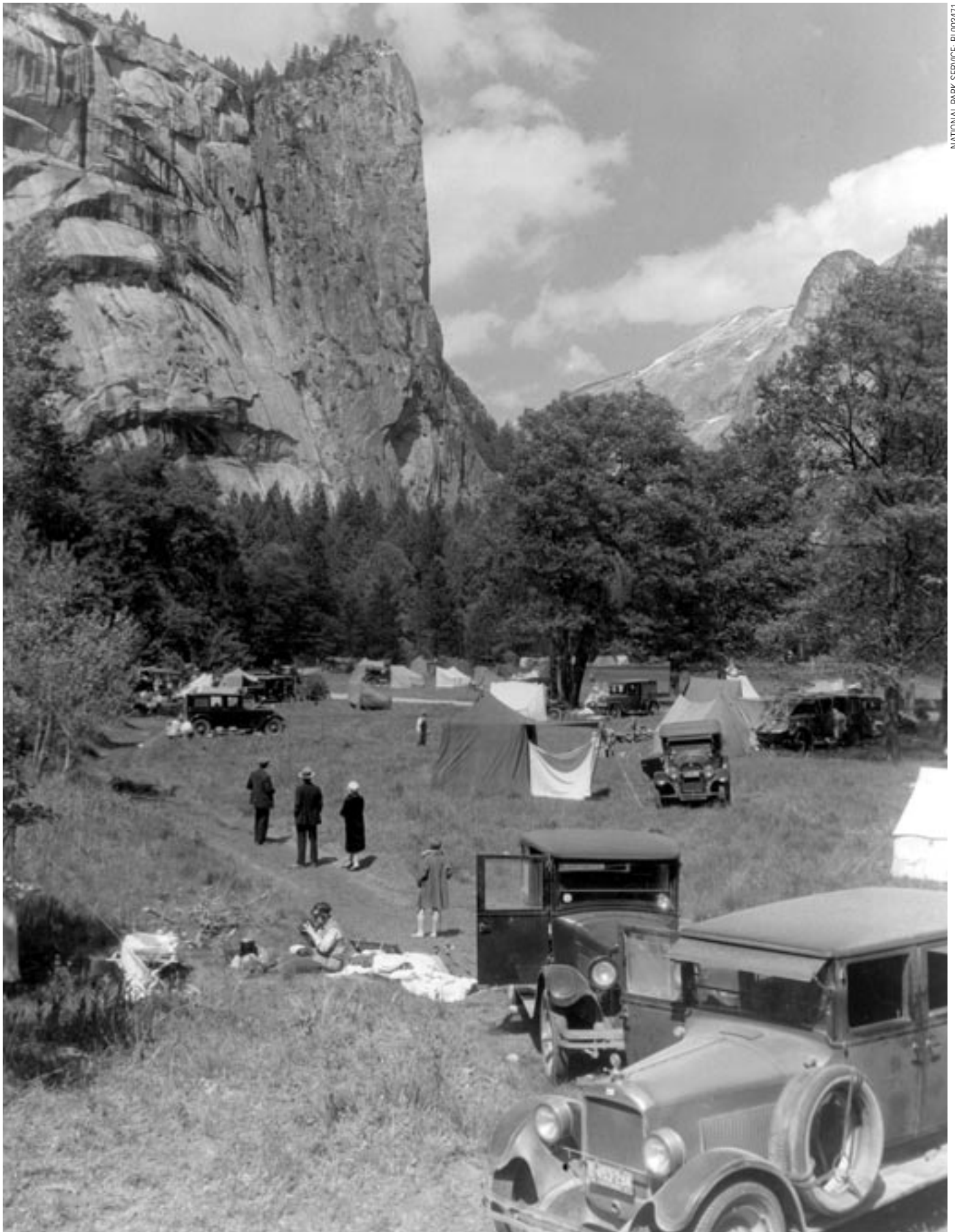
their favorite spots in the surrounding trees, parking lots, and meadows. Softly at first, but quickly gaining volume as more campers joined in, the strains of “America the Beautiful” rose above the din. Soon it felt like everyone in the valley was singing.

The conversations and singing immediately hushed as a faint voice rang out: “Hello Glacier Point!” The crowd quieted as a single voice called from above, “Hello Camp Curry!” Then, another voice, typically that of the night bellhop at the Ahwahnee Hotel, hidden behind a nearby boulder, yelled, “Is the fire ready?” A beat later, from Glacier Point, came the response, “Yes, the fire is ready.” The invisible voice then bellowed, “LET THE FIRE FALL!” As if by magic, a cascade of glowing embers poured off Glacier Point, making it appear as if a waterfall of fire was flowing down the granite face. As thousands of viewers gasped in delight, the sound of cameras clicking and whirring in quick succession filled the air as the vivid red coals streamed down the darkened granite face.¹

Wildly popular since its inception in 1872, the Firefall had grown into a beloved tradition in Yosemite. Many visitors considered it the highlight of their annual trip to the park. So in 1968, when the Park Service announced its cancellation of the event, the news came as a jolt to many. Calling the Firefall “artificial,” Park Service Director George Hartzog decided the event had grown too large, created too much traffic, and left behind too much litter. Charged with protecting the natural wonder of the park, the Park Service, he asserted, could no longer condone the event.² The event’s popularity had led to its demise.

The Firefall’s cancellation, and the ensuing public backlash, highlighted the very real limitations of visitor use in Yosemite. With the park hosting more than two million visitors annually, crowds were overwhelming campgrounds, roads, trails, and scenic overlooks. Rather than finding space for the quiet contemplation of Yosemite’s wonders, the park’s visitors more often encountered

BY MICHAEL CHILDERS



People camping with tents and automobiles in Stoneman Meadow, below Washington Column, Yosemite Valley, 1927. A few years later, camping was banned in the meadow; 40 years later, it became the site of a riot that changed Park Service policies.



In the late 1960s, families vacationing in Yosemite Valley expected to hear rangers talking about nature above the din of birds, not above loud music, drunken revelry, and roaring motorcycles.

mountains of litter, citylike traffic jams, and campgrounds chaotically packed with tents, cars, and people. Bumper-to-bumper traffic brought mounting complaints over air pollution and the lack of parking in the valley. Weekend traffic congestion had become so bad in Yosemite Valley that Park Service officials worried that they would soon have to put up “Closed to Vehicles” signs at the park’s entrances. Within the next two years, rangers did begin turning cars away from the valley on busy summer weekends.

Outside the valley, the constant stream of cars passing through the Wawona Tree had so weakened the tree’s root system that the giant sequoia could no longer support itself. The tree’s collapse in winter 1969 brought an end to a nearly 90-year tradition of visitors’ driving through its tunnel by horseback and automobile. While saddened by the giant sequoia’s death, one ranger voiced his relief, telling the *New York Times*, “I hate to say it was fortunate, but the tree was a real headache, a major traffic jam.” Throughout Yosemite, sitting in traffic had become as common an experience as standing at the base of Yosemite Falls, leading to mounting calls to limit the number of cars allowed into the park.³

A METROPOLITAN AREA IN THE SUMMERTIME

Although traffic remained the park’s most visible problem, camping and lodging were also reaching a crisis point. As early as 1965, Hartzog described Yosemite as being a “great metropolitan area in

the summertime.”⁴ Overcrowding had become such a problem that by the late 1960s, Yosemite Valley had earned the unwanted nickname “Yosemite City.”

In 1967, one-seventh of all the camping in the entire National Park System occurred in Yosemite Valley.⁵ Anarchy reigned in the campgrounds. Campers set up wherever they wanted because there existed no designated individual sites. One Yosemite visitor complained that 25 to 60 people crammed into single campsites.⁶ To address the issue, in 1968 the Park Service finally delineated individual sites, each with a single picnic table, fire ring, tent area, and parking spot, in the hopes of imposing some much-needed order on the bedlam. This obvious step did not alleviate the problem. “I’ve had people move right in, take down my tent and set up where my family camped while we were off hiking,” one visitor complained.⁷ Disregard for the long-held tradition of first-come, first-served forced the creation of a reservation system.

Frustrations with overcrowding in Yosemite took a much darker turn in the summer of 1970. Seeking a small bit of respite from modern life by camping along the Merced River, peering out over Glacier Point, or standing at the base of the Yosemite Falls, visitors instead found modern life intruding on their solace: traffic congestion, chaos, and loud noise in the campgrounds, and both the Yosemite and Curry villages teeming with people, including a growing number of young visitors. To many, the long-haired and strangely dressed youth were simply odd. But to others, including

many long-time park rangers, the growing numbers of “hippies” roaming Yosemite Valley were an unwelcome intrusion. Park rangers fielded seemingly endless complaints about loud music, marijuana smoke, loose dogs, public nudity, and theft. “It seemed that every group had loud stereo systems, and we kept moving from one campsite to another trying to quiet them down and hoping it would stay that way,” recalled law enforcement ranger James O’Toole.⁸

Similarly, Don Hummel, president of the Yosemite Park & Curry Company, which operated lodging and food concessions in Yosemite Valley, complained of the rampant panhandling, loitering, and shoplifting in the park. It had become generally accepted that leaving possessions unattended in any campground typically ended with having them stolen. Frustrated over the Park Service’s failure, in his view, to police Curry Village, Hummel turned to private security. Some tourists met the new security with a mixture of resignation and outrage at the presence of a private police force in a national park. Most, however, aimed their ire at the few panhandlers sitting outside the village’s restaurants and shops.⁹

But if there was a single issue that bedeviled park visitors and rangers alike, it was the lack of parking. Unable to find parking in campgrounds, where visitors were limited to one vehicle per campsite, or in nearby parking lots, many drivers had simply taken to parking along the side of the road. This, in turn, further congested Yosemite Valley’s heavily used thoroughfares. Congestion was particularly bad adjacent to Stoneman Meadow, where groups of mostly young visitors had begun to congregate in increasing numbers but, as had been the case for 40 years, camping was not allowed. Park rangers managed both the illegally parked cars and the crowds in the meadow by citing those vehicles parked on the meadow’s edge, to encourage their owners to move.

This rather informal arrangement came to an abrupt end on Memorial Day weekend in 1970. That Saturday evening, rangers announced that people in the meadow needed to remove their cars parked alongside the road or risk being ticketed. When few complied, rangers closed the four-way intersection at Camp Curry to stop any further traffic. They then called in a tow truck to begin removing all the illegally parked vehicles. With the parking issue seemingly settled, Yosemite’s chief law ranger, Dave Patterson, ordered rangers to begin pushing people out of the meadow while he and three

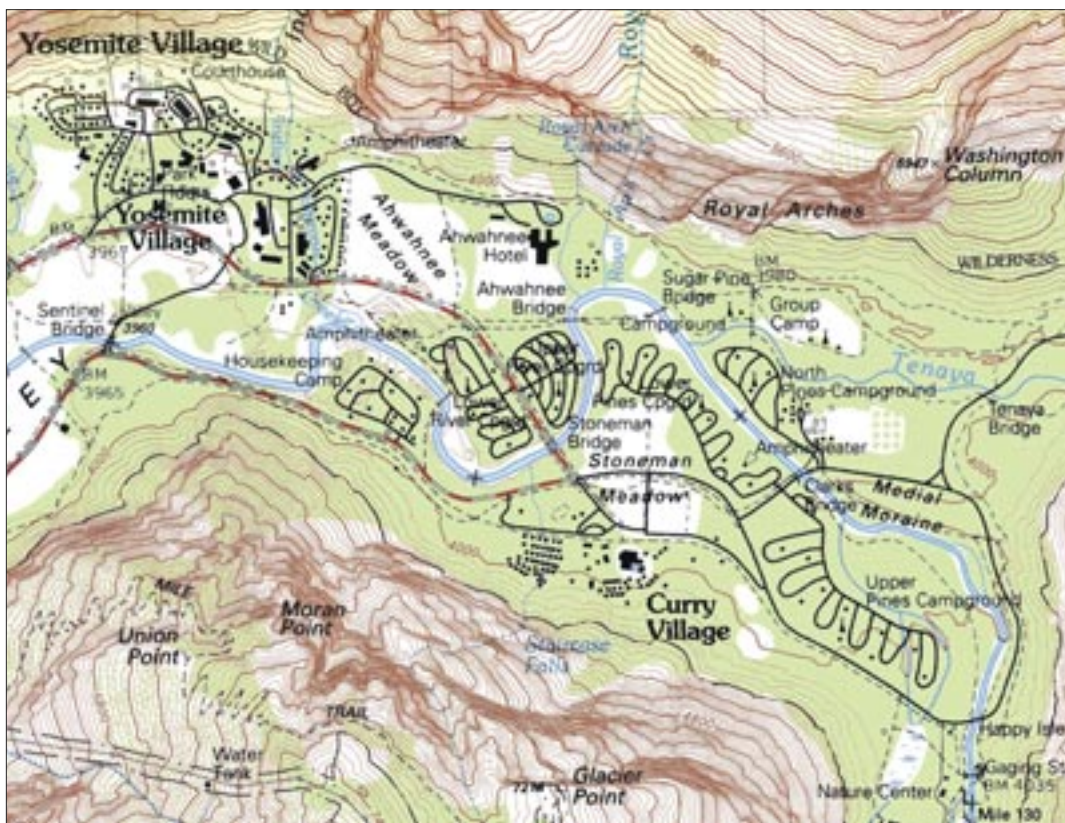
other rangers boxed in the near side to ensure none slipped back in. Few in the meadow initially noticed the rangers’ entry. But after rangers arrested a young man for pulling a knife, “the crowd seemed to explode,” Patterson later wrote in his report on the incident.¹⁰ Fearing further violence, Patterson ordered his men to withdraw from the meadow. Emboldened by the rangers’ departure, and seething over their harassment, many lingered at Stoneman Meadow before finally dispersing the following morning.

Although rangers had made only a single arrest, tensions in Yosemite Valley remained high the next day. Making matters worse, crowds continued to pour into the area, overrunning the already crammed campgrounds and stretching the nine park rangers on duty to the breaking point. “By Saturday the men were extremely tired, having only 7 or 8 hours sleep in a 48-hour period,” according to Patterson. In addition to having contended with the crowds gathered in Stoneman Meadow, the small band of rangers had had to deal with multiple car accidents, reroute incoming traffic out of the valley to alleviate overcrowding, and conduct what few foot patrols they could. Although no further violence occurred, the size of the holiday crowds that had descended on Yosemite Valley raised serious alarms over the coming Fourth of July weekend.¹¹

SHOWDOWN IN STONEMAN MEADOW

Such concerns proved warranted as thousands of visitors swarmed into Yosemite for the long holiday weekend. Seeking to prevent another confrontation in Stoneman Meadow, Superintendent Robert L. Arnberger ordered quiet hours in the valley be moved from 10 to seven o’clock in the evening. Once again, groups of young revelers gathered in the meadow. By early evening an estimated 300 had settled in and showed no sign of obeying the curfew. The situation in many of the valley’s campgrounds was no better, with loud drunken parties shattering the evening peace.

Stoneman Meadow is in the heart of Yosemite Valley, near the Ahwahnee Hotel (now called the Majestic Yosemite Hotel), and adjacent to several campgrounds and the tent cabins in Curry Village, now called Half Dome Village.



U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY MAPS, 1992, VIA PICKATRAIL.COM, MODIFIED

Seeking to regain control by first removing the increasingly wild parties from Stoneman Meadow, rangers slowly encircled the meadow. As quiet hours began, over a loudspeaker a ranger ordered the crowd to disperse while law enforcement rangers, augmented by 13 wranglers and packers on horseback, entered the meadow in a long skirmish line.

Walking past Stoneman Meadow with his twenty-one-year-old daughter that evening, John Fisher watched as the line of rangers and mounted park employees moved into the meadow. "Before my very eyes we watched these children stampeded, several being clubbed, and two thrown to the ground, handcuffed, and led off to jail," the physician and former Florida state senator later wrote in a scathing open letter to President Richard Nixon. In the ensuing chaos, Fisher lost track of his daughter, only to be reunited with her when a ranger physically dragged her to him and demanded to know whether she was in fact his child. Incensed as much at her treatment as at the Park Service's heavy-handed tactics, Fischer insisted on speaking to the superintendent but was told that Arnberger would not be available until Monday. Seething, Fisher and his daughter returned to their campsite for the night.¹²

After engaging in a "large confrontation" with those remaining in the meadow, rangers succeeded in pushing the crowd from Stoneman Meadow into Camp 14. There, they spoke with revelers about park regulations and the environmental consequences of such large crowds on the meadow. A few visitors pressed the rangers on the logic of removing people from the meadow to keep them from trampling grass while allowing pollution-spewing cars and motorhomes into the valley, but most simply drifted back to their campsites for the evening.¹³

The Fourth of July dawned in typical Yosemite magnificence. Campers awoke to the sound of Steller's jays squawking as the first rays of light hit Yosemite Valley's granite walls. And slowly, the smell of woodsmoke and coffee drifted across the valley. In Camp 14, the Fisher family made preparations for a hike. Still upset at the treatment of his daughter by park rangers, John Fisher again sought to speak with Arnberger. But once again he was told that the superintendent would not be available until the following morning. Meanwhile, several other families packed their cars and left the park, disgusted by the previous evening's events. Returning from a hike later that afternoon, the Fishers once again found the meadow teeming with people. But a somber mood had settled over the area. And as the evening cast shadows across the valley floor, rangers again ordered those in the meadow to disperse.

Standing on the edge of the meadow with hundreds of other spectators, Fisher watched in horror as park rangers, wranglers, maintenance workers, and even naturalists wearing construction helmets and armed with ax handles emerged from the far tree line into the meadow. "Without any warning, the horsemen suddenly burst forth in a pack, riding the iron-shod steeds directly into the midst of the seated assembly, at full gallop, scattering all those fortunate enough not to be run over," wrote Fisher of the sight. A CBS film crew captured what happened next. Seeing horses charging at them, several in the meadow began hurling whatever lay at hand. One horse, struck in the head, panicked. People scattered in every direction, and fear quickly turned into anger. Small scuffles broke out across the meadow as rangers used their batons and ax handles to ward off attackers. Having lost control of the crowd, rangers retreated from the meadow. But the fuse had been lit, and the valley was bedlam for the next several

hours. Rioters set a bonfire in the road, blocked and then rolled a police vehicle onto its side, and skirmished with Park Service personnel for the next several hours.

In the end, the Park Service had called in nearly 150 police officers from the nearby communities of Madera, Merced, and Fresno, along with U.S. marshals, to quell the riot. Over the two days, 174 people, including 41 minors, were arrested. The majority of the arrests were for drugs and alcohol, but a fair number were for far more serious crimes, including assaulting a federal officer, carrying a loaded firearm, and assault with a vehicle. Five rioters were reported as needing medical care for injuries received while resisting arrest, and another for an unspecified foot injury.¹⁴

Fisher laid the blame for the riot directly on the shoulders of the Park Service, whose tactics he argued had incited the violence—a view that not all agreed with.¹⁵ Having arrived in Yosemite Valley that afternoon, the Ford family had grabbed one of the abandoned campsites in Camp 14, grateful for their luck in finding a site during the holiday weekend. Such feelings soon turned to disgust as they watched "several of the children ... crawling out of the meadow," too drunk to walk. Partiers caroused throughout the campground, passing jugs of wine, and raced motorcycles up and down the valley's narrow roadways. On returning from Camp Curry just prior to the seven p.m. curfew, the Ford family's three boys reported that a ranger had been attacked, his car was destroyed, and hundreds of hippies, some armed with knives, were congregating in the meadow, apparently hoping to provoke law enforcement. That evening, after attending a naturalist's talk, the family returned to their trailer where the sound of fireworks, motorcycles, and yelling forced them to close all their windows to block the noise. Later, as police began to comb through the camp making arrests, the Fords awoke to obscenities screamed at the officers.

The experience remained vivid months later for the Fords, and after reading Fisher's account in a newspaper, Mrs. Ford wrote a letter to Hartzog blaming hedonistic youth for the riot, condemning their despoilment of Yosemite Valley, and voicing her shock at Fisher's account of the weekend. "Never have I read such a flagrant untrue account of an event," she wrote, lambasting Fisher for his naiveté and the failure of visitors to behave in an acceptable manner in the park. "We believe that the National Parks of this country are provided for the beauty and enjoyment of all," she wrote. "If the young people of this country want to enjoy the benefits of the beautiful tributes to God and a great country, they should be willing to accept the rules of decent conduct."¹⁶

DON'T TRUST ANYONE UNDER AGE 30

The riot fundamentally changed how the Park Service understood the growing national fear of lawlessness and the counterculture. For visitors such as the Fords, long-haired youth represented a clear danger to the park—a view many in the Park Service agreed with. In explaining the park administrators' actions after the riot, Yosemite's assistant superintendent, Russell Olsen, said that he had tired of college-age youth and their antics. "Today's fad is social protest," which he said had no place in a national park. Believing that the riots had "made it clear that the traditional methods for the administration of criminal justice have failed," Arnberger set about reforming how the park dealt with offenders. The first order of business was to set in place policies in preparation for Labor Day weekend, when Park Service officials feared that the *Berkeley Tribe's* call for a "10,000 freak army" to descend

on the park would draw large crowds bent on protest and violence.¹⁷ Among the new policies was turning away all vehicles deemed “to be in an unsafe condition, or operated contrary to law.” Invoking safety as reason for the policy, entrance rangers were told to find any reason to keep any visitor “under 30 with long hair” from entering the park.¹⁸

After a five hours’ drive from San Francisco, Dorothy Goldeen and a friend arrived at the Big Oak Flats entrance gate around midday on September 6th. Although the riot had occurred some weeks before, the park remained on edge. After glancing into the car, the ranger manning the entrance station asked Goldeen to pull to the side of the road for a vehicle inspection. Annoyed at the delay, she curtly asked why the inspection was needed. The ranger said the inspection was necessary to prevent any accidents in the park. Exasperated by the thinly veiled reason, Goldeen pulled to the side, where two armed rangers began walking around her car inspecting its condition. One informed Goldeen that the light over the license plate was out, the plate needed to be bolted down, and the left rear reflector needed to be replaced before she and her passenger would be allowed into the park.

Fuming at the obvious ploy to keep them from entering Yosemite, Goldeen headed to the nearest repair shop. Three hours later, the two women returned to the entrance station. “The same ranger, who remembered us, checked over our car,” Goldeen later complained in a letter to Joseph Rumburg, director of the National Park’s Western Region. On seeing that the rear light was taped over, the ranger once again denied the women admittance. In a fit of rage, Goldeen broke out a roll of tape and completely covered the offending rear taillight. The ranger then asked to hear the car’s horn in a “final, futile attempt” to deny them entrance. The horn worked, and the ranger allowed the two women to pass.¹⁹

Goldeen’s experience was far from rare. Following Stoneman, entrance rangers turned hundreds of visitors away after rather suspicious vehicle inspections came up with balding tires, weak horns, and other mechanical problems—all of which were grounds for nonadmittance. Many who had experienced overzealous entrance rangers asserted such policies were discriminatory, and that the Park Service had no authority to restrict visitors to the park based on their appearance. The Park Service denied such discrimination. In responding to Goldeen’s letter, Rumburg wrote, “You may be interested to know that of the very few complaints against the program we have received, those who share your opinion that the program was discretionary universally identify with the ‘under 30 with long hair’ segment of our visitors.” Concluding that since Goldeen clearly would reject any justification for the inspection program, there was little else he could say other than to extend a sincere hope her trip to Yosemite had been “enjoyable, inspirational, and safe.”²⁰

Even as the Park Service was seeking a means to stem the tide of hippies from entering Yosemite, many in the agency began to realize the consequences of a greater visual presence of law enforcement in the park. The Department of the Interior’s investigation of the riot determined the confrontation between visitors and park rangers had been unnecessary and avoidable. Investigators reported that the crowd in Stoneman Meadow that day had shown no indication of being violent, and that park personnel had failed to follow procedure in handling the situation.²¹

“People see the park service uniform and respond to its symbolic meaning almost automatically,” Rumburg later noted. The

riot, he said, had turned the Park Service’s carefully crafted image as the protector of the nation’s natural treasures into one of an armed police force. But although the addition of a sidearm, handcuffs, and a helmet presented an image “not needed for normal park functions,” the rise in crime throughout all national parks along with the trauma of the Stoneman riot obligated rangers to interact with the public more as police officers than as naturalists. The new approach both comforted and worried visitors concerned about their safety while distressing those nostalgic for the image of the friendly ranger armed only with a flat-brimmed Stetson and quick smile.²²

The agency’s first step in changing its approach to law enforcement was to improve it and make training uniform. The riots caught the attention of Congress, which, in the wake of the 1968 riots across the country following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and now the Stoneman Meadow incidents two years later, was eager to appear tough on crime. Consequently, Hartzog had little trouble getting funds for the Park Service’s new Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in 1971.²³ The first of its kind, the center institutionalized law enforcement throughout the park system by creating a small cadre of specially trained law enforcement rangers to police every Park Service unit.

Yosemite established its own law enforcement office to handle criminal investigations the following year. Seeking to bridge the generational and cultural divides at the heart of the tensions and to soften the image of rangers as “park pigs” whose primary task was to “hassle” young men and women and infringe their rights, Yosemite established an “empathy team” to reach out to younger visitors. Contrary to the Park Service’s strict dress code, rangers let their hair grow longer, wore beads, and often sat down to “rap” about the role of parks and nature.²⁴

Yet the empathic approach proved the exception rather than the rule when it came to law enforcement. Fearing another Stoneman, the Park Service began aggressively policing visitors’ behavior. Believing that its “Smokey Bear” image and “soft” law enforcement policy were no longer effective, Olsen, Yosemite’s assistant superintendent, ordered rangers to “tighten up their enforcement attitude.” Rangers would not hand out written or oral warnings to visitors but rather adopt a zero-tolerance policy toward any infraction in efforts to curb the surge of crime in the park. But as the park took a harder line on law enforcement by handing out citations rather than friendly warnings, visitors and even some employees lamented that the “the old, gentle rangers” had been replaced “by SWAT teams.”²⁵ Allowed to carry firearms beginning in 1976, law enforcement rangers became the Park Service’s own police force, reflecting both the grim reality of crime in Yosemite and the philosophical shift in handling the millions of visitors.²⁶

LAW ENFORCEMENT SINCE STONEMAN

In the half-century following the Stoneman Meadow riot, law enforcement in Yosemite Valley has remained a contentious and difficult issue. The work has grown ever more challenging as park law enforcement officials contend with crowds in the eight-square-mile valley that average 21,000 visitors a day during July and August.²⁷ “People bring urban problems with them,” Yosemite ranger Mike Mayer told the *Washington Post* in 1991, explaining, “When you have 15,000 to 20,000 people bedded down in this valley, it’s a small town of transients.” The high-profile murder

of four women by a concessioner employee in the late 1990s underscored the increasingly serious nature of crime enforcement in the park. Ensuring the safety of visitors has made law enforcement in the national parks one of the most dangerous jobs in the country.²⁸

Yet as Rumburg noted, in the aftermath of the riot, the sight of armed rangers did not fit visitors' image of the National Park Service. Fifty years later, the problem with perception remains. Law enforcement rangers often appear more like an occupying force than the public's nostalgic image of a park ranger. Stories of rousting unsuspecting concessioner employees from their beds on suspicion of being drunk and issuing high fines to visitors for comparatively minor offenses have earned Yosemite's law rangers a reputation for being overly zealous and opened the Park Service to scrutiny from critics and the press. One of the most egregious examples of law enforcement overreach was park rangers' arrest and imprisonment of Australians Margaret and Andre Visser in 2004. After enjoying a meal at the Ahwahnee Hotel to celebrate Andre's 60th birthday, the couple was pulled over by rangers on suspicion of drunk driving. Andre blew a 0.08, the minimum to be considered drunk in California, and Margaret, 0.06. The two male rangers frisked the couple, then arrested them. Asked why she was being arrested, the ranger reportedly said she was a danger to herself and others. After paying a \$2,500 fine, both were released from the park's jail the following morning.²⁹

Such reports have become all too frequent, leading critics to charge that Yosemite law enforcement holds a zero-tolerance policy toward all infractions, no matter how minor—a charge National Park officials deny. Those stories do, however, point to the difficult challenge law enforcement faces in Yosemite—and by extension, across the entire National Park System—as the number of visitors continues to climb: balancing park visitors' expectations of tranquility and friendly rangers with the Park Service's fear that Yosemite Valley will again erupt in chaos. □

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Since its establishment, the National Park Service has struggled to define its purpose and mission. Were the parks to be managed for scenery or science? The presence of a tiny fish in the Nevada desert challenged the assumptions and policies of early Park Service leaders and compelled the agency to change direction.

THE “NATIONAL PLAYGROUND SERVICE”

AND THE DEVILS HOLE PUPFISH

In an isolated, out-of-the-way patch of desert in southern Nevada, the National Park Service goes to great lengths to protect one of the rarest species in the world: the Devils Hole pupfish (*Cyprinodon diabolis*). This one-inch-long blue fish darts around a spring pool at the bottom of a cavern called Devils Hole. More than 500 feet

deep but with an opening just 10 feet by 60 feet,¹ Devils Hole may be the smallest vertebrate species habitat in the world. In 2006, and again in 2013, biologists observed fewer than forty individual pupfish in Devils Hole. The whole species could fit in a gallon milk jug.

The forty acres around Devils Hole form a detached unit of Death Valley National Park.² Most of the park's 3.4 million acres lie twenty miles to the west, on the other side of the Funeral Mountains, but several park biologists spend much of their time at Devils Hole managing the pupfish. They regularly scuba-dive to count pupfish, periodically remove sediment that washes into the hole during flash floods, and even conduct “supplemental feeding” (i.e., they add fish food). In a \$4.5 million facility a few miles away, meanwhile, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protects a second, “backup” population of pupfish in a 100,000-gallon tank that replicates the peculiar low-oxygen and high-temperature conditions in Devils Hole.

The current management of the pupfish demonstrates an impressive commitment by the two agencies to protect this species from extinction. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, having “adapted to survive in very warm water with very low oxygen content,” the pupfish “has much to teach scientists about adaptation to adverse conditions.”³ But nearly seventy years ago, the National Park Service wanted nothing to do with the Devils Hole pupfish. And the Fish and Wildlife Service, though it briefly considered acquiring the area around Devils Hole, appeared not to be aware of the species' presence. Though the site was “of very real scientific interest,” Park Service Director Newton Drury wrote in 1950, “it is felt that it does not possess qualifications of national significance sufficient to warrant its inclusion in the National Park System.”⁴ Drury notified the Bureau of Land Management—which had asked whether the Park Service wanted the land set aside for park protection—that the agency was not interested.

BY KEVIN C. BROWN

How Devils Hole and its pupfish eventually came to be part of the park system, after the initial rebuff from the National Park Service, is the subject of this article. This story—of a tiny fish, in a remote corner of a national park larger than the state of Connecticut, embedded in an even larger, complex administrative system—is more than a footnote in the history of the National Park Service. It sheds light on a persistent question at the heart of the agency’s mission: just what exactly is the national park system for? Should it be a “playground system” meant primarily for visitors to enjoy scenic wonders? Or is one of its central responsibilities the protection and careful management of ecosystems and species?

The Devils Hole pupfish’s path from Park Service reject in 1950 to a well-protected and cherished creature of Death Valley National Park today indicates that the Park Service’s answers to those questions have changed. It is worth remembering, however, that the places included in the national park system—and those that are not—are often artifacts of shifting ideas about what parts of nature are worthy of protection.

THANKS, BUT NO THANKS

The early twentieth century was an anxious era for natural scientists. The decline and extinction of species as a result of human activities—from logging to hunting—loomed over their efforts to investigate and classify plants and animals around the globe.⁵ This was especially true in the western United States. Joseph

Grinnell, the director of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley, felt compelled to collect and preserve fauna, in part, he said, because “many species of vertebrate animals are disappearing; some are already gone.”⁶ Preserved specimens, Grinnell believed, might be all that was left of many species for future researchers.

Scientists understood that the biota of desert springs like Devils Hole was especially sensitive to human disruption, since the scarcity of water in arid areas made springs valuable for development. In 1928, Harvard University entomologist Charles Brues cautioned that “all except the most inaccessible” springs in the West had already “been converted into natatoria, sanatoria for arthritics, radium baths and the like, or have been diverted into irrigation ditches, sometimes with the aid of dynamite, to supply a few desolate ranches with water for cattle and alfalfa.”⁷ As early as 1914, two ranchers proposed a scheme to irrigate their land with water from Devils Hole.⁸ And though the site remained undeveloped, researchers nonetheless saw reason for concern. Robert Rush Miller, a young University of California ichthyology student and future authority on the taxonomy of desert fishes, visited Devils Hole in 1937 and worried about the pupfish’s future. “*C. diabolis* was found to have been reduced to not more than fifty or sixty fish,” many less than seen on his previous visit, he wrote. “At this rate it won’t be long until they are extinct.”⁹ Miller had overstated the precariousness of the population, but his fear that



This iridescent blue inch-long fish’s only natural habitat is in the 93 degree waters of Devils Hole, located in a detached unit of Death Valley National Park in Nevada. Although the cavern is more than 400 feet deep, the pupfish are believed to spawn exclusively on a shallow rock shelf just under the surface.

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION USFWS - OLIN FEUERBACHER

isolated fauna in the West were in trouble echoed biologists' broader anxieties.

In response to this early-twentieth-century biodiversity crisis, two American ecologists, Charles C. Adams and Victor E. Shelford, and their fledgling professional organization, the Ecological Society of America, proposed habitat preservation as a tool for species conservation and called for the establishment of natural areas. Others called for using national parks and monuments to safeguard and study animal life.¹⁰ The American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (ASIH) even proposed extending park boundaries or establishing new units administered by the Park Service for the "perpetuation of such threatened species and subspecies of fishes." This 1946 resolution did not specifically mention the Devils Hole pupfish, but it may as well have: the ASIH explained that "certain kinds of fishes in the arid parts of the West are confined to extremely limited waters—some to single springs," thus making them vulnerable to disturbance.¹¹ Although advocacy for the protection and study of nongame, uncharismatic fauna through habitat protection is often presumed to have emerged in the environmental era of the 1960s, the idea was commonplace among biologists in the first half of the twentieth century.

Such beliefs had not, however, taken root in the National Park Service. Instead, the Park Service managed land mostly for tourists to enjoy scenic wonders. In one of its founding documents, Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane described developing the parks as a "national playground system."¹² As historian Richard West Sellars has observed, "Scenery has provided the primary

inspiration for national parks and, through tourism, their primary justification." Once in Park Service hands, Sellars continued, parks were operated on the basis of "protecting and enhancing the scenic façade of nature for the public's enjoyment, but with scant scientific knowledge and little concern for biological consequences."¹³

During the 1930s, the Park Service did create a Wildlife Division, but it was understaffed and short-lived. The division suggested that all parks complete routine "faunal investigations"—today, ecological monitoring—and proposed that biologists review park development projects. Its advice often went unheeded. In Death Valley National Monument, for example, Park Service biologist Lowell Sumner argued against improving a road through Titus Canyon, home to both rare plants and a watering hole for bighorn sheep. Instead, he suggested that it be protected as a "research reserve." Sumner was ignored and the road developed.¹⁴ After the death of its founding chief, George Wright, the Wildlife Division was even briefly transferred out of the National Park Service altogether. Sumner, one of the few agency biologists who survived the tumult of the era, summed up the status of biology in the western region of the Park Service in 1951: "For five years I have been asking for a fisheries biologist and have made progress to the point where occasionally someone else in the office also mentions the desirability of such a position. This is at least a step forward."¹⁵

Science and species conservation were at the margins not only in management of established units but also in the Park Service's evaluation of potential additions. Floyd Keller, a Death Valley National Monument naturalist, advised against making Devils



MAP BY AUTHOR IN ARCGIS ONLINE, WITH PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA

Devils Hole became a detached segment of Death Valley National Monument (now Park) in 1952. Lowell Sumner's 1951 report on Devils Hole recommended installing a fence with a gate, and keeping the key at the park headquarters in Furnace Creek, an hour's drive away.

Hole a national monument, noting that though the area was “of interest to the scientist,” it did not “possess the qualifications and accessories” that constituted “national significance to meet the National Park Service standard.”¹⁶ The Park Service argued that its hands were tied by the Antiquities Act, a 1906 law that allowed U.S. presidents to reserve public land for “objects of historic or scientific interest.” Though by 1950 the “objects...of scientific interest” clause had been put to a wide range of purposes—including the establishment of Death Valley National Monument itself—Park Service leaders argued that “animal life in itself is not among those attributes on which can be based the establishment of a national monument under the Antiquities Act.”¹⁷ This belief had little to do with the act itself, which is open-ended, and said more about the Park Service’s interpretation of its own mission. Protecting a species like the Devils Hole pupfish that few would ever see was a project better left to another agency.

NICE WEATHER FOR DUCKS

But another agency had already looked over the land surrounding Devils Hole. In fact, by 1950 the Fish and Wildlife Service had twice declined proposals—in 1937 and again in 1947—to acquire the relatively wet patch of desert around Devils Hole called Ash Meadows. Besides Devils Hole, the area was home to more than a dozen large springs and habitat for four other unique fish species.¹⁸ Whereas the Park Service peered into Devils Hole and saw a curiosity only of interest to scientists—and certainly not an obligation of the agency—Fish and Wildlife and its bureaucratic predecessor the Bureau of Biological Survey looked across the Ash Meadows landscape and did not even notice the fish. It had its eyes on ducks.

The Biological Survey had its origins in the 1880s as the Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy in the Department of Agriculture, where it began to survey the distribution of the nation’s flora and fauna. The first-ever specimens of pupfish collected from Devils Hole, for example, were removed as part of the division’s Death Valley expedition in 1891. Especially after 1910, the agency took on a variety of other functions, including an increasing role in the control of farm and ranch pests, such as wolves, coyotes, and prairie dogs. After 1929, when Congress authorized the purchase of acreage for wildlife refuges, principally for migratory birds, the Biological Survey administered these lands.¹⁹

In 1937, as part of its responsibilities for wildlife refuges, a regional director of the Biological Survey asked J. Clark Salyer II, in charge of the agency’s migratory waterfowl division, to consider Ash Meadows. Salyer explained that “if it is all you claim it is, we are certainly interested in it, although our present acquisition program is held up by the common ailment of the Biological Survey—no funds.”²⁰ Nothing ever came of Salyer’s visit. A decade later, however, the agency—by then rolled into the Interior Department’s new Fish and Wildlife Service—took another look at the land. Two employees reported enthusiastically on its potential to provide habitat for “the dwindling flight line of ducks in this locality.” Fish and Wildlife envisioned impounding water in ponds for waterfowl and even suggested building a warm-water fish hatchery in Ash Meadows²¹—efforts that would likely have harmed the native fishes and plants of Ash Meadows. Despite the glowing report, the proposal again landed on Salyer’s desk. He scratched out a curt reply: “I don’t see any chance of considering this area for some years to come. I have seen it previously.”²² A subordinate clarified: “In view of the present financial situation, it does not appear that anything

can be done in regard to this proposed unit for some years to come. In the circumstances no further examination work should be done on the project.”²³ The Park Service did not think Devils Hole met its standards, and Fish and Wildlife could not come up with the money for birds, never mind the fish.

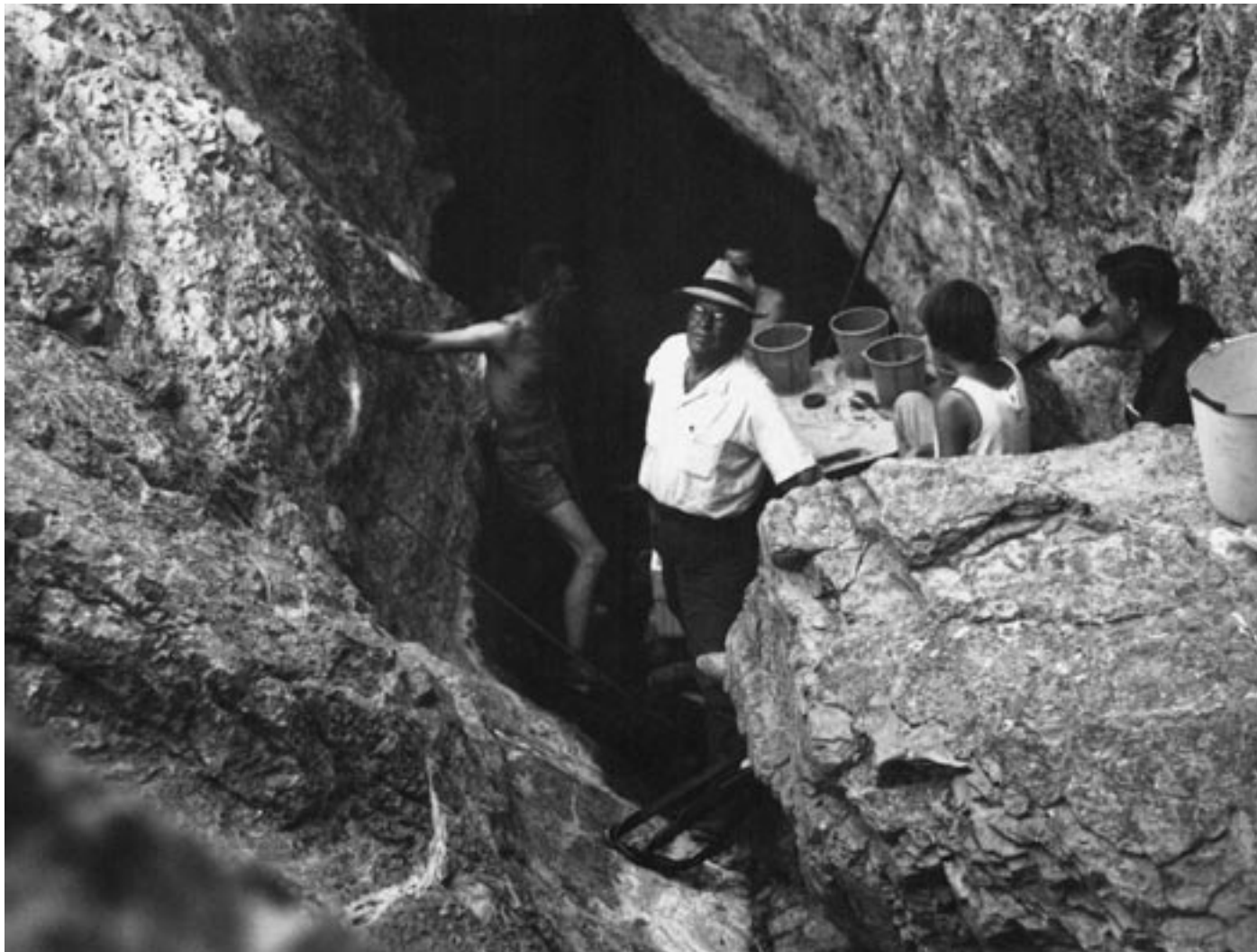
TOWARD A PUPFISH PLAYGROUND

The different visions for the national park system held by biologists and park administrators collided at Devils Hole in the winter of 1950–51. A Scripps Institution of Oceanography professor named Carl Hubbs learned from his son Earl, who was then working in Death Valley, of the Park Service’s decision not to protect Devils Hole. “Perhaps I have been naïve in assuming that preservation of nature was among the basic reasons for and functions of the National Park Service,” Hubbs sarcastically wrote in a lengthy letter to Director Drury. “I would hate to think of your department as only a National Playground Service.”²⁴

Hubbs, a prominent ichthyologist in the United States in the mid-twentieth century, had served as president of ASIH and had a long-standing interest in Devils Hole and Ash Meadows. He had visited with his family in the 1930s as part of summer specimen-collecting expeditions to isolated spring systems across the West, and his protégé, Robert R. Miller, wrote his doctoral dissertation on the fishes of the Death Valley region.²⁵ As early as 1943, Hubbs had corresponded with Park Service officials about the possibility of protecting Devils Hole and Ash Meadows. “We have seen some of the isolated fishes of the desert pass out of existence within recent years,” he told the agency’s chief naturalist, “and I believe the Ash Meadows group of springs would be a very logical one for Park protection.”²⁶ Foreshadowing the Park Service’s analysis in 1950, Conrad Wirth, a future Park Service director who was then an assistant director for land planning, dismissed the suggestion as “purely a scientific matter.”²⁷

Hubbs’s “national playground service” letter laid out an alternative vision of the parks—“it is a national concern to preserve a habitat and a species as unique as are Devils Hole and its endemic fish”—and proposed that Devils Hole should be added to Death Valley National Monument instead of set aside as its own monument. The main novelty of Hubbs’s letter, however, was not his argument but the recipients. Though the letter was nominally addressed to Drury, Hubbs circulated copies to university scientists, sympathetic Interior Department personnel, and later, conservation organizations. “It seems unlikely that the National Park Service has the authority to take direct action in the matter unless there is loud public clamor on behalf of the habitats,” cautioned one of Hubbs’s Park Service supporters.²⁸ But that was exactly what Hubbs wanted, warning Death Valley naturalist Keller that “I have had some other responses from my letter that indicate general and rather strong interest in the project. I will try and carry on, spreading interest in the matter, until something is accomplished.”²⁹

Hubbs got help from Fish and Wildlife, including former student J. Clark Salyer II, the same official who had declined to pursue acquisition of Ash Meadows as a wildlife refuge in 1947. “I am very sympathetic with the case you present with respect to *Cyprinodon diabolis*,” Salyer told Hubbs.³⁰ Salyer passed Hubbs’s letter to Ira Gabrielson, a former Fish and Wildlife director and the current president of the Wildlife Management Institute; to Howard Zahniser, executive secretary of the Wilderness Society; and to leaders in the National Parks Association.³¹ Afterward, Gabrielson wrote to Director Drury to express support for



Carl Hubbs, facing camera, at Devils Hole, 1967. Although he learned of the pupfish issue from his son, who was working in Death Valley, around 1950, his interest in Devils Hole and Ash Meadows dated back to the 1930s.

preserving Devils Hole, while the National Parks Association began organizing to persuade the agency to protect not only Devils Hole but also other springs across Ash Meadows.

Inside the National Park Service, a former member of the Wildlife Division weighed in. Lowell Sumner, biologist for the western region, visited Devils Hole in January 1951, took photographs, and produced a new report that reached conclusions very different from earlier agency analyses. Addressing the question of whether Devils Hole met “National Park Service Standards,” Sumner offered a strong affirmative: “Scientifically (i.e., biologically)? Yes—so unmistakably that we need not argue the point... . Scenically? Well, maybe—this depends more on each individual’s point of view.... As Part of the Death Valley Story? Again, Yes.” Sumner recommended that “in the national interest,” Devils Hole be added to Death Valley National Monument.³²

In March 1951 the National Park Service reversed its position and recommended acquisition. The agency notified the Bureau of Land Management it was interested in Devils Hole because “additional studies” had revealed that “the 40-acre tract in question does, after all, warrant the distinction and protection of national monument status.”³³ And in January 1952, President Harry Truman signed Presidential Proclamation 2961, designating the forty acres around Devils Hole as a part of Death Valley National

Monument.³⁴ Carl Hubbs got his way; the pupfish made it into the national park system.

“INADVERTENTLY OMITTED”

Truman’s order had taken the National Park Service to water, but it could not make the agency drink: management of Devils Hole got off to an inauspicious start. In May 1953, Death Valley National Monument’s acting superintendent, Edward E. Ogston, apologized to the agency’s Washington office over a mistake in the monument’s 1952 annual report. “It is regretted,” Ogston wrote, “that the addition of Devils Hole...to Death Valley National Monument on January 17, 1952, was inadvertently omitted.”³⁵ Not only had Death Valley left Devils Hole out of its report, but eighteen months after acquisition, the Park Service had still failed to install fencing around the site.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the agency learned almost nothing about the resource it was charged with managing. In fact, while the agency was investing a billion dollars in Mission 66, its ten-year infrastructure construction and expansion program, ecological research and management remained a low priority. Only in the late 1960s, after groundwater pumping by a rancher in Ash Meadows began lowering the water level in Devils Hole, did Death Valley staff and the Park Service more generally begin to focus on

the site. And in 1976 a U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Cappaert v. U.S.*) affirmed the right of the federal government to maintain water levels sufficient to support the pupfish, even at the expense of junior water rights held by nearby ranchers.

Today, given the Park Service's considerable efforts to preserve the Devils Hole pupfish, it is tempting to believe that, as one agency report stated in 2009, "One of the fundamental resources and values that national parks were established to protect is the maintenance of biodiversity."³⁶ In its wildlife management—in defending the pupfish, reintroducing grizzly bears in the northern Cascades, and recovering the Channel Island fox, to name just a few examples—the Park Service thus portrays itself as a longtime guardian of biodiversity in the United States.

But the Devils Hole pupfish's history suggests a more nuanced interpretation of the agency's historical role in protecting and managing plants and animals. The "national playground service" moved in new directions only under pressure from both inside and outside the agency. At Devils Hole, Carl Hubbs played the role of the outsider, and Lowell Sumner, the insider. As the skirmish wrapped up, Sumner thanked Hubbs for taking such an active interest in the park system, and he reflected on Hubbs's role in pressuring the agency to change its position: "I think that is real democracy," Sumner wrote.³⁷ As the park system moves into its second century, it is a lesson worth remembering. □

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Counterfeiting money, making cheese, selling timber, growing market vegetables...these and many other activities in what is now the Cuyahoga Valley National Park have been interpreted by the National Park Service as part of the history of the Brown-Bender Farm. A rediscovery of the importance of woodland management to the farm's economic and ecological history will help inform the Park Service management of the rural landscape in the Cuyahoga Valley.

FORESTS AND FIELDS

RECONSIDERING THE RURAL LANDSCAPE IN CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

People have practiced agriculture in Ohio's Cuyahoga Valley for thousands of years, shaping the landscape and ecology from prehistoric times through the Woodland period of aboriginal occupation to European contact. The very first English accounts of the valley noted the presence of village sites and

of cultivated fields. In 1794 the Moravian missionary John Heckwelder published a map of the mission town of Pilgerruh, established in 1786 on the site of an Ottawa village amid the forested hills and cultivated bottomland, that even included a cornfield.¹ From the beginning, humans relied on forests and fields, together, for sustenance and survival. By reexamining how land use has changed over the past two centuries, the National Park Service can better manage and interpret the Cuyahoga Valley's rural landscapes.

THE RURAL LANDSCAPE

According to the establishing legislation, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park exists to preserve and protect for public use and enjoyment the historic, scenic, natural, and recreational values of the Cuyahoga River valley, to maintain the open space necessary for the urban environment, and to provide for the recreational and educational needs of the visiting public. The national park was created as a thirty-three-thousand-acre national recreation

area from former industrial and agricultural lands along twenty-two miles of the Cuyahoga River between the metropolitan areas of Cleveland and Akron in 1974; the recreation area became a national park in 2000. Since then, a principal goal of the National Park Service has been to preserve and protect the park as a place apart from the urban world that surrounds it.

To meet this goal, the Park Service engaged in a long planning process and proposed several alternatives in consultation with federal and state agencies and the public, ultimately selecting the Countryside Initiative alternative. This initiative is an approach to preserving and protecting historic resources, scenic views, and open space through rural landscape management. The rural landscape would be "managed largely by issuing long-term leases to private individuals for the purpose of conducting sustainable agricultural activities and revitalizing a 'sense of place' in the Cuyahoga Valley."² The Park Service initially defined the valley's rural landscape as "lands and structures modified by humans for agricultural use."³ This definition asks us to understand the modification of

BY WILLIAM M. HUNTER



Known as the “Jim” Brown House, the Brown-Bender House was actually built by Dan Brown.

the environment for agricultural uses relative to a host of historical forces, from drought and floods to external markets to the servicing of bank debts. It also places humans in the central role of shaping the environment in the service of agricultural production, fundamentally an economic as well as ecological act.

The conception of the farm program in the Countryside Initiative assumes that “agriculture was the dominant and very prosperous way of life” in the valley.⁴ Unfortunately, over time, the definition of rural landscape began to change from the site of productive labor to a more passive construct: “a large area of land with relatively few structures.” This definition reflects the separation of woodland from field in our collective understanding of what a rural landscape should be,⁵ deemphasizes the forest component of the region’s agriculture, and misrepresents the historical practices of successful farming in the valley.

Indeed, the explicit intent of the Park Service’s rural landscape management was to preserve agricultural activity “or the appearance thereof” in the public space of the park.⁶ The candid emphasis on the visual character of the program was well intended, but it bifurcates farms into field and forest and represents the rural landscape as something separate and apart from the associated woodlands. The maintenance of open space was intended to convey the scenic values of the national park as well as retain the fields for future agricultural uses. Yet scenic values, a subjective category, do not necessarily relate to or convey the historical significance of the valley’s agriculture. Over time, this produced a rural landscape that was not truly representative of all, or even most, of the lands modified by humans for agricultural use in the valley.

The story of the historical ecology of the Brown-Bender Farm—the best representative of the events, people, and archi-

ture of all the historic agricultural properties in Cuyahoga Valley National Park—demonstrates the centrality of the woodlands to the successful practice of agriculture during the period of agriculture’s dominance in the valley. Building on the groundbreaking work by historian John Henris on farmers, woodlands, and conservation consciousness, I show how the Brown-Bender Farm relied on forest as much as field. Integrated management was no novelty but was in fact fundamental to the successful practice of nineteenth-century agriculture in the Cuyahoga Valley.⁷

THE BROWN-BENDER FARM

The Brown-Bender Farm is one of the most significant and intact historic properties in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. At its center are a large Greek Revival Georgian-style house, constructed in 1845 and representative of the canal-era wealth of the valley, and a barn, erected 40 years later. The 1845–1885 era was the period of agriculture’s economic and ecological dependence on the forest. The extant farm—a greenhouse, orchard, and mere 35 acres of the once 308-acre property—distances the woodland from the farm’s ecology and illustrates how farms, and the perception of farms, contracted between 1885 and the 1930s.

That the Park Service’s property boundary includes the associated fields but excludes much of the associated woodland—replete with haul roads, small quarries, and logging platforms—indicates the visual bias in cultural landscape assessment and the misunderstanding of the central role of woodland management to the economic well-being of the agricultural properties in the park. In fact, far from being peripheral to interpretation of the farm, the story of the woodland reflects how the economic processes affected agriculture during periods of relative

permanence and growth and during times of transience and contraction. Regardless of the economic cycle, woodlands were always crucial to farm economy.

Like other sequentially occupied farms in the valley, this property underwent intensive use extending back for millennia. People occupied the area long before Euro-American settlement or the establishment of the Connecticut Land Company survey. A Prehistoric village was located on the geological terrace where the Brown farmhouse and barn stand today, and a Late Prehistoric farming hamlet or similar site type was located below and south of the barn, west of the road—both testament to the advantages of the riverside site.⁸ However, by the time of survey and Anglo settlement, the area was unoccupied by historic-era aboriginals.

Three years after John Heckwelder published his map, Northampton Township was surveyed in 1797 and then resurveyed into quarter-section lots for its sale.⁹ Although the first effective Euro-American settlement of what was surveyed as Northampton Township coincided with a resurvey in 1802, permanent settlement throughout the township lagged until after the War of 1812, and a settlement nucleation did not emerge in the area until the late 1820s.¹⁰ The woodlands then were native and varied, the slopes and aspects of the valley ravines creating an array of habitats dominated by the beech-maple complex of the uplands—a resource for eastern investors in what was then Connecticut’s Western Reserve on the Ohio frontier.¹¹

Jim Brown, one of Cuyahoga Valley’s most infamous early residents, was in some ways typical of the settlers. Coming from Livingston County in upstate New York, Brown’s family followed the stream of migration into the Western Reserve when he was a child, fleeing the already apparent ecological limits of the settled areas. In adulthood, Brown emerged as a skilled businessman, property owner, and tavern keeper in the nearby Boston, Ohio, area. However, Brown was also a notorious counterfeiter, fraudulently securing the plates for the currency issued by the old Bank of the United States.¹² Brown and his confederates considered themselves *de facto* bankers in an era of no federal banking system, frequent economic recession, and financial uncertainty. Printing and circulating counterfeit money gave the local economy a measure of stability and ensured credit for area firms. Brown was repeatedly arrested, tried, and acquitted while retaining the admiration of his neighbors and business associates as a source of stability in a time of sustained financial uncertainty; so high was their admiration that three times they elected him justice of the peace.¹³

FARMS FROM FORESTS

Jim’s son Dan Brown followed his father into the financial sector, establishing counterfeiting or laundering operations in the cities along the Ohio & Erie Canal trade network, which included New York, Detroit, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, and extending from the port of New Orleans to California. The Ohio & Erie Canal ran the length of the Cuyahoga Valley, an extension of the river’s hydrologic system and an agent for landscape change along its course. Dan Brown acquired the wooded tract on the east side of the Cuyahoga River from the estate of John Wells, a Massachusetts investor.¹⁴ However, Wells died on October 13, 1834, before the contract could be fulfilled, and the contract passed through several hands until acquired by N. C. Baldwin, a merchant and future land developer, who afterward conveyed the contract to Dan Brown, although the cost of the contract is unknown.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

A relic haul road connecting the barnyard to the wooded uplands is still visible.

This illustrates how a formerly abstract commodity—the rights to wooded land in the Western Reserve—circulated and then was materialized as the Brown Farm.

The canal era (1827–1875), the period of the canal’s consequential economic life, engendered a particular type and scale of development oriented to the place and connectivity of the canal. The relationship between Baldwin and Brown may explain the prosperity of the farm in its first decades and point to the relative legitimacy of the Browns’ “wholesale” counterfeiting operations during the long bank crisis of the 1830s and 1840s. Baldwin had emigrated to the Cuyahoga Valley as a teenager and would later go into business first as a merchant and then in the produce commission business. This enterprise grew to include shipping, which combined the produce commission work with a network of packet boats that drew commodities from all along the Ohio & Erie to its warehouses in Cleveland.¹⁵ Brown, in spite of his reputation, acquired from Baldwin the contract for the heavily



Cuyahoga Valley National Park lies within the Ohio and Erie Canalway



The 1874 Summit County atlas (left) shows the James R. Brown property (#83). The house's location is marked by the square just north of the intersection of present-day Ira Road and Akron Peninsula Road. Today the property sits in the southern end of the national park.

wooded, perfectly situated farm tract overlooking the canal, two locks, and two mills—an articulation point for the conversion of produce and timber into tradable commodities.

On October 2, 1845, the sale of 283 acres for the final payment of \$670 was completed and Dan Brown became owner of the lot free and clear.¹⁶ Brown had just married and presumably built the large, elegant, classically inspired mansion as the seat of his new family. The two-story braced-frame house features a five-bay façade with tripartite bilateral symmetry, and it rests on a raised sandstone foundation overlooking the Cuyahoga Valley, visible from the locks and mills along the Ohio & Erie Canal.

The structure illustrates the Georgian ideals of rationality and order, and its classical details, including corner boards, a continuous frieze, pedimented cornice returns, and a central entrance with a three-part entablature, all convey a distinctly high-style taste, rare in this part of the Western Reserve, fashioned from local wood. The farm's location on a high, forested terrace above the Cuyahoga River and its bottomland gave its early owners a particular advantage in a township known for shallow soils and difficult terrain.¹⁷

For many years, landowner Dan Brown was a fugitive traveling under the alias "Dan West" throughout the Midwest via the lake steamers, warehouses, and packet boats owned by merchants like Baldwin, and later to California with the Gold Rush, always a step ahead of the law and vigilantes.¹⁸ Yet the new farm was well managed in his absence. The 1850 census shows 30-year-old Dan Brown as the owner of the well-situated property that was then

worth \$4,000, but does not give a sense of his actual business or his plight.¹⁹ Ailing from scurvy and fatigue, the fugitive returned to the Northampton farm to settle his affairs. On December 27, 1850, Dan Brown and his wife, Minerva A. Brown, sold the 197 acres in Lot 83 and the 101 acres in north part of lot 74 to his brother, J. R. Brown, for \$3,000 in "good and lawful money of the United States," a line undoubtedly written in the record book with a sense of irony.²⁰

PERMANENCE

Both Jim Brown and son Dan were incarcerated, on the run, or in some form of legal trouble and were away from the area from 1846 to 1850, and in their absence the farm was skillfully managed by Jim's wife, Lucy Mather Brown, and their son, J. R. Brown.²¹ In 1850, the farm was a productive, mixed agricultural operation (livestock, corn, oats, and potatoes) with 100 acres "improved" and the other 198 acres left as valuable woodland.²² That year, the farm produced sixteen hundred bushels of Indian corn, its principal product—more than ten times the township average. The farm at that time also kept livestock valued at nearly twice the township average, including three horses, five milk cows, fourteen other head of cattle, and twelve swine.

On January 21, 1851, Dan Brown died, and that year his mother, Lucy Mather Brown, divorced Jim Brown. After his divorce and Dan's death, Jim Brown left the area, never to see his family again. Twenty-eight-year-old son J. R. Brown worked hard to restore

the family's reputation following his father's and brother's misdeeds by running a successful farming operation with an ethic of permanence and conservation. The farm was established just as the nation's farmers began to embrace mechanization—both a product and a driver of the canal-oriented economy of the valley.

The J. R. Brown farm occupied 298 acres on two tracts, including some upland, the terrace on which the house and barn stand, and the lowlands along the river. The mills and canal locks on the opposite side of the river just south of the property provided an important market and service center, likely with some kind of river crossing at a dam.²³ By 1860, the 37-year-old farmer was in the prime of his life. His real estate was worth \$7,730, well above the value of his neighbor's holdings and complementing his more modest declared personal estate of \$900.²⁴ Brown then lived in the elegant house with his wife, Louisa, four minor children, two tenants (a cooper and a laborer), and a domestic servant.

The Browns continued to improve their land and transform the landscape to accommodate changes in agricultural technologies and markets, the transfer of cheese production from upstate New York being one of the principal trends. Like other Cuyahoga Valley farmers, Brown also drew conservatively from his woodland not only to supply on-farm needs but also to raise and hold capital, serve as woodland pasture, and supply material for small-scale commodity production linked to the agricultural economy, such as cooperage and broom making. In the phrase of environmental historian Steven Stoll, "thinking farmers" like J. R. Brown carefully managed the woodlands as part of their farm operations.²⁵

Above all, like other progressive farmers, Brown was focused on permanence, managing the woodland and fields through rotation and manuring. Specifically, Brown had created an interlocking ecological relationship from his fields, woods, and work yards.²⁶ Yet the decision making involved more than mere dollars and cents; "permanence of society, landscape, home was the paramount value of improvement."²⁷ This is in contrast to the skim-and-scratch ethic of casual cultivators who, having exhausted the soil and denuded their woodlands, left for new lands to the west. As Stoll notes, "maintaining the fertility of the soils and a balance between plow land and woodland served a particular conception of society that would last as long as thinking farmers were alive."²⁸ The ecological balance took on new meaning in the production of a valuable and transportable commodity: cheese.

The transfer of agricultural knowledge from upstate New York and New England into the climatically similar Western Reserve had occurred from the time of first settlement. This practice, soon combined with access to northern and southern markets via the Ohio & Erie and Erie canals, encouraged the establishment of a farm-dairy cheese manufacture in Northampton Township that mirrored larger trends in what became known as Cheesedom.²⁹ At midcentury, Ohio was rivaled only by New York in cheese production on a farm scale. Soon the ongoing transportation revolution and technical innovation gave rise to a new system of production that took hold in the area, engendering new land uses and subsequently new ecologies.³⁰ The cheese factories, as centers of both production and trade, grew slowly during the 1850s and then, spurred by the success of early operations and a change in taste, proliferated rapidly, especially in the eastern portion of the Western Reserve.³¹ Northampton Township was an epicenter of this transformation.

As recorded in the 1870 census, James R. Brown was a forty-eight-year-old farmer with \$10,000 in real estate and a personal

estate worth \$3,700, living at the farm with Louisa, two adult sons, and four minor children.³² The rise in the farm's value is in part attributed to the continued improvements by the Browns, who by then had converted 205 acres of the then 308-acre farm, including much of the upland, to cropland or pasturage through clearing, ditching, and draining. The woodland, dramatically reduced to 100 acres over the past decade, was heavily used for seasonal lumbering, an essential complement of the overall operation. Much of the actual work of creating and maintaining the ecological mix through logging, clearing, and manuring was done by hired labor, shaping a landscape of permanence amid a lifestyle of transience in the labor-rich region.

Many farmers of this period had small sawmills to process the timber cut from woods during the winter months. Another pressure on the woods was intensive woodland grazing, a direct result of the changes in the region's agriculture.³³ Woodland grazing persisted as a practice in the valley well into the modern era, damaging the forest understory and injuring or killing trees. Over time, with the rise of the factory cheese system, the imperative of the market forced the conversion of these diminishing woodlands to pasturage: the "grass culture" of modern Western Reserve husbandry.³⁴

FIELDS FROM FORESTS

The 1870 census data show that James R. Brown shifted his emphasis to dairying and cheese production in addition to some corn and staple crops, investing in more milk cows (eighteen) and producing 4,800 pounds of cheese. This follows the trend for the township, which produced 120,000 pounds of cheese that year,³⁵ but the Brown farm was a leader in cheese production, far exceeding the 287.7-pound average for other township farms. Brown's priorities are reflected in his use of the land. The 1874 county atlas shows that the farm had by then grown to 308 acres, including a small parcel along the river near what was the site of the mill and a proposed railroad crossing,³⁶ and indicates that as he prospered, the woodland continued to contract.

Valley farmers invested in lumbering equipment, such as portable sawmills, in part to clear uplands for supplemental income, but often to fund an upgrade to their dairy operations—specifically the factory cheese system.³⁷ Local farmers reported that the "Browns have also kept up a steam sawmill on their farm for years, which has contributed largely to the convenience of the lumber business."³⁸ Farmers logged their own land, processed timber from neighboring farms, or were paid by contractors who harvested the timber on contract; the income often funded farmers' westward migration or investment in new agricultural technologies at home.

Increasingly, the scale of the cutting was antithetical to the tradition of integrated management of forest and field as practiced by "improving farmers" who sought to stay in place.³⁹ Although farm publications championed integrated management through advocacy of regular cutting, careful stewardship, and productive use of forest commodities, even the most forward-thinking farmer had to adjust to the demands of the market. According to Henris, there was real anxiety among Ohio's permanent farmers about the loss of woodlands, but even the most conservation-oriented farmer would be enticed by the economic opportunity afforded by the emerging regional timber economy.⁴⁰ Many of the park's remaining landmark barns represent both the profit and the product of these enterprises during this era.



Above, at three stories tall, the Brown-Bender barn design was unusual for the Cuyahoga Valley area.

Right, the truss system on the barn's second floor was built to support and store a steam engine and other apparatus.



Like many permanent farmers, Brown reinvested in his farm by building a large and elaborate bank barn just as the nearby Valley Railway became operational. His three-story, raised-basement barn features vertical siding and a low-pitched side-gable slate roof pierced with two cupolas. Built from the farm's large, old-growth hardwoods, its unconventional structural system makes it an architectural and technological marvel.⁴¹ Based on its size, form, and unusual three-story design, the Brown barn appears to have been built as a model feeding-barn designed to support manuring and to maintain the soil produc-

tivity of the farm. Most barns of this era have two floors, with a stable on the bottom; the upper floor is where equipment was housed and grain threshed. The massive truss system used by Brown allowed for a middle floor where the family stored the steam engine used for a variety of farm work, from sawmilling to cutting and feeding the silage into the silo.⁴² The uppermost floor was used to store tons of hay and grain, and there were two grain chutes used to deliver feed past the middle floor to the basement stable in a vermin-proof channel.

This state-of-the-art barn was completed just as agriculture in

the valley was again changing: the principal farm commodities of butter and cheese began giving way to general farming, putting new pressure on farmers' woodlands. The pace of on-farm deforestation quickened throughout the dairy region because of the dynamic nature of both industry and agriculture.⁴³ This ecological transformation undercut the ethic of permanence and subverted the ecologies needed to sustain commercial agriculture in the valley.

The Browns' barn had been built into a steep hillside above an intermittent watercourse that drains a small hollow. At some point the drainage was dammed and water was piped, perhaps to remedy the notoriously unsanitary conditions associated with nineteenth-century dairying. Despite this attention to the management of water, when the barn was completed, a pile of excavated earth left by the stone foundation on the west side retained stormwater, flooding the basement. During a severe storm in 1889, Brown dug a drainage trench and apparently as a consequence fell ill that evening. His death, soon after from pneumonia, proved to be an event of great consequence for the farm and the health of what remained of the woodland.⁴⁴

Not long after Brown's death, local historian Samuel Lane wrote, "James R. Brown Esq. was a thoroughly upright, intelligent and courteous gentleman [who] lived upon his large and well cultivated estate," successfully reclaiming the family name through his successful growth of this farm.⁴⁵ Eventually, his youngest son, William A. Brown, and wife, Cyrene, became the formal proprietors of the farm. That they were the owners of a lumber mill to the south again demonstrates the importance of the forest to the Brown family farm.⁴⁶

TRANSIENCE

The rapid urbanization of Cleveland and Akron led to an increase in demand for hardwood; the "timber fever" that gripped the Cuyahoga River and its tributaries during the 1880s "was representative instead of the wholesale reduction of farm woodlands throughout northeastern Ohio."⁴⁷ The pressure on farmers to exchange the foundation of their relative agricultural prosperity for cash eroded even the most committed progressives' ethic of permanence—an ethic that would not survive the valley's second generation of farmers. Economic crises were also ecological crises for the valley farmers, forcing them to make difficult decisions in evolving circumstances.⁴⁸ Economic crises engendered debt, and debt, the need to satisfy it, often through liquefying whatever assets were at the farmer's disposal, including what was left of the woodlands.

William A. Brown operated or leased the farm, managing its transition from dairying to more general mixed agriculture, and making use of its resources—timber, soil, and stone—to raise capital. The farm stayed in the Brown family until its sale in 1900.⁴⁹ William and Cyrene Brown moved to Los Angeles, typifying the cut-and-run ethic that had been anathema to thinking farmers like J. R. Brown. Soon after the turn of the century, investors capitalized on the region's new roads and railroad networks, the advantages of assembly-line production, and timber and water resources to build factories and develop large-scale industry throughout the valley.

In this new era, area farmers and landowners again diversified their economic activities, often combining farming and wage labor. Exploitation of the woodlands continued and was now combined with erosion and soil degradation, challenging farmers with ecological constraints to economic stability. The new owner,

Miner Howe, was a "commercial man," a merchant and flour miller, and the next owner, Fred Ozier, was a cigar merchant.⁵⁰ Not interested in farming, Howe and Ozier presumably reaped some return from the property through the sale of timber, by then common practice in the valley, although much of the land was already denuded.

On January 10, 1907, the Oziers sold the three-hundred-acre farm to Andrew C. and Ira Bender for \$10,000 and, like the Browns, moved to Los Angeles.⁵¹ With his sons, Andrew Bender practiced general farming on a small scale, initially with a dairy operation supplemented by livestock and staple crops. His wife Ira Bender later served as the proprietor of the farm and was listed in the 1920 census as "manager of the general farm operations" rather than as a farmer.⁵² The farm later passed to Earva Bender, one of the couple's twelve children.

As the area was reshaped by improved roadways, in-migration, and the growth of nearby cities, the Benders, like other valley farmers, shifted away from dairy and commodity crops toward fruits and vegetables, a type of agriculture much less dependent on the slowly reforesting woodlands or on-farm milling. The family began trucking their garden crops for both wholesalers and retail operations in urban markets and transformed the farm landscape by planting apple, cherry, and peach trees in the old pasture, building a greenhouse, and establishing a vineyard. In an urbanizing era, passing motorists viewed this new landscape as emblematic of rural land. The family operated a prosperous roadside farm stand fronting on the modern roadway. By 1930, many of the neighbors worked in industrial or managerial jobs—mail clerk for the railroad, tire builder at a rubber factory, truck driver for a milk company—further blurring the boundary between city and country.⁵³

FORESTS FROM FIELDS

During the Great Depression, transience replaced permanence as the dominant ethic as farmers sold out and left the valley, heading south or west in search of cheaper land, labor, or resources. The agricultural landscape of production—forest and field—began to atrophy. If maintained, houses and barns endured as landmarks in the local geography, and thus preserved the sense of place, but farm fields became further separated from their associated woodlands.

Over time, farms on more productive soils and close to the evolving road network retained much of their value. Farms on marginal soils struggled. Many were abandoned; old-field farmland then slowly reverted to woodland. Other farms were sold to wealthy urbanites as country estates. Some farmers reforested old fields as tree farms or for soil and water conservation, mirroring the large-scale reforestation efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps and local governments. It was the rare valley farmer who promoted careful restoration of the woodlot as an active part of the farm; most, like the Benders, followed the advice of agricultural extension agents and focused on truck farming and high-input field crops for urban markets.⁵⁴

The establishment of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area in 1974, in part a legacy of the economic contraction and collapse, stabilized the loss of the rural landscape, and after Earva Bender passed away in 1988 at age 87, the Park Service began purchasing the remaining farm property.⁵⁵ A local landmark, the property was first recorded for the Ohio Historic Inventory in 1976. Originally, only the house and 3.5 acres were nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, and only for the prop-



The newly leased fields on the site of the 1786 cornfield. Under the Countryside Initiative, they will be developed as an orchard.

erty's architectural significance and association with the notorious counterfeiters: the exceptional management of the 305-acre farm as a whole by J. R. Brown, the thinking farmer who lived in his notorious father's and brother's shadow, received little attention.⁵⁶

To address this, in 1993, Park Service historians re-nominated the property with a boundary increase to include the barn, vineyard, orchard, greenhouse, and 35 acres of farmland for their agricultural significance.⁵⁷ The nomination chronicled the conversion of the farm from specialized to mixed agriculture to market truck farming but overlooked both its importance to the local cheese industry and the management and use of the woodland. A quarter century ago, the house and property were considered to be in "excellent" condition but have since deteriorated, suffering from deferred maintenance and vandalism. All the while, however, the wooded portion of the farm has been quietly and steadily reforesting—separate and apart from the managed rural landscape.

CONCLUSION

Considering the historical forces responsible for changes in land management helps us understand the role of woodlands in the story of Cuyahoga Valley's agriculture. The study of historical geography restores the rural farm landscape to its rightful balance: land bearing the material fruits from field and forest.

CODA

In 2017, as part of its Countryside Initiative, the Park Service leased the site of the cornfield mapped by John Heckwelder in 1786 to farmers who will develop an orchard, small livestock operation, and vegetable farm. The orchard and cropland will be based on an ethic of permanence and ecological balance that would have been very familiar to thinking farmers like J. R. Brown. Yet unlike Brown, these farmers must survive without the benefit of expansive and valuable woodlands: the lease, like the other leases in the initiative, is for the fields and specifically excludes activities in the associated woodlands, in keeping with National Park Service policy.⁵⁸ The lessees are in effect foresting a field that was cleared and cultivated at the time of European contact, an irony that should prompt reconsideration of the approach to rural landscape management. Above all, recognition of the centrality of woodlands to agriculture in the Cuyahoga Valley demonstrates the value of a critical approach to environmental stewardship, as the park and its managers struggle to protect and preserve this valley as a place apart. □

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The claim of a federal “land grab” in response to the creation of Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Maine revealed a lack of historical awareness by critics of how two other cherished parks were established there: through private-public partnerships and the donation of land by private citizens.

THE MAINE CHANCE

PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP AND THE KATAHDIN WOODS AND WATERS NATIONAL MONUMENT

It is never over until it is...and even then, it might not be. That conundrum-like declaration is actually a straightforward assessment of the enduring, at times acrimonious, and always tumultuous series of political debates that have enveloped the U.S. public lands—their existence, purpose, and mission—since their formal

establishment in the late nineteenth century. From Yellowstone National Park (1872) and Yellowstone Timberland Reserve (1891) to Bears Ears National Monument (2017), their organizing principles and regulatory presence have been contested.¹

The 2016 presidential campaign ignited yet another round of this longstanding controversy. That year’s Republican Party platform was particularly blunt in its desire to strip away federal management of the federal public lands and reprioritize whose interests the party believed should dominate management decisions on the national forests, grasslands, monuments, and refuges:

The federal government owns or controls over 640 million acres of land in the United States, most of which is in the West. These are public lands, and the public should have access to them for appropriate activities like hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting. Federal ownership or management of land also places an economic burden on counties and local communities in terms of lost revenue to pay for things such as schools, police, and emergency services. It is absurd to think that all that acreage must remain under the absentee ownership or management of official

Washington. Congress shall immediately pass universal legislation providing for a timely and orderly mechanism requiring the federal government to convey certain federally controlled public lands to states. We call upon all national and state leaders and representatives to exert their utmost power and influence to urge the transfer of those lands, identified in the review process, to all willing states for the benefit of the states and the nation as a whole. The residents of state and local communities know best how to protect the land where they work and live. They practice boots-on-the-ground conservation in their states every day. We support amending the Antiquities Act of 1906 to establish Congress’ right to approve the designation of national monuments and to further require the approval of the state where a national monument is designated or a national park is proposed.²

Although candidate Donald Trump indicated he was opposed to outright land transfers to the states, President Trump, in what arguably was a new twist to an old tale, initially appeared to be committed to *de-designating* some of the national monuments that his predecessor, President Barack Obama, had established

BY CHAR MILLER



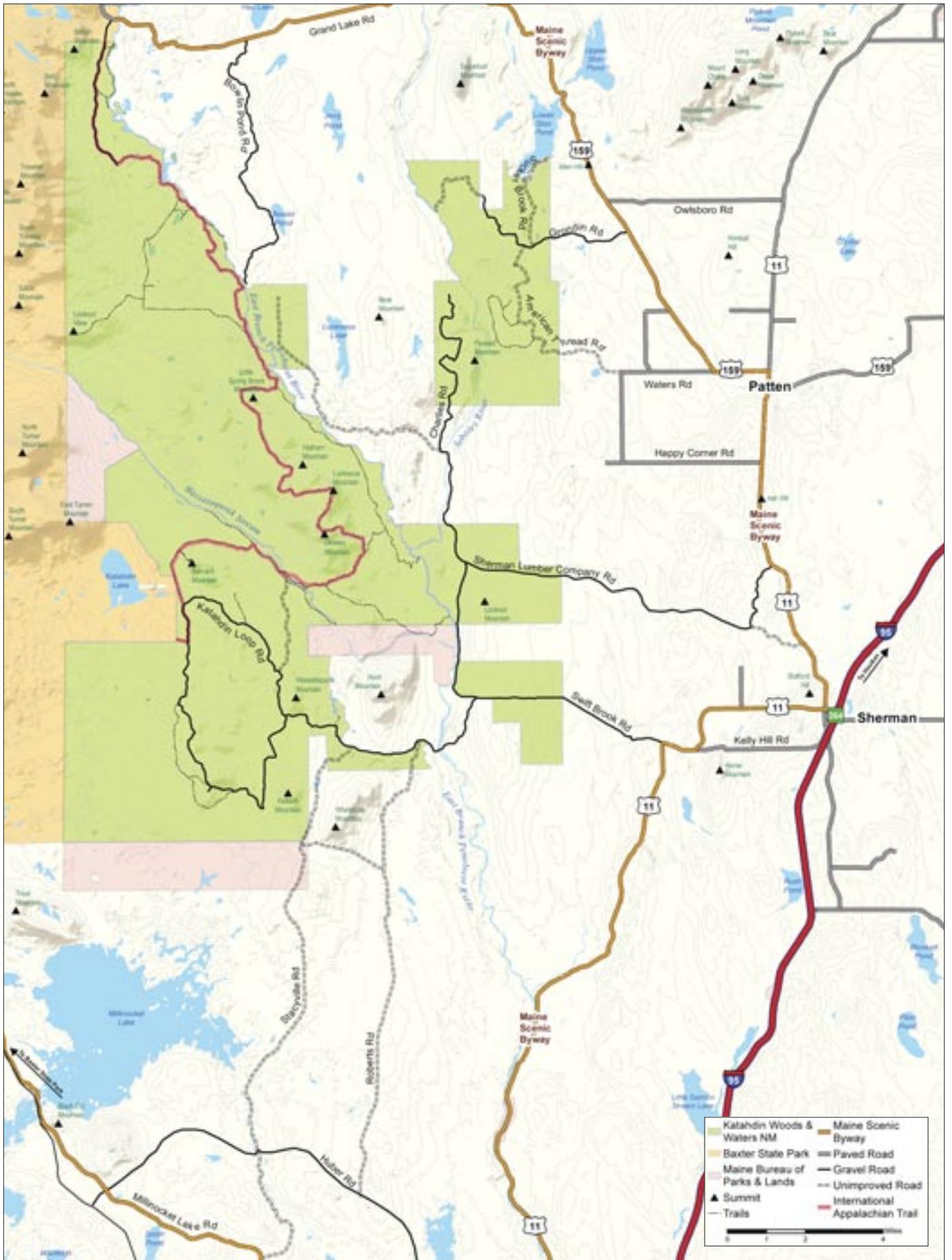
Roxanne Quimby had been open and upfront about her desire to donate land she owned to create a national park—with all the restrictions on activities that a park entails. Opposition to her proposal led her to change tactics and turn the effort over to her son.

during his two terms in office. Certainly, that is what a vocal cadre of Trump’s supporters from Utah to Maine urged him to do, infuriated as they were by the second-term designations of Bears Ears and Katahdin Woods and Waters national monuments.³ When scholars and policymakers pointed out that the president did not have the clear authority or power to strike down such designations and that, moreover, no previous chief executive had ever attempted to do so, the White House pivoted.⁴ Instead, to avoid what would have been a series of lengthy (and costly) legal fights, on April 26, 2017, President Trump signed the Executive Order on the Review of Designations under the Antiquities Act. It authorized Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to evaluate “all Presidential designations or expansions of designations under the Antiquities Act made since January 1, 1996, where the designation covers more than 100,000 acres, where the designation after expansion covers more than 100,000 acres, or where the Secretary determines that the designation or expansion was made without adequate public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders.”⁵ Maine’s governor, Paul LePage, was among those crowding around the president as he put pen to paper. LePage’s presence was not by happenstance: he had stumped for Trump across the Pine Tree State and was a vociferous critic of President Obama’s decision to establish the Katahdin national monument. Little wonder, then, that he expressed satisfaction with the signing ceremony’s outcome: “Pleased to support President Trump’s efforts to review the federal government’s massive land grab from the American people.”⁶

The “land grab” talking point that LePage and others employed is a misnomer: none of the national monuments that President Obama established had been taken from the American people. With one exception, they were all already public lands, owned and managed on behalf of the American people by a variety of federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Even the one exception undercuts Governor LePage’s land-grab rhetoric: the 87,500-acre Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in north-central Maine was a munificent gift of the Quimby family to the nation.⁷ This donation of private property did not make the national monument’s creation any less controversial, but a close examination of its larger context helps explain the nature and limitations of that debate.

INTO THE WOODS

One day before the National Park Service celebrated its centenary, President Obama gave the agency an early birthday present: on August 24, 2016, he used the powers that the Antiquities Act has vested in the president to create the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. In the establishing proclamation, the president enumerated the site’s many striking geological features, cultural (including Native American) values, and scientific virtues, but particularly its scenic wonders. Katahdin, the official document enthused (as much as such things can enthuse), covers a lot of ground, “from the breadth of its mountain-studded landscape, to the channels of its free-flowing streams with their rapids, falls, and



Katahdin Woods and Waters Monument area map.



The East Branch of the Penobscot River flows through part of the new monument, from which one can take in excellent views of Mount Katahdin.

quiet water, to its vantages for viewing the Mount Katahdin massif, the ‘greatest mountain.’” New and beguiling vistas emerge when the sun sets: “The area’s night skies rival this [daytime] experience, glittering with stars and planets and occasional displays of the aurora borealis, in this area of the country known for its dark sky.”⁸

Its beauty notwithstanding, what makes the Maine national monument one of the most innovative in U.S. environmental history is that the Quimbys’ transfer of their property to the federal government came with a \$20 million endowment, a sum that the family committed itself to doubling in the coming years. This endowment has made the Katahdin national monument a private-public partnership without parallel. Yet however green and well-funded, this acquisition was also rich in partisan drama. Predictably, the state’s Tea Party–backed governor denounced the Quimbys’ donation: “It’s sad that rich, out-of-state liberals can team up with President Obama to force a national monument on rural Mainers who do not want it.”⁹ An Utahan did not want Katahdin, either, and brought outside intervention more to LePage’s liking. U.S. Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), chair of the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands, rebuked the president for what he called federal overreach: “The President is using the Centennial as a cover to subvert the will of Maine’s citizens and leaders. The only votes taken on this proposal, at the local and state level, have demonstrated opposition from Mainers. If the President cared about local voices and improving our National Park System, he would have done this through the public process and not behind

closed doors. Instead, he’s hijacked a moment of celebration to advance powerful elite special interests over Maine’s economy and citizens.”¹⁰

That public lands are controversial is how we know they are public, and thus worthy of debate.¹¹ Yet the polarizing rhetoric that swirled around Katahdin—like the predictable, almost boilerplate language opponents used to decry many of President Obama’s designations between 2009 and 2017—should not deflect attention from, in this gilded case, the unusual character of the Quimby family’s donation. Since the 1990s, Roxanne Quimby, founder of Burt’s Bees personal care products, had been open and upfront about her desire to donate her property to the federal government so that its rich biodiversity and unsurpassed beauty would be protected in perpetuity. Her initial ambition to create a full-blown national park—a preserve—would have come with restrictions governing resource extraction and motorized access, as with other units in the national park system. Not many locals took kindly to her stated goal of excluding them from their traditional practices in the North Woods, among them hunting and snowmobiling. Their resistance grew so intense that Quimby turned the project over to her son, Lucas St. Clair, to devise a new, less combative and more collaborative strategy. By allowing hunters, anglers, and snowmobilers back on a portion of the family’s lands, and by engaging with community groups, tribal entities, local officials, and state and national conservation organizations to restructure how the landscape would be managed in the future,



As part of his effort to win public support for the proposal, Lucas St. Clair spoke with groups and attended public meetings to address concerns about, and build support for, the proposal. His willingness to compromise achieved the long-term goal of conserving the family's land.

St. Clair changed the tone of opposition. Sen. Angus King (I-Maine) was among those who modified his concerns: "The benefits of the designation will far outweigh any detriment," he told the *Washington Post*, "and—on balance—will be a significant benefit to Maine and the region."¹²

TOURISM RULES

In garnering enough local and statewide support, St. Clair also managed to attract the Obama administration's attention. Also of interest was the Quimby family's assurance that the new national monument would boost Maine's already robust \$5.6 billion tourism industry. Having built Burt's Bees into a multi-million-dollar corporation, Quimby knew something about how to create jobs, and she used her acumen and experience to argue that the Katahdin park would be a boon to local businesses. "I am not interested in putting any manufacturing jobs under, but tourism has always been No. 2 or No. 1, depending on the survey, as a jobs maker in the state of Maine," she said at a 2011 public meeting. "I believe we can maximize the dollars we can make in Maine if we are not in denial about it, if we just embrace it."¹³

Boosters across the country have made similar claims about the creation of new parks and monuments, and *ex post facto* economic assessments appear to bear out those predictions. Headwaters Economics, an independent, nonprofit research organization based in Montana, annually releases a report tracking the economics of public lands in the U.S. West. In spring 2017, its

analysis concluded that "rural counties in the West with more federal lands or protected federal lands are performing better on average than their peers with less federal lands or protected federal lands in four key economic measures." Increased tourism was not the only factor: "The greatest value of natural amenities and recreation opportunities," it observed, "often lies in the ability of protected lands to attract and retain people, entrepreneurs, businesses, and retirees."¹⁴ The uptick held true for long-established parks as well as for just-created ones. Some of the most recent beneficiaries of this effect include California's Pinnacles National Park, New Mexico's Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks National Monument, César E. Chávez National Monument in the Central Valley of California, and the African Burial Ground National Monument in Manhattan, all designated by Obama. These designations, though diverse in their offerings and settings, have become destinations.

The communities surrounding the Katahdin national monument anticipate a similar economic upturn, not least because tourism in Maine has had such a lengthy history. Henry David Thoreau may not have been the state's first visitor, but his 1840s excursions into the North Woods, described in *The Maine Woods* (1864), helped put the state's "grim and wild" land on the tourism map. (He did the same for its local hand-crafted, cedar-infused beer, which he called "clear and thin, but strong and stringent"; drinking it, he wrote, was "as if we sucked at the very teats of Nature's pine-clad bosom."¹⁵) Thoreau's roughing-it forays set

the stage for Maine's informal motto, stamped on every license plate: Vacationland. Over the years, millions of Americans have taken the hint, frolicking on shore, river, or lake, on mountain, forest, or isle. And tens of thousands of boys and girls have spent their formative summers at camps in the Pine Tree State.¹⁶ They learn, as I did at Camp Agawam, hard by Crescent Lake in Raymond, how to pitch a tent, shoot a rifle, and paddle and portage. By day, we swatted black flies and mosquitoes; by night, we were lulled to sleep by a loon's soporific call. Every one of us has helped the state's economy hum.

That hum intensified with the opening of the Katahdin national monument. So argued Lucas St. Clair in testimony before the House Committee on Federal Lands on May 2, 2017. "Businesses are starting to grow and expand," he told the GOP-controlled committee. "Jobs are being created. Real estate prices have started to rebound. And there are new, significant private-sector investments, including plans for a \$5 million outdoor recreational school." Countering Governor LePage, who testified that same day in continued opposition to the national monument, St. Clair observed that some of the governor's one-time backers "have started to come around as they have begun to recognize the benefits of having a national monument near their communities."¹⁷ In a state that lost 1,500 jobs between 2014 and 2016 when five paper mills closed down (and is expected to lose 1,800 more by 2024), and where the logging industry is declining in parallel, tourism and related industries have become even more important to the economy since Roxanne Quimby made her 2011 prediction.¹⁸

COLLABORATIVE COMMONS

The new park's many visitors will learn that the private-public partnership that led to its creation is perfectly in line with a century of such initiatives in Maine: collaborative projects have established some of the state's most iconic (and protected) landscapes. An early-twentieth-century grassroots movement created the White Mountain National Forest, which straddles New Hampshire and Maine. Its proponents had been driven to act by the damage caused by intense logging in mountainous watersheds, as cutover terrain sent snowmelt floods into downstream communities. But to restore the woods required funding that neither state's legislature would provide. The forest activists came to understand that gaining some measure of regulatory control over the once heavily forested mountains would require an act of Congress. After more than a decade of protest and negotiation that drew support from across the country, New England and southern conservationists managed to secure congressional action in the form of the Weeks Act of 1911. This crucial legislation for the first time authorized the federal government to purchase land from willing sellers. Many landowners in Maine and New Hampshire would sell their property as part of a shared commitment to protect local watersheds. In 1918, the bistate national forest was established, and ever since, it has drawn millions of visitors each year.¹⁹

Acadia National Park, founded two years earlier as the first Park Service unit east of the Mississippi River, has proved every bit as popular.²⁰ It too was a joint venture between private property owners and the federal government. Wealthy landowners on Mount Desert Island donated property to the federal government in advance of President Woodrow Wilson's initial designation of it as *Sieur des Monts* National Monument in July 1916. The date is significant: Wilson accepted the land one month before he

formally signed off on the creation of the National Park Service, making Acadia an early birthday gift, much as Katahdin was a centennial present to the agency. This earlier, concerted effort saved more than 40 miles of Maine's spectacularly rugged coast, and in 2016 the park drew upward of three million visitors.²¹

Baxter State Park, which abuts Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument to its immediate north, is the result of yet another private-public project. Named for Percival P. Baxter, a former governor and state senator, the park owes its origins to Baxter's indefatigable energy and deep pockets. In the early 1920s, Governor Baxter urged the state legislature to purchase the land that surrounds Mount Katahdin, but to no avail. At the end of that decade, as the Great Depression hit hard, he negotiated directly with the landowner, the Great Northern Paper Company. Baxter used his inheritance to purchase the first 6,690 acres and immediately donated it to the state; over his lifetime, he continued to add parcels that subsequently totaled more than 200,000 acres. To ensure the park's preservation, Baxter bequeathed a \$7 million endowment to underwrite the efforts of a stand-alone park authority to manage these lands under tighter constraints than prevail at the Katahdin national monument. Baxter's deeds-of-gift ensure that this mountainous region "shall forever be used for public park and recreational purposes, shall be forever left in the natural wild state, shall forever be kept as a sanctuary for wild beasts and birds, that no road or ways for motor vehicles shall hereafter ever be constructed thereon or therein."²²

Baxter was an inveterate hiker, so it is fitting that his eponymous park—and Mount Katahdin specifically—is the northern terminus of yet one more private-public partnership: the 2,180-mile-long Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The brainchild of Benton MacKaye, who in the early 1920s envisioned a series of utopian communities linked by a footpath running from Georgia to Maine, the Appalachian Trail has depended on the support of private landowners and public agencies at the local, state, and federal levels, and on volunteer labor and philanthropic support. This tangled array of contributions to the trail's early development explains its contemporary maintenance and management arrangement: cooperators include the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and countless other entities and individuals.²³

The Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument adds to the enduring legacy of private-public partnerships in Maine. It also reflects the collaborative approach to landscape-scale management that is shaping how land managers across the nation are securing the resources—human and fiscal—to ensure more sustainable stewardship of some of our most treasured terrain.²⁴ Nothing about this development is easy, as the controversy surrounding the Quimby family's gift of land for the Katahdin national monument indicates. Katahdin may have launched the National Park Service into its second century of service, but this new century—given President Trump's April 2017 executive order to review Antiquities Act designations—is off to a rough and contentious start. □

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National parks are not unique to the United States, and neither is the issue of climate change. How the media and nongovernmental organizations talk about the impact of climate change on national parks can and does influence our understanding of and response to the issue. This essay was first published in National Parks beyond the Nation: Global Perspectives on “America’s Best Idea.”

THE TROUBLE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

AND NATIONAL PARKS

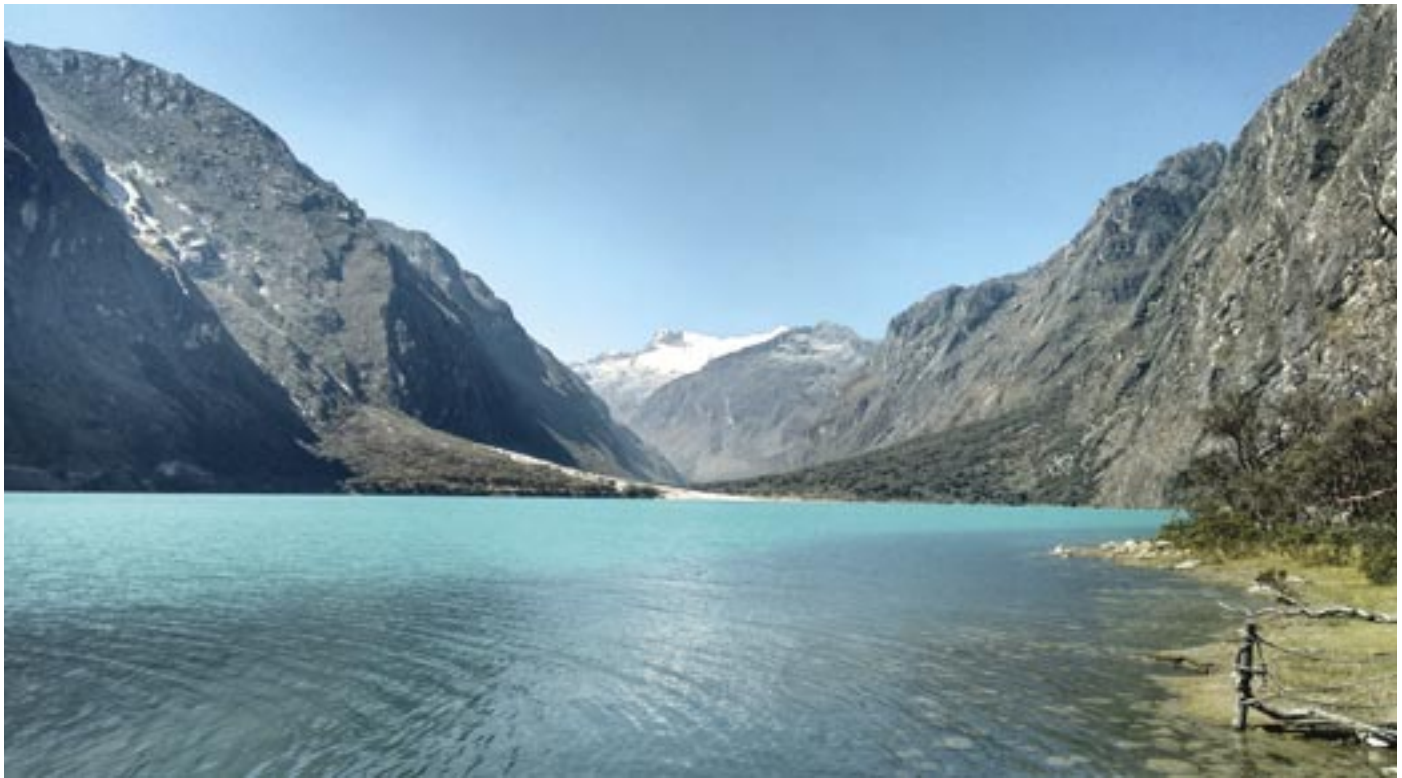
Global warming is threatening what many see as the world’s most pristine environments: national parks from Glacier in the United States to Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Sagarmatha (Mount Everest) in Nepal, and Huascarán in Peru, among many others. Worse, many see global warming as driven

by the same nefarious forces that people hope to escape in parks—industrialization, natural resource exploitation, development and sprawl, consumerism, and rampant capitalism—thereby making climate change particularly offensive when it tarnishes the parkland sanctuary. Melting glaciers, forest fires, hungry polar bears, species migration and extinctions, diminishing water supplies, depleted scenery, declining tourism economies—these are what the media and environmental groups report as the most severe consequences of climate change in the world’s national parks. As the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization and Natural Resources Defense Council recently asserted, “Human disruption of the climate is the greatest threat ever to our national parks.”¹

Media accounts and environmental groups’ reports about climate change in national parks reveal a great deal not only about climate impacts but also about embedded ideas of wilderness,

human-nature interactions, and the place of parks in national narratives of nature.² Journalists and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) typically have to—or at least choose to—simplify their coverage of climate change in national parks. What they decide to convey to readers and, more importantly, what they leave out actually reveals a great deal about their values, ideas, and perceptions of both climate change and national parks. In many cases, the climate change discourse on national parks resembles the declensionist narrative of environmental degradation that has long been at the center of the environmental and wilderness preservation movements—a narrative that scholars have also critiqued.³ When news stories and climate reports simplify human-environment dynamics, exaggerate global warming impacts, or avoid discussion of complex human-nature dynamics, they can also perpetuate a certain “traditional” view of national parks.⁴ I

BY MARK CAREY



A popular tourist destination, the Llanganuco Lakes are located at the base of Peru's Mount Huascarán. Media accounts fail to mention the role of water rights, reservoirs and dams, and shifting land- and water-use practices that all affect watershed hydrology.

thus argue that the last fifteen years of media accounts and environmental groups' reports on climate change in national parks actually divulge as much about popular perceptions of parks and the relationship between people and nature as they do about climate change impacts. What's more, these portrayals that depict climate change as such a tragic threat may even impede more effective efforts in climate change adaptation, because they emphasize tourist wishes and the aesthetics of park landscapes, or they portray people as passive victims, instead of delving deeper into ecosystem processes, social-ecological systems, human livelihoods, natural hazards, resource management, social justice, and many other critical issues affected by global climate change.⁵

In addition to uncovering these narratives of national parks embedded in climate discourse, this essay also strives to break out of the pervasive and highly restrictive believer/skeptic dichotomy that characterizes much climate research. After studying climate change and glacier retreat impacts in the Andes for more than a decade, I can attest to the fact that climate change has already unleashed catastrophic consequences that killed thousands of residents around Huascarán National Park. Further, my research underscores how more marginalized populations often suffer disproportionately from climate-related hazards, resource conflicts, and biophysical changes stemming from climate change.⁶ But just because I understand the deadly effects of climate change does not mean I should step into the mold that pits global warming "believers" against "skeptics." Clinging to one of these two climate "camps," I believe, has derailed scholarship and made it nearly impossible for scholars to critique any aspect of climate discourse without coming across as a skeptic.⁷ What's more, the language that refers to believers and skeptics gives the discussion strong religious overtones, thereby shutting down open, critical analysis of climate change. Finally, an uncritical adherence to the "believers"

camp out of fear of providing ammunition for skeptics runs the risk of potentially doing social science and humanities research in the service of Western science or environmentalist groups' priorities, both of which scholars have long critiqued for being socially constructed and having embedded agendas of their own.⁸

The goal in this essay is to critically examine media accounts and NGO reports of climate change impacts in Huascarán National Park in Peru and Glacier National Park in Montana. Both Huascarán and Glacier are located in high mountain glaciated environments, are globally high-profile parks, and have received significant international attention related to climate change. This analysis involved an exhaustive search for news articles examining these parks written during the last fifteen years. Media accounts and news articles influence public views and also offer helpful insights into popular perceptions. Interestingly, most journalists tended to cite and quote environmental organizations, rather than scientists or even park officials, as the climate experts in their news stories. Therefore, this research also involved analysis of reports by influential environmental NGOs—not park officials or scientists—because they are the ones overwhelmingly represented in the media. Media reports in Spanish from Peru and in English from the United States and the United Kingdom were consistent in their portrayal of parks and climate change: they all linked people and parks in Peru. The Spanish-language sources, however, rarely mentioned Glacier National Park; therefore, a divergent view between Glacier and Huascarán was not possible to detect from this research. Of approximately 100 news articles and a dozen NGO reports found on national parks and climate change, about one-third of them were devoted entirely or significantly to Huascarán and Glacier. This research also included historical analysis to help juxtapose past depictions of Huascarán and Glacier against more recent accounts. The historical perspectives show

not only how perceptions changed over time, but also how the issues identified as global warming impacts also reveal long-standing cultural values and ideas about national parks.

PARKS AND PEOPLE IN PERU

The iconic Huascarán National Park in the Peruvian Andes has attracted significant international attention related to climate change. In fact, international NGOs have petitioned the World Heritage Committee more than once to designate Huascarán—along with a handful of other parks such as Glacier and Sagarmatha (Mount Everest)—as an “endangered” site precisely because of the effects of global warming. The climate discourse about Huascarán reveals several things about perceptions of national parks in Peru. First, nature is generally portrayed, or idealized, as static scenery, and Huascarán is often cast as a place primarily for recreation and tourism. Second, environmental processes and socioenvironmental dynamics are usually simplified, while certain societal or environmental changes are misattributed to climate change. Third, deterministic predictions about future climatic/environmental changes tend to minimize human agency and ignore past adaptation accomplishments, thereby turning Peruvians into passive victims. Despite many similarities in the depiction of climate change in Huascarán and Glacier National Parks, the conceptualizations of climate impacts in the two parks also illuminate a fundamental difference in the perceptions and meanings of U.S. and Peruvian national parks. In Peru, the parks are not discursively separated from people as they are in the United States. Rather, Huascarán National Park is inextricably connected to human populations through natural hazards, natural resources, the tourism economy, and water supplies.

Huascarán National Park was created in 1975, and it remains one of the country’s preeminent parks. It protects a significant part of the upper elevations within the Cordillera Blanca, a 200-kilometer-long mountain range that includes twenty-seven peaks above 6,000 meters, including Peru’s highest, Mount Huascarán (6,768 meters). Huascarán became a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 1977 and was first inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1985. The Cordillera Blanca is the highest and most glaciated tropical mountain range in the world, and parkland varies from 2,500 meters to 6,768 meters above sea level, offering a host of ecological life zones, ecosystems, plant and animal diversity, and climatic variation within the park. The park also protects the *puya raimondi*, the world’s largest bromeliad, and is home to animals such as the spectacled bear and Andean condors.⁹ Yet the park also has strong foundations in recreation, tourism, and mountaineering. The roots of the park’s creation, in fact, lie in tourism promotion as much as plant and animal conservation.¹⁰ Interestingly, the early proposals and recommendations for the park barely mentioned the park’s glaciers; instead, they focused on its lakes, flora and fauna, forests, high mountains, and geology.¹¹ Today park descriptions focus on the glaciers themselves, as in Glacier National Park.

With shrinking glaciers highlighted as the principal climate change impact in Huascarán National Park, media accounts imply that glaciers and other aspects of the natural environment in national parks should remain as static scenery primarily for tourists to enjoy. Many articles focus on the effects that glacier retreat will have or has had on tourism and mountaineering, and they cite a 20 to 35 percent loss of Cordillera Blanca ice since the late 1970s as evidence of this impact.¹² Some also lament the loss of the ice caves, which were a beautiful feature of Huascarán’s Pastoruri

Glacier before they melted.¹³ Another complained, “The glacier looks like a patient dying of a virus.” But the real problem expressed in this news story is that the glacier terrain is “not normal” because it is unstable and problematic for mountain climbers.¹⁴ Accounts also tend to exaggerate the rate of future glacier retreat, thereby making a statement about how changing park scenery is lamentable. Some accounts suggest twenty years for the disappearance of glaciers, and one journalist lamenting ice loss in Huascarán National Park and other World Heritage sites noted that Peru will lose “almost all [glaciers] within the next 7 years.”¹⁵ The claim that Cordillera Blanca glaciers will disappear even in fifty years cannot be found in scientific literature, and informally I have heard glaciologists say total ice loss in the Cordillera Blanca would likely be on the scale of centuries, not decades.¹⁶

Iconic species also appear prominently in climate discourse, suggesting how the nature in national parks is often identified as charismatic flora and fauna—even if news stories provide little evidence of climate impacts on these species. As one representative news article mentions for Huascarán, “the Andes are home to many rare species. The mountains are populated by llamas which can be found living at high altitudes, predominantly in Peru and Bolivia. The South American condor, the largest bird of its kind in the Western hemisphere, is also found here as are pumas, camelids, partridges, *parinas*, *huallatas* (geese), and coots.”¹⁷ The article’s focus on climate change impacts leads the reader to believe these species are actually affected by climate, but there is no evidence provided. Moreover, the statement that llamas are a rare species would be like suggesting that white-tailed deer are rare in Massachusetts or cows unusual in Iowa. Of course, climate change does threaten species inhabiting national parks, and in some cases species might migrate outside park boundaries, thus creating new dilemmas for park managers.¹⁸ But when climate change news stories claim that climate change affects bears, llamas, condors, and other symbolic species without offering any evidence of those impacts, then the articles reveal a tendency to associate national parks with iconic species and charismatic fauna rather than other lesser-known species or ecosystem processes.

Most media accounts of climate change impacts in Huascarán National Park reveal a very different perspective than exists for Glacier National Park in the United States: local people in Peru are shown to be intimately tied to the national park, unlike the common portrayal of U.S. parks that (mis)depict them as standing in isolation from all surrounding populations. The two contrasting popular narratives of people connected to parks in Peru and of vacant wilderness parks devoid of nearby populations in the United States are thus affecting the ways in which people learn about climate change impacts—and vice versa. One way the link between people and nature in national parks comes up for Huascarán is through an emphasis on natural hazards associated with climate-induced glacier retreat. In the United States, in contrast, the disaster narrative for parks often centers on the natural environment: disappearing glaciers or threatened plant and animal species that must migrate or go extinct. In Peru, climate change has already caused catastrophic consequences in Huascarán from glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) that have killed thousands of residents.¹⁹ Glacial lakes formed at the foot of retreating glaciers after the end of the Little Ice Age in the mid-nineteenth century. As the ice retreated, lakes formed that were precariously dammed behind unstable moraines. In 1941 Lake Palcacocha burst through its moraine dam and killed 5,000 people in the city of Huaraz. Two



Mount Huascarán as seen from the Carhuaz-to-Chacas road that crosses through the park. Unlike their descriptions of Glacier National Park, the media depicts local people in Peru as intimately tied to the national park.

additional GLOFs occurred in 1945 and 1950 that killed nearly 1,000 people and destroyed one of the country's largest hydroelectric stations at Cañón del Pato. Other types of glacier disasters originating in the park have caused even more deaths, including the 1962 glacier avalanche that killed 4,000 people in Ranrahirca and the 1970 earthquake-triggered avalanche in Yungay that killed at least 6,000 people (based on studies completed since official documents put the death toll at 15,000).

News stories about climate change in the park generally mention this history of disasters and the potential for more in the future, though they sometimes exaggerate the potential impacts. A 2007 report written by a variety of international NGOs and published by UNESCO exemplifies these views. The section of the case study report on Huascarán asserted that “the livelihood of two million people living within the immediate vicinity of the Huascarán National Park is threatened by high-altitude glacial lakes with the combination of climate change, local seismic activity, and increased glacier and hill slope instability.”²⁰ Another news story offers a similarly high number, suggesting that “millions of people in the Peruvian Andes live under threat from catastrophic floods caused by global warming.”²¹ Recent census data and GIS spatial analysis, however, reveals that fewer than a half million people live in all the surrounding areas. And the portion of those people exposed to potential glacier and glacial lake hazards is much smaller.²² Media reports make other exaggerations by claiming, for example, that 70,000 people died in the Yungay glacier avalanche in 1970.²³

Another way news stories connect the national park to surrounding populations—and thus blur nature and culture together in ways that discourse about Glacier does not—is by noting the effects of climate change and glacier retreat on the tourism economy around Huascarán National Park.²⁴ But in many cases, the media reports misrepresent or oversimplify the human impacts. In one

confusing example, the author mentions the loss of “picturesque glaciers” and then refers to local testimony from an elderly man who said, “We used to walk to those glaciers from my school. It would take six hours. Today I can walk there in two and a half hours. Some of the glaciers will be gone forever.”²⁵ It is unclear how the glaciers got closer to this man's community—since everyone lives on slopes at elevations below glacier tongues—unless glaciers had advanced, not retreated. Such “evidence” to illustrate the effects of climate change impacts in and around Huascarán National Park actually undermines the point and clouds understanding of climate change and glacier shrinkage impacts. Another article argues that “the drastic melt forces people to farm at higher altitudes to grow their crops, adding to deforestation, which in turn undermines water sources and leads to soil erosion and putting the survival of Andean cultures at risk.”²⁶ It's unclear why people would be *forced* to move higher because the glacier shrunk, especially because the water still runs downhill. But the insistence on linking park changes to human changes demonstrates the close connection between local residents and Huascarán. This also occurs when media accounts refer to so-called climate refugees, people around the park who will be displaced by climate change.²⁷ Articles about climate refugees near Huascarán do not definitively show how climate change affects the economic drivers of migration, which are usually identified as the most influential for triggering migration.²⁸ Nevertheless, the focus on human migration, the tourism economy, natural hazards, and human vulnerability demonstrates how depictions of the national park include people, which is a sharp contrast to the more common U.S. view of parks as isolated wilderness where nature and culture usually do not discursively connect.

Even though the climate discourse helps link people with parks in Peru, the media articles still present a view of nature and environmental processes that is devoid of human influence, behaviors,

and decision making. This view is particularly notable in the portrayal of climate change impacts on freshwater supplies. Many articles note the potential negative effects of glacier shrinkage on regional water availability, which would also have a major effect on hydroelectricity generation and industrial-scale irrigation on Peru's Pacific coast.²⁹ There is little doubt that long-term continued glacier shrinkage will affect water supplies, but the media accounts often ignore the critical role that people play in the hydrologic cycle in and around the national park. They fail to ever mention the role of water rights, reservoirs and dams, and shifting land- and water-use practices that all affect watershed hydrology. For example, one article recounts the perspectives of a local resident who said that, as a child, he played in rivers that were too large to cross by foot but that are now easy to jump over "without ever touching the water."³⁰ He blames this river change on the retreating glaciers that are vanishing because of climate change. But it seems just as likely that this supposed river change could have resulted from fluctuations in upstream water-use practices (new water withdrawals), rather than glacier retreat. Another local resident living next to Huascarán National Park lamented, "We all get our water from there. But if the ice disappears, there won't be any more water."³¹ This framing suggests that 100 percent of the region's water comes from glaciers, which is not the case. Other articles expand the impacts well beyond the national park by noting that glacier retreat in Huascarán is causing an "irreversible crisis because of water scarcity."³²

But glacier runoff is a lot more complicated than these media accounts indicate, and the way journalists simplify hydrology unveils important insights about how they view human-environmental processes. Most scientific studies, in sharp contrast to the media accounts, suggest that glacier runoff has not yet begun to decline and that water flow from glaciers may, in fact, be in a period of increase, not decrease. These studies project a decrease of water flow of up to 23 percent by the year 2080 or 21 percent by 2050–59.³³ One new study, however, reports that seven of nine studied watersheds surrounding Huascarán National Park have seen reduced dry-season discharge that probably began around 1970. But the study maintains that even once these watersheds lose 100 percent of their glaciers—which will not occur for a long, long time—water flow for the western half of the Cordillera Blanca will decline between 2 and 30 percent, depending on the watershed.³⁴ This is a significant proportion of water, but a much smaller percentage than many news accounts imply when they suggest the imminent disappearance of all water in the region as glaciers shrink. The media and NGO reports also tend to overlook the important role that groundwater supplies play in the region's hydrology.³⁵ Moreover, they ignore how people affect those water supplies through subsistence and large-scale agriculture, human consumption, hydroelectricity generation, mining, reservoir management, and social action and protest.³⁶ News stories miss the ways in which these upstream water-use practices affect the rest of the watershed and interact with climate impacts.

These depictions of climate impacts and hydrologic fluctuations without much regard for the role of people reveals a broader trend that Mike Hulme refers to as environmental reductionism in climate change scenarios. As Hulme explains, this "new climate reductionism is driven by the hegemony exercised by the predictive natural sciences over contingent, imaginative, and humanistic accounts of social life and visions of the future."³⁷ In short, the increasing dominance of predictive quantitative models fails to account for social change and human ingenuity. This climatic

reductionism is playing out in the media coverage of Huascarán National Park, and the rendering implies that Peruvians are simply passive victims waiting hopelessly for climate change to ruin their lives—whether through shrinking glaciers, glacier disasters, or evaporating water supplies. As one article exemplifying this view puts it: "The ice loss means less water, less food, and less hope for our future generation."³⁸ A more accurate interpretation of climate-glacier-water dynamics would suggest that Peruvians may be forced to change their water management strategies, and this will likely cause unequal impacts because some people are more (or less) vulnerable. And these impacts will be conditioned based on a variety of social, political, economic, cultural, and environmental factors that all intersect as the climate changes.

The portrayal of Peruvians as passive victims is also ahistorical. For one, it denies seventy years of successful Peruvian engineering and science to prevent GLOFs from within Huascarán National Park. Peruvians were enormously effective in adapting to the threat of outburst floods, although these accomplishments are rarely conveyed in media reports. Peruvian engineers have drained and dammed thirty-four glacial lakes in the park since 1951, and they developed flood prevention strategies that they are now increasingly sharing with the rest of the world, especially in the Himalayan region.³⁹ Categorizing Peruvians as waiting passively for their water to run out also overlooks how they have increased water use from Huascarán National Park rivers dramatically over the past half century. They expanded hydroelectricity generation, increased irrigated agriculture, and provided drinking water for a growing population. Human ingenuity, new technologies, economic investments, shifting management practices, and changing laws have all shaped historical water use in the region—and these factors no doubt will affect the future, even though most climate models and media accounts ignore them. This is not to say, of course, that climate change impacts in Huascarán National Park will not cause significant consequences. Rather, the point is that climate change does not occur in a social vacuum. Understanding the effects of climate in a national park (or anywhere) thus requires a much deeper analysis of human forces and the interconnected dynamics between coupled natural-human systems—precisely the kinds of insights that environmental historians have been offering for decades. Climate discourse does link parks and people in Peru, but only to a limited degree given these simplifications of the hydrosocial cycle and other environmental processes.

STATIC SCENERY IN GLACIER

Glacier National Park has also attracted worldwide attention in the face of climate change. It was here, in 1997, where Vice President Al Gore hiked to the base of the shrinking Grinnell Glacier and pledged to fight against global warming.⁴⁰ Since then, the park's disappearing glaciers—among other climate impacts—have attracted consistent and increasing national media attention. While these news stories point to real climate-related problems in the park, they also reveal three trends in the conceptualization of national parks: the emphasis on lost scenery for tourists rather than the inclusion of local populations; the portrayal of static nature; and the misattribution of climate change impacts that perpetuate simplistic depictions of social-ecological systems.

The U.S. Congress established the 1-million-acre Glacier National Park in 1910 to protect its rugged and unparalleled mountain scenery. In 1932 Glacier National Park combined with the adjacent Waterton Lakes National Park on the Canadian side

of the border to form the world's first International Peace Park. Glacier became a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 1976. Since 1916, Glacier has been managed by the U.S. National Park Service, which was created "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."⁴¹ This law and the 1910 enabling legislation for Glacier National Park set up contradictory objectives: to preserve nature but to manage wildlife and the natural and cultural scenery for tourists more than ecosystem health or scientific objectives. From the outset, the park founders also evicted Blackfoot Indians from Glacier, thereby establishing and perpetuating popular narratives (and policies) of national parks as devoid of people, even if that meant actively dispossessing Native peoples.⁴² Such portrayals have spilled over onto other neighboring populations because, in the case of Glacier, the discourse rarely mentions how the park's natural resources help local populations as depictions in Peru do.

Recent climate change discourse about Glacier National Park reflects this historical legacy of the park in a key way: it portrays the park primarily as scenery for tourists. A typical news story lamenting climate change notes that glacier loss should motivate tourists "to take a road trip through Glacier National Park, Montana this summer before it is gone." After mentioning the likelihood of complete glacier loss in Glacier by 2020, the article concludes by noting that "with mountains not snow-capped as much or as long into the summer, the scenery that draws most visitors to Glacier—including stunning waterfalls and lakes—would be affected."⁴³ Glaciologists recognize that glaciers are indicators of long-term changes in the climate system because the ice responds to various climatic conditions.⁴⁴ But news articles do not always draw this connection. Instead, it is common for articles to focus on the mere loss of the ice as the main climate story, which then conveys the idea that visible scenery is more important than water supplies or habitats. Often these articles note how the number of park glaciers has decreased from 150 in 1850 to twenty-six in 2006, and so, as one article mentioned, the ice "simply faded away to expose bare mountainsides."⁴⁵ The article does not detail the consequences of this glacier retreat, nor does it suggest that glacier retreat is an indicator of climate change. Instead, the article primarily laments the loss of ice, implying that it is the replacement of ice with "bare mountainsides" that is tragic. This point of view, of course, is very subjective, because a rock aficionado might appreciate the elimination of glaciers, just as ecologists were thrilled to establish Alaska's Glacier Bay National Park nearly a century ago precisely because the glaciers were retreating, which allowed them to study plant colonization and succession on newly opened landscapes.⁴⁶ Lamenting glacier retreat is a point of view that demonstrates how journalists value the tourist scenery in national parks.

This cultural construction of glaciers in recent years stands out when compared to past representations of glaciers in the national park. An analysis of a dozen guidebooks written about Glacier between 1910 and 1995 shows how past commentators did not apply such value judgments to glacier changes. For one thing, glaciers have only come to be the focus of Glacier National Park in the past decade or so. Previously, commentators remarked on the glaciers as one among many other remarkable features of the park. The geologist Marius R. Campbell pointed out in 1914 that glaciers "can hardly be considered [the park's] most striking feature. The

traveler passing through it for the first time is generally impressed more by the ruggedness of the mountain tops, the great vertical walls which bound them, and the beauty of the forests, lakes, and streams, than by the glaciers."⁴⁷ Robert Sterling Yard noted in 1920 that "Glacier National Park is so named because in the hollow of its rugged mountain tops lie more than 60 *small* glaciers, the remainders of ancient monsters which once covered all but the highest mountain peaks."⁴⁸ Most guidebooks focused on the lakes, waterfalls, and majestic mountain vistas, not glaciers, in their description of tourist destinations in the park.⁴⁹ When authors did discuss glaciers, they usually portrayed them as dynamic, ever-changing bodies of ice that come and go, carving the magnificent landscape in the process.⁵⁰ As one wrote in 1963, "The growth and decay of the early glaciers was uneven and interrupted. There were numerous fluctuations and periods of little change. The ice may have completely disappeared from the area even within historic times."⁵¹ The point to note in these depictions of Glacier's glaciers up until the late twentieth century is their recognition of glaciers that retreat and advance, even disappear—and they explain this without value judgment. In fact, these authors recognize that it is precisely because of significant glacier retreat that the park's scenery exists, thereby contrasting with today's lament for lost ice as if glaciers were static, unchanging living things.

When journalists underscore the rate of glacier retreat and show deep nostalgia or longing for the supposedly good old climate of the past, they convey a belief that national parks should remain static and unchanged. Commentators talk about "losing" parks to climate change, while others mention how climate change creates "an ecosystem out of balance" or how it upsets "intact ecosystems."⁵² Some refer to past climatic conditions as allowing parks to be "healthy" or having "undisturbed ecosystems."⁵³ Global warming, on the other hand, causes national parks to lose their "natural condition" and become "an ecosystem out of balance."⁵⁴ This suggestion that past environmental conditions were static can occur with discussions of species migrations in national parks. Researchers note that global warming will drive species to higher areas to maintain their ecological and climatic niche. Few of the media accounts, however, indicate that climatic shifts have always occurred; they neglect to say that the real issue is the rapid rate of change in recent decades. Without discussing the various rates of change, readers are left to (mis)assume that static landscapes and climates existed until the last few decades. Still others talk about seeing Glacier and other parks threatened by climate change and melting ice as destinations to see "before they [the parks] die."⁵⁵ Glaciers, pikas, and forest fires will likely undergo dramatic alterations from climate change.⁵⁶ But nature is also in constant flux, and the idea of static, unchanging nature is inaccurate.⁵⁷ The media accounts do little to clarify these differences, even if they are likely referring to the stunning rate of changes and the value of anything that is lost. Without such explanations, their messages convey the sentiment that national parks are unchanging—indeed, that they are places where the scenery and environments should not change. In many ways this view corresponds to the 1916 enabling legislation that created the National Park Service and set out to preserve parks "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Critics of wilderness have since pointed out that nature in national parks is as much a cultural construction as it is "wild," while they have also shown that nature is never static.⁵⁸ These traditional views of national parks as static wilderness, however, continue to exist, and the global warming narrative exemplifies how the static wilderness



Glaciers have only become the focus of Glacier National Park in the past decade or so. Most guidebooks used to focus on the variety of landscape features such as wildlife and high peaks. Now media accounts exhort readers to visit soon before the glaciers disappear, giving the impression that there is little of interest beyond the glaciers in the park's one million acres.

ideal both reflects this view and is perpetuated through such media accounts of climate change in Glacier.

Perceptions of the impact that glacier retreat in Glacier National Park will have on freshwater supplies helps illustrate the different views of parks in the United States and Peru. In Montana the impact of glacier shrinkage on human societies is largely absent, except for tourists, as news stories instead refer vaguely to environmental impacts. One news article about that process explained the rate of past glacier loss in Glacier, as well as the predicted outcome of having no glaciers by 2030. But the article never mentions any effects of these shrinking glaciers except to report that “climate change is eliminating glaciers and harming the park environment.”⁵⁹ Another account explains that “there’s more to glaciers than just beauty. They also play a crucial role in the ecosystem, and their disappearance may have widespread consequences.”⁶⁰ It says glaciers provide water and help with the health of aquatic and riparian ecosystems, just as another article claims the disappearing glaciers are “endangering the region’s plants and animals.”⁶¹ But how? Most articles do not explain precisely how, even though a few scientists have been studying climate-glacier-hydrology dynamics in Glacier.⁶² Despite their studies, the U.S. Geological Survey still explains on its website that “few measurements of glacier volume or mass have been made. Measurements of area alone can be misleading; changes in mass and/or ice flux can result in significant changes to the glacier and to streamflow below the glacier even when glacier area remains stable. Though hydrologic changes such as these can have important ecologic effects downstream of the glaciers, the nature and extent of changes in runoff volume, and stream temperature have not been measured or analyzed.”⁶³ In fact, it is not even clear what percent of the water supplied to Glacier

National Park and surrounding areas comes from glaciers, or how much water supplies will decline if glaciers vanish altogether. This lack of evidence makes it difficult to determine if glacier shrinkage will, in fact, result in “losing an important source of fresh water.”⁶⁴ Without much data available or analysis of the complex ways in which glacier volume affects downstream water supplies, it seems the media reports might be exaggerating the worries about glacier retreat for downstream hydrology.

But more relevant for what this climate discourse says about perceptions of national parks is the way the concerns about glacier-water fluctuations rarely mention local people—even though tens of thousands of people live outside Glacier National Park, including those on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, and even though the Hungry Horse hydroelectric station outside Glacier generates more energy than the Cañón del Pato station outside Huascarán. Still, the discourse about Glacier largely overlooks the presence of local people, which contrasts markedly to portrayals of the national park in Peru. These views of climate change impacts thus illustrate how U.S. national parks can be viewed as an isolated landscape, where static nature is separate from people but preserved—preferably unchanged—for tourists. Despite a few decades of critical scholarship on national parks and wilderness, the traditional views of parks as untarnished by and disconnected from human beings remain prevalent, embedded in depictions of climate change impacts and continuing to drive NGO and environmental group agendas in parks.

CONCLUSIONS

Key similarities stand out in the analysis of popular media about Huascarán and Glacier National Parks. In both parks, climate discourse reveals embedded ideals about static nature and the way



Changes in Iceberg Glacier in eastern Glacier National Park are noticeable when comparing these photos taken in 1940 (left) and 2010 (right). It is common for media accounts to focus on the loss of the ice as the main climate story.

parks should preserve scenery primarily for tourists. Yet this discursive analysis also shows how perceptions of national parks in the two countries are also quite distinct. Unlike the discourse about Glacier that characterizes the park as an isolated, island wilderness area separate from human societies and culture, portrayals of Huascarán National Park tend to focus on its inextricable interconnections with surrounding societies. In particular, media and NGO accounts reveal that Huascarán is the source of many natural hazards that affect Peruvian populations; they also note how the park is central to the local tourism economy and a vital source of water and other ecosystem services. The severe human impacts of climate change that journalists discuss for Huascarán also reveal how much more acute climate effects are in the Andes than in northern Montana. What's more, nature and culture do not seem nearly so discursively divided in Peru as in the United States. Despite blurring nature-culture boundaries, however, journalists do nonetheless reveal a type of environmental reductionism for Huascarán that overlooks the role of cultural ingenuity, ignores the possibility of human adaptation to climate change in the future, and minimizes past Peruvian accomplishments. Overall, though, this utilitarian view of the socioeconomic and natural resource dimensions of Huascarán National Park contrasts markedly with the representation of Glacier National Park, which is portrayed primarily as tourist scenery and a place of biodiversity, with only limited mention of surrounding human populations.

Cautiously using these two parks as representations of national parks in Peru and the United States suggests key differences in the purpose and meaning of parks in the two countries, at least as

uncovered in the popular media. The principal distinction lies at the heart of the U.S. Yellowstone model: evicting local people (both physically and discursively) from national parks to create supposed pristine wilderness landscapes.⁶⁵ In Latin America park developers have, to a degree, avoided this Yellowstone model through time. Instead, national parks with human residents have been common, and parks for utilitarian purposes—such as watershed conservation for urban populations—have been the norm.⁶⁶ Fortress conservation that blocks out everyone except tourists through policies and rhetoric has been the main practice in the United States. But in Peru as elsewhere in Latin America, national parks have never been as divorced from local populations as in the United States.

The analysis of climate discourse in national parks also has implications for responses to global warming. Many of the media accounts do not discuss broader implications of glacier retreat and species changes in these two parks. Nor do they recognize and convey the complexity of human societies or the role of both human and nonhuman variables that can cause environmental or societal changes. National park narratives thus penetrate the discussion of climate change impacts and affect the types of responses or solutions that might emerge. In Huascarán, a change in the representations could bring human variables into the climate change equation even more explicitly and meaningfully than they have been. More realistic identification of populations exposed to glacier hazards could target the placement of disaster prevention programs and direct attention to issues of socioeconomic and political inequality that exacerbate vulnerability and lead to disproportionate impacts of climate change. Recognition of past



Peruvian achievements in the prevention of GLOFs could assist other regions. Finally, the acknowledgment of human water management practices alongside discussion of climate-glacier-hydrology frameworks would link societal and environmental forces while also projecting future scenarios that actually have people in them. In Glacier the discourse tends to focus on more cosmetic issues such as glacier (scenery) loss, rather than trying to discern the effects of glacier shrinkage for downstream water users, or the impacts of ice loss on stream ecology, or the potential impacts on the tourism economy. Media reports tend to recapitulate the same themes about lamentable glacier shrinkage without digging deeper into other human or ecosystem issues, such as species migration, forest fires, or precipitation and snowpack changes. A different narrative could shift the climate discourse toward actual impacts that require the implementation of adaptive measures. This different approach to climate change adaptation might be impossible, however, without first generating fresh narratives of nature and new perspectives on national parks. □

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Biographical Portrait

**FREDERICK LAW
OLMSTED SR. (1822–1903)**

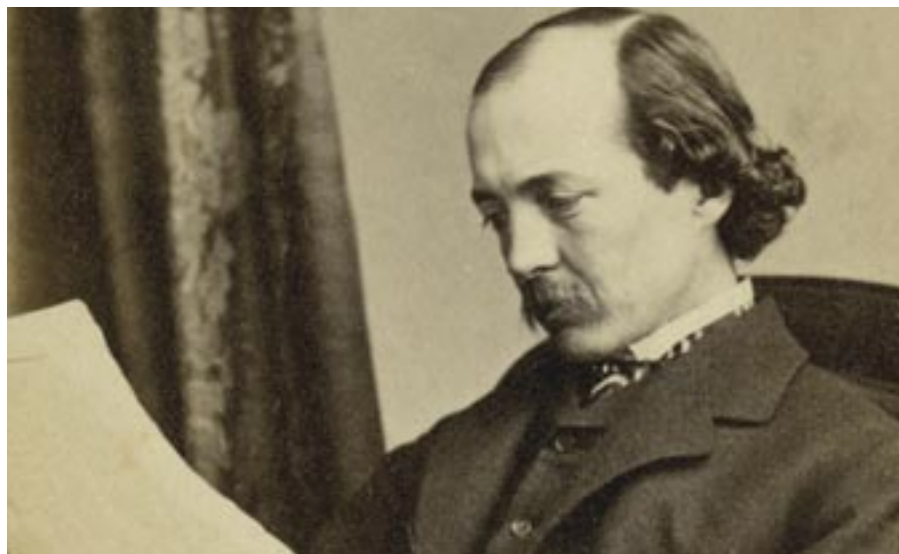
AND

**FREDERICK LAW
OLMSTED JR. (1870–1957)**

By Alfred Runte

Frederick Law Olmsted and his son, Frederick Jr., dominated the field of landscape architecture from the mid-nineteenth until well into the twentieth centuries. Born into a prosperous Connecticut family at Hartford, on April 26, 1822, Frederick Sr. was to begin study at Yale University in 1837, but a bout with poison sumac affected his eyes and cost him a sustained formal education. This deficiency did nothing to inhibit his growth and maturity as a writer, however; following a tour of Europe and Britain in 1850, he composed the first of several books, *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (1852). By 1861, he was also renowned for his lengthy series of articles about the antebellum South and slavery, which he had prepared as a traveling correspondent for *The New York Times*. These works, collected and condensed as *The Cotton Kingdom* (2 vols., 1861), revealed Olmsted's keen sense of observation and political astuteness.

Olmsted's greatest reputation, of course, was still to be linked with the rising field of landscape architecture. As early as 1850, he had praised the city parks of London and Liverpool in England as a noble experiment in democracy. Regarding Birkenhead Park in Liverpool, for example, he exclaimed: "The poorest British peasant is as free to enjoy it in all its parts as the British queen.... Is it not a grand, good thing?" That England had beaten its young rival, the United States, to the invention of parklands for the common man did not escape the attention of American nationalists, who themselves had long argued for city parks as a means of protecting the quality of urban surroundings for both the



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.

working and the leisure classes. Thus, Olmsted was philosophically prepared when an opportunity presented itself for him to become superintendent of Central Park in New York City in 1857. Shortly afterward, he and his partner, Calvert Vaux, entered the competition to draw up a new design for the preserve, which the two men won under the title of "Greensward." Accordingly, on May 17, 1858, Olmsted was appointed architect-in-chief of Central Park in addition to superintendent.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Olmsted resigned as head of Central Park to become general secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission. Then, in 1863, he moved to California to become superintendent of the Mariposa Mining Estate in the Sierra Nevada foothills at Bear Valley. To the east lay Yosemite Valley, which Olmsted and his family first visited

in August of 1864. Two months earlier, on June 30, 1864, Congress had set aside the valley and the nearby Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias and had presented both areas to California to be managed as a state park "for public use, resort, and recreation." The state was further required to protect the park "inalienable for all time."

Some accounts link Olmsted's name with the park campaign itself, although there is no direct evidence of his participation in the initial movement to preserve the valley. Rather, Olmsted's major contribution came as head of the Yosemite Park Commission, for which he prepared a detailed assessment of the valley. This report, presented to the commissioners in 1865, outlined steps to mitigate the inevitable conflicts that would arise between the desire to protect the park and that to open it to visitors. Unfortunately,

after Olmsted left California his fellow commissioners failed to present the report to the legislature, and the text of the document was lost until 1952. By that time, the worst of Olmsted's fears about Yosemite Valley being overrun with tourists and resort facilities had come true.

While in California, Olmsted also sketched out some ideas for the campus of the University of California at Berkeley and Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Meanwhile, however, he and Calvert Vaux had been reappointed as landscape architects to the commissioners of Central Park, so Olmsted returned east in 1865 to pick up where he had left off in New York City. For the next decade and a half, the firm of Olmsted and Vaux laid out a great variety of projects, including Prospect Park in Brooklyn, the Boston city parks system, and the suburban community of Riverside near Chicago. In 1874, Olmsted was commissioned to design the grounds of the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. Five years later, he once more turned seriously to scenic preservation by immersing himself in the campaign to restore Niagara Falls to its natural condition and protect the environs of the cataract as a free public park. In 1885, he realized these goals with the dedication of the Niagara Falls State Reservation; in 1888, Ontario followed New York State's example with the opening of its own provincial park on the Canadian side of the falls.

Final highlights of the older Olmsted's career included his design of the grounds for the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893; Stanford University in Palo Alto, California; and George W. Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate near Asheville, North Carolina. He counseled Vanderbilt to undertake the nation's first large-scale forestry experiment, pointing out to his young client that to do so would provide an "inestimable service" to his country. The work there has since been preserved by Vanderbilt's descendants on the estate and the U.S. Forest Service in the Pisgah National Forest. Olmsted spent his declining years in ill health and growing senility and died on August 28, 1903, in Waverly, Massachusetts.

It remained for his son, Frederick Jr., known as Rick, to bring the family tradition full circle. Fortunately, Rick was prepared to follow in his father's footsteps, and in fact was raised to do so. Born July 24, 1870, he was originally christened Henry Perkins and called Boy, according to biographer



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.

Laura Wood Roper. "He was so determined that his only son should enter his profession that when the child was four, Olmsted changed his name to Frederick Law so that a Frederick Law Olmsted might be identified with the firm and the profession" long after his death. Rick's work at the Biltmore and the Chicago Columbian Exposition had provided superb opportunities to learn the older man's techniques, and in 1894 Rick obtained his B.A. degree from Harvard University.

With the death of Frederick Sr. in 1903, Rick and his half-brother John found themselves in command of the largest landscape architecture firm in the United States. Great responsibilities and opportunities followed. As early as 1900, Rick began the first curriculum in landscape architecture in the United States at Harvard University and served on its faculty until 1914. In 1901, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him to the Senate Park Commission to assist in restoring and developing the L'Enfant plan for Washington, D.C., in light of modern needs. As a result, Olmsted assumed responsibility, in whole or in part, for such projects as the White House grounds, Lafayette Park, the Jefferson Memorial, the National Arboretum, and portions of Rock Creek Park. He was also instrumental in founding the Fine Arts Commission, on which he served from 1910 to 1918. Between 1926 and 1932,

he served as a member of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Thus was his father's work on the Capitol grounds given even wider and more lasting significance.

So, too, in the field of scenic preservation, Rick added to the Olmsted tradition. In one notable instance, preservationists seeking to establish a National Park Service turned to him for suggestions regarding key passages of the proposed enabling act. Time and again, his drafts of the bill passed back and forth between him and its chief proponents, until finally the language was acceptable to everyone. Specifically, the National Park Service Act, approved August 25, 1916, stated that the fundamental purpose of the national parks "is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." For thirty years he advised the National Park Service on issues of management and the conservation of water and scenic resources, leaving his mark on parks from coast to coast.

Similar projects further underscored the concern of the Olmsted family for the physical environment. Proposed diversions of water from the Niagara River between 1906 and 1913 brought Rick back to the



The Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, Massachusetts, served as home and office for the Olmsteds for about 80 years. In 1883, Frederick Sr. moved there and established “Fairsted,” the world’s first full-scale professional office for the practice of landscape design.

scene of his father’s earlier accomplishments, this time to assess whether the falls themselves could survive such dramatic attempts to siphon off their flow. Olmsted, who maintained a part-time residence in California, conducted a survey of potential park sites there in 1928; his report laid the basis for the elaborate state park system developed by California during the following decades; it became a model for other states. Olmsted also devised a master plan for saving the California redwoods. In 1932, Olmsted headed a special investigation to assess the suitability of the Everglades of southern Florida for national park status. Largely on the basis of his report, preservationists opposing the park because it was a swamp came to agree that its uniqueness lay in its sense of wildness and remoteness and that these features, coupled with wildlife, justified creating a park so dramatically different in physical structure from the wonderlands of the West.

Olmsted retired to California in 1950, where he continued his lifelong campaigns



to protect noted features of the Golden State, especially the coast redwoods. He was also active in plans to realize his father’s hopes for better management in Yosemite Valley when death came on Christmas Day of 1957. □

Revised by James G. Lewis from the Encyclopedia of American Forest and Conservation History, which was prepared by the Forest History Society for MacMillan Publishing Company ©1983.

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HISTORY ON THE ROAD

A NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM ROAD TRIP

Text and Photos by James G. Lewis



Last fall, I took a leave of absence and drove cross-country from Durham, North Carolina, to attend a writer's residency program in Point Reyes Station, California. It was truly history on the road, giving me the opportunity to see the variety of sites administered by the National Park Service. I visited national parks, drove a road nominated for National Historic Trail status, and spent three weeks just a stone's throw from national seashores. The trip also included seeing three presidents' homes, the lowest-elevation point in North America, and the oldest living trees on the planet.

Going west, I drove about eight to ten hours each day. After a night in Nashville, Tennessee, I angled northwest and went past the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area in Tennessee and waved to the Gateway Arch in St. Louis as I sped by on the interstate to Columbia, Missouri. Between there and Denver, my next destination, I visited the homes of two U.S. presidents with Smokey Bear connections. In 1952, President Harry Truman signed the Smokey Bear Act (66 Stat. 92), which

protects the Smokey Bear symbol from unauthorized use. His successor, Dwight D. Eisenhower, took delivery of the first officially authorized Smokey Bear toys a year later.

I stopped in Independence, Missouri, to see Truman's house (top), which is located in a residential neighborhood. Not a bad place for a failed haberdasher! His museum and library are located nearby and are operated by the National Archives.

The modest farmhouse outside Abilene,

Kansas, where Eisenhower grew up now shares a campus with his museum and presidential library. Like with Truman, the Park Service manages Ike's home and National Archives the library and museum. I have to say that Ike looked pretty good for 126 years old, although he was a bit on the thin side.

The museum has a cross-section of the famed Eisenhower Tree, a loblolly pine at Augusta National Golf Club (home of the Masters Tournament), of which Ike was





a member. Ike hit the tree so many times while playing the seventeenth hole that he proposed having it cut down. Legend has it that instead of allowing a vote whose outcome would embarrass Ike, the club's president quickly adjourned the meeting. The tree was finally cut down in 2014, after being damaged in an ice storm.¹

From Denver I went through Salt Lake City and on to Reno, Nevada. Having

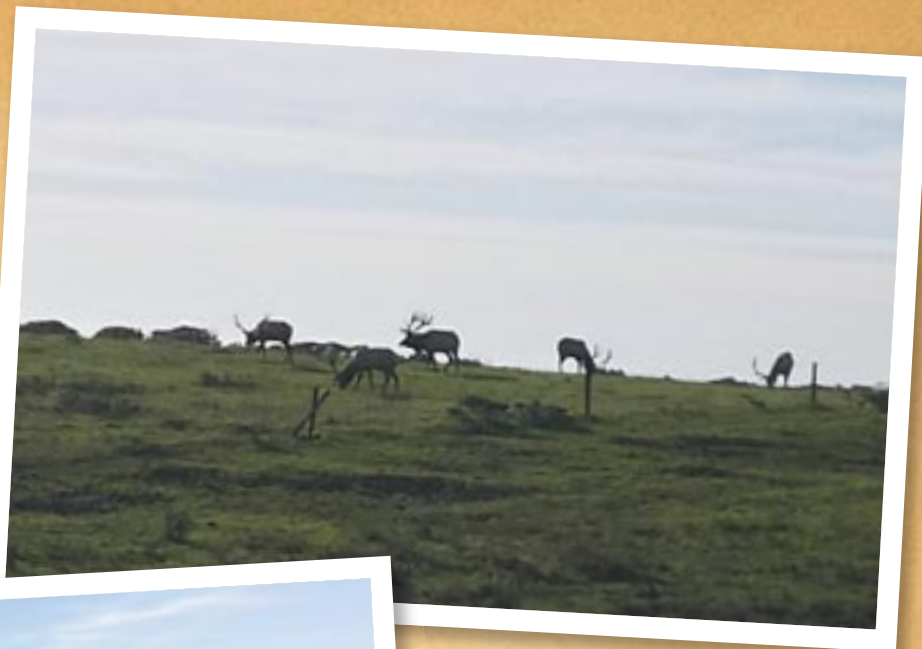
crossed Utah at night on a previous trip, I hadn't seen *Metaphor: The Tree of Utah*, a sculpture along the interstate. It stands along the roadside in the middle of the Bonneville Salt Flats, which is managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Fifteen miles west of the sculpture is a rest area. There you can walk out onto the flats and look toward where, for more than a century, the fearless and daring have come

to set land-speed records in cars and motorcycles. I found this 40-square-mile landform fascinating. "Otherworldly" doesn't begin to describe this odd bit of public land. Rimmed by distant mountains, the salt flats look like an ice-covered lake and made me think of Mars. It was so flat I'd swear I could see the curvature of the earth. Little did I know that I would see a similar view again in Death Valley.

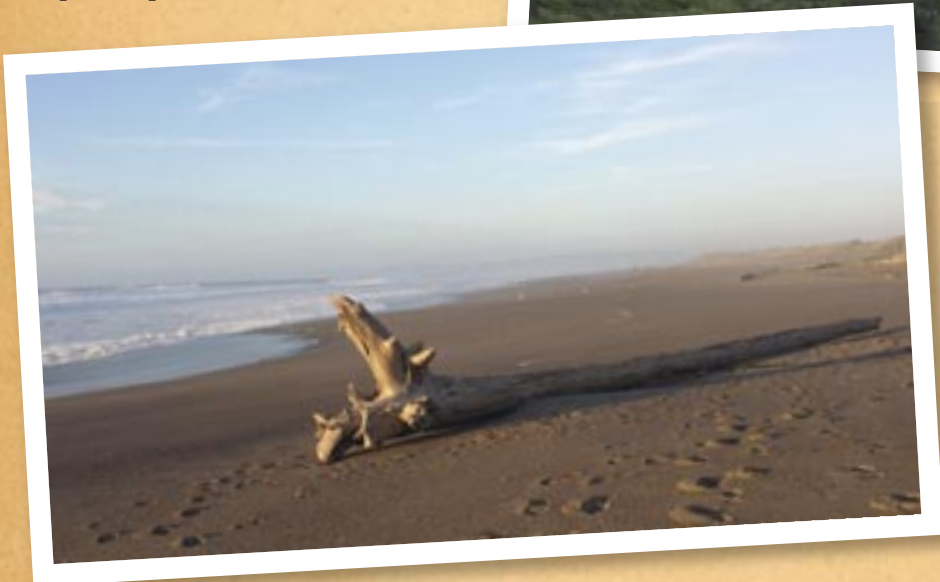


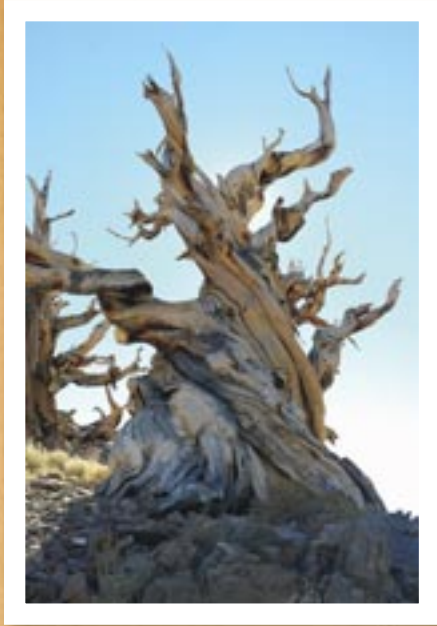
After the Salt Flats, I crossed the Great Basin (but did not visit the titular park in eastern Nevada) and on to the Bay Area. The greater San Francisco area is rich in federal public lands, including the Golden Gate Park Headlands, where I watched surfers try their luck in the cold Pacific; Muir Woods, which I had visited before; and Point Reyes National Seashore, adjacent to where I was staying in the village of Point Reyes Station. I went on several bike rides through the rolling hills of the national seashore, and twice by car went out to the picturesque lighthouse and walked the beaches, where I saw some impressive pieces of driftwood. The road



to the lighthouse goes past historic cattle ranches. But instead of grazing cows, I saw deer and, to my surprise, elk. Later I learned that at the northern end of Point Reyes is the Tule Elk Reserve. The diversity of visual offerings and magnificent beauty across Point Reyes easily explain why I've gone out of my way to visit there on two other occasions.

The other thing I learned, though the hard way, is that some of the trees near the Point Reyes lighthouse possess the ability to sneak up on unsuspecting tourists and pounce on them.



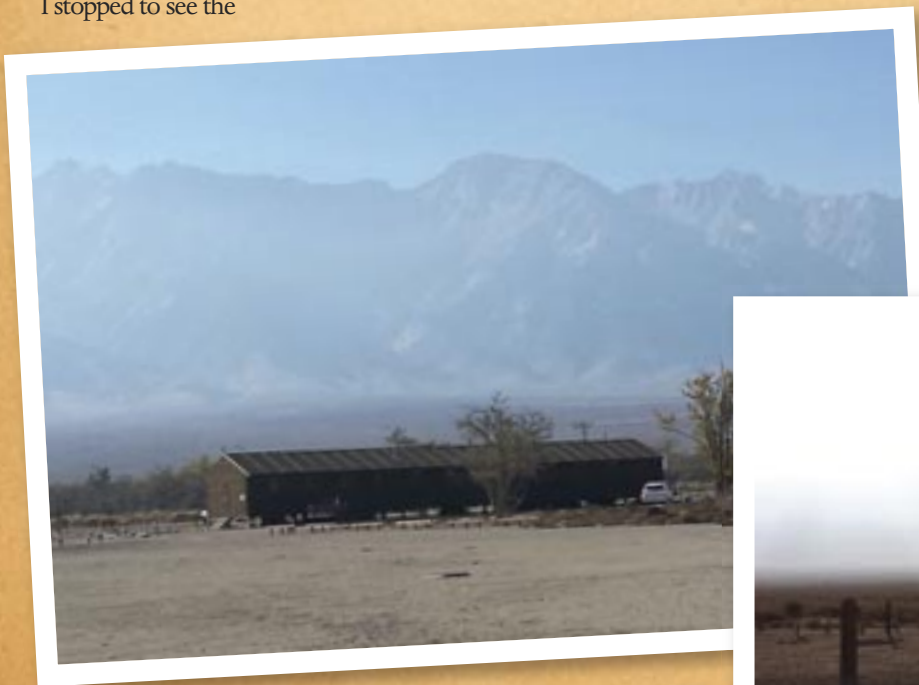


After leaving Point Reyes, I drove east to Lake Tahoe to camp and then headed south to Bishop, California, birthplace of Horace Albright, second director of the National Park Service. Over the next two days I drove up into the White Mountains to hike Schulman Grove, named for researcher Edmund Schulman², on the Inyo National Forest—home to *Pinus longaeva*, the ancient Great Basin bristlecone pine trees (other federally protected areas include Great Basin and Bryce Canyon national parks). Some of these gnarled living oddities are more than 4,000 years old. Before driving into the White Mountains, I stopped to see the



Roosevelt Tree, a century-old giant sequoia that stands at the western terminus of the road to Schulman Grove. The visual contrast between the two species could not be more striking.

I spent two days photographing trees that looked dead but somehow survive in an incredibly exacting climate at 10,000 feet, and then left for Death Valley National Park. But I could not go there without visiting Manzanar National Historic Site. It was the first of the ten World War II-era Japanese-American internment camps, or “war relocation centers,” hastily established in March 1942 by the federal government. This particular camp was situated in Owen Valley, an arid, windswept plain, located—ironically—a few miles south of the town of Independence and adjacent to the Lone



Pine Indian Reservation. Living conditions were harsh, but not harsh enough to destroy the love of America the detainees felt. During the war, landscape photographer Ansel Adams photographed the “evacuees” in the camp and the beautiful mountains and valley surrounding it, and assembled into the book *Born Free and Equal: The Story of Loyal Japanese Americans*.³ The Park Service has preserved the cemetery and reconstructed several barracks to show how people lived. The related exhibits in the interpretive center, housed in the historic high school auditorium, are moving and timely, tracing the history of the consequences of wartime hysteria for minority populations in America from the early twentieth century to the present. Facts can be a powerful weapon against bigotry.

At Death Valley, the largest national park outside Alaska, the ecological offerings seemed a pastiche of other landscapes: the sand mounds in the Mesquite Flat Dunes reminded me of both Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina and Great Sand Dunes National Park in southeastern Colorado; the salt flats at Badwater Basin—the lowest point in North America—looked like the

Bonneville Salt Flats, but even more expansive, with five times the area. Yet, where else can you crane your neck looking up to see a sign that reads SEA LEVEL?

As a historian, I feel obliged to stop at any interpretative center. Like that at Manzanar, Death Valley’s does an outstanding job of explaining the area’s natural and human histories. I highly recommend both centers.

When leaving the valley, I headed east and gained more than a mile in elevation. I stopped at Zabriskie Point and Dante’s View to watch the sun set over the far side of the valley. In the fading light, the haze made the salt flat look like a flowing river. A full day in Death Valley left me feeling alive.

After a long, dark drive that night through the desert and Las Vegas (speaking of otherworldly!), I stayed in Kingman, Arizona, along historic Route 66. Famed in song and story, the Mother Road was nominated for National Historic Trail status in February 2017, thirty-two years after it was decommissioned. Three days later, as I came back through Nashville, I did a quick pass by the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson’s home (presidential house number 3!), and then drove on to spend

Thanksgiving just north of Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

In ten days’ time, I had walked among the oldest living trees in the world, stood at the lowest point in the northern hemisphere, and visited two national seashores a continent apart. National parks: America’s best idea, indeed! □

James G. Lewis is the editor of Forest History Today. He has driven across America by car six times, and has visited 47 of the lower 48 states.

NOTES

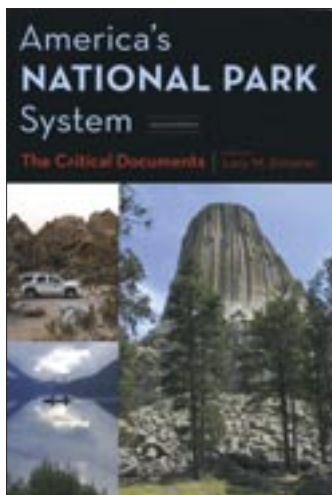
1. For more on the Eisenhower Tree, see my essay “A Blogpost Unlike Any Other: The Eisenhower Tree, The Masters, and Forest History,” *Peeling Back the Bark*, April 6, 2017, <https://fhsarchives.wordpress.com/2017/04/06/the-eisenhower-tree-the-masters-and-forest-history/>.
2. In the 1950s, Edmund Schulman had conducted groundbreaking dendrochronological research in the grove. Thomas J. Straka, “Biographical Portrait: Edmund P. Schulman (1908–1958),” *Forest History Today* Spring 2008: 46–49.
3. Published in late 1944, the book provoked criticism for his sympathetic portrayal of the interned citizens. See *Ansel Adams: An Autobiography* (New York: Little, Brown, 1985), 256–64.



BOOKS OF INTEREST

by James G. Lewis and Eben Lehman

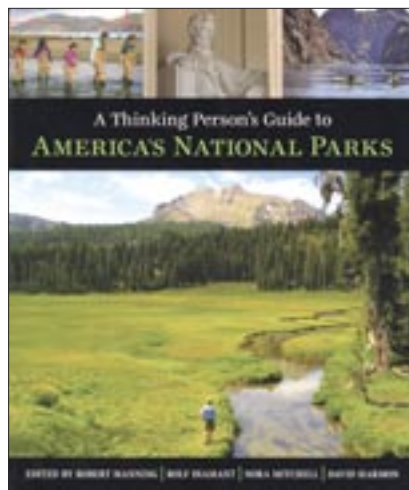
It's rare that a documents reader is worth recommending in this column. But sometimes one comes along that will interest audiences beyond history and natural resource management students and professionals. Such is the case of Lary M. Dilsaver's second edition of *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). First published in 1994 and updated for the



centennial, the collection is intended “to help explain this sprawling [national park] system and its complex management culture by reproducing, in their original texts, the key documents that have shaped them.” To have so many hard-to-find documents presented with such lucid explanations in one place makes this an invaluable reference. Dilsaver opens the book with a succinct overview of the history of the national park system. Beginning with the Yosemite Act of 1864, the documents are arranged chronologically into eras, and the introduction to each era offers context for the documents contained within. This second edition contains nearly all the laws and reports reproduced in the first (a 1992 report discussing future needs was dropped because it is no longer relevant) and adds two new ones: a series of letters debating the decision to desegregate national parks in the South during the World War II era, and the 1976 law about mining in the national parks. It also

has a new section, “Towards a Second Century, 1997–2015.” Following the original appendix, which summarized lengthy documents, is a new appendix with summaries of significant court rulings and opinions. Members of Congress and officials in the executive branch would do well to read these formative documents about our cherished public lands. (JL)

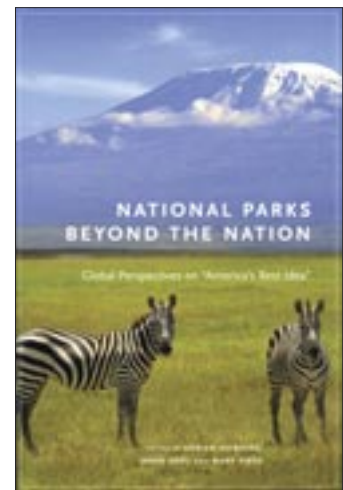
An ideal book to read after browsing through the previous one is *A Thinking Person's Guide to America's National Parks: 23 Essays on America's National Parks* (George Braziller Publishers, 2016). Unlike the innumerable travel and tour guidebooks on individual parks and the many single-author histories of the Park Service, this book brings together ecologists, historians, naturalists, landscape architects, and other specialists who have worked for or studied the National Park Service and



the national park system to offer an engaging mix of history and personal reflection. The goal of editors Robert Manning, Rolf Diamant, Nora Mitchell, and David Harmon—all Park Service veterans and standouts in their individual fields—was to get readers to think about the “big ideas” that bind the national parks into a national park system and “broaden [their] understanding and appreciation of important issues” facing it. The tone is casual, making essays such as “Conserving Biodiversity”

(by David Graber) or “Indigenous Voices” (by Melia Lane-Kamahele) accessible to the lay reader. Essays on Park Service programs and parks in urban settings and on the system's museums address topics the general public may not associate with an agency that manages iconic landscapes like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Yosemite. That it is heavily illustrated with beautiful photos throughout adds to the intellectual stimulation and enjoyment. This oversized book would be as appropriate in a home of a thoughtful person who wants “to help conserve these special places” as in the dorm room of the history, environmental education, or natural resource management student. (JL)

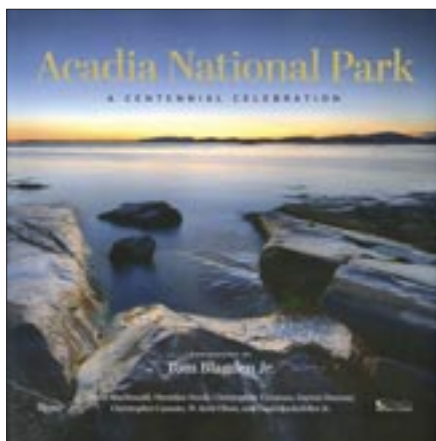
One topic of *A Thinking Person's Guide* is how America's national parks have benefited from the international exchange of personnel and ideas—in particular, the



exportation of the very idea of national parks. In *National Parks beyond the Nation: Global Perspectives on “America's Best Idea”* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), editors Adrian Howkins, Jared Orsi, and Mark Fiege of the Public Lands History Center in Fort Collins, Colorado, have assembled a collection of essays that will challenge preconceptions many readers hold about national parks, and of American exceptionalism. Wallace Stegner's exceptionalist assertion—that the national parks are

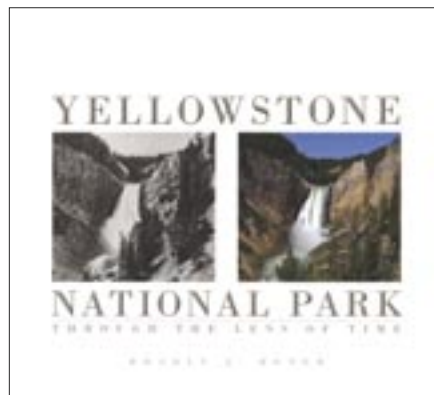
America's best idea—is the jumping-off point for fifteen scholars and writers to look at the international history of national parks. Some essays compare the experience of contiguous countries, like Canada and the United States (“Canada’s Best Idea? The Canadian and American National Park Services in the 1910s,” by Alan MacEachern; and Karen Routledge’s “100 Dangerous Animals Roaming Loose’: Grizzly Bear Management in Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, 1932–2000”), or consider shared issues, like climate change (“The Trouble with Climate Change and National Parks,” by Mark Carey, reprinted elsewhere in this issue) or outdoor sports and indigenous religious sites (“Conquering Sacred Ground? Climbing Uluru and Devils Tower,” by Ann McGrath). Others focus on the parks in one country (Brazil, New Zealand, and Indonesia) or regions (“Nature Conservation in Africa’s Great Rift Valley: A Study in Culture and History,” by Chris Conte), or compare parks on two continents (“Why Celebrate a Controversy?’: South Africa, the United States, and National Parks,” by Jane Carruthers; and “Conservation on Tour: Comparing Nations, Scientists, and Parks in the Americas,” by Emily Wakild). But defining parks geographically this way is misleading. The essays address policies, the role of science and scientists in managing national parks, human relationships with landscapes, and several other topics that are common to all parks. (JL)

The year 2016 was the centenary of not just the nation’s Park Service but also Maine’s first national park. *Acadia National Park: A Centennial Celebration* (Friends of Acadia in association with Rizzoli New York, 2016) opens with short essays on the park’s history by historian Dayton Duncan



and philanthropist David Rockefeller, among others with close connections to the park. But it is Tom Blagden Jr.’s 150 stunning color photographs of the park today, laid out in this oversized coffee-table book, which exhausted my entire store of superlatives. Some reminded me of Monet landscapes; others belong in art galleries or had me wanting to cut them from the book and display them on my walls. His images of animals—an eagle in flight, a fox staring into the camera lens—are equally impressive. The sumptuous photos, some spread over two pages, draw the reader in and create such a desire to see Acadia in person that one can only agree with essayist Christopher Camuto when he says, “What a gift, to see it brought to life in these pages.” (JL)

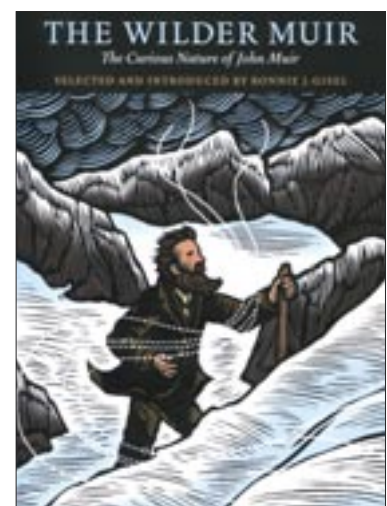
The same can be said of Bradley J. Boner’s *Yellowstone National Park: Through the Lens of Time* (University of Colorado Press, 2016). After compiling a complete set of William Henry Jackson’s 1871 photographs of the Yellowstone region, taken as part of Ferdinand Hayden’s U.S. Geological Survey expedition, Boner traveled through Yellowstone during the summers of 2011 through 2014 to take photographs



from the exact same points. Jackson, along with landscape painter Thomas Moran, provided the visual documentation of the “mythical wonderland” to accompany the findings of the first scientific expedition to the region. His photos, which verified trappers’ and explorers’ tales of geysers and bubbling mud, are credited with helping persuade Congress to set aside Yellowstone as the first national park. Boner opens the book with brief chapters on the history of Yellowstone explorations and the three other photographers who visited Yellowstone in 1871, one of whom collaborated with Jackson for part of the trip. He also explains the complicated wet-

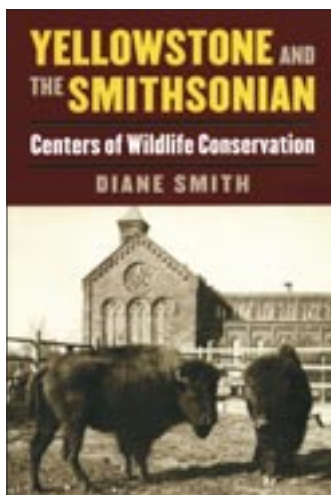
collodian process Jackson used for taking photographs: transporting and setting up a fragile yet bulky camera, spreading several chemical preparations onto eight-by-ten-inch glass-plate negatives, then preparing, exposing, and developing each plate in situ in a portable dark room. Jackson could produce just one usable image every twenty minutes. Boner had it much easier as a photographer but faced the challenge of identifying where Jackson had stood when taking the photographs. Since Jackson had not kept a diary of the trip, Boner turned to the diaries and journals of others on the Hayden survey or resorted to using visual clues in the original photographs. The result is a satisfying, intriguing side-by-side comparison of photos taken about 140 years apart, showing the changes—or lack of—throughout Yellowstone. Each photo pairing includes captions or descriptions by both photographers; Boner sometimes explains the challenges they faced when getting the photograph or elaborates on the differences readers should look for. (JL)

Another popular topic during the 2016 centennial was naturalist John Muir. His writings have been published in numerous collected volumes, so anyone venturing into this well-trod territory must find a fresh angle. Environmental historian Bonnie J. Gisell, who has published extensively on Muir’s botanical legacy and edited a volume of correspondence between Muir and his friend and mentor Jeanne C. Carr, takes the tack of drawing from published and unpublished materials. The twenty-three “tales of Muir’s wild and curious wanderings” gathered in *The Wilder Muir: The Curious Nature of John Muir* (Yosemite Conservancy, 2017) are selected



from letters, journals, articles, and books and presented in chronological order. Each “tale,” introduced with a few paragraphs of context that together provide a basic biography of this multifaceted man, has a theme. Gisel begins with “Calypso Borealis.” Appearing in 1864, it was Muir’s first published piece on nature, celebrating what he considered “the rarest and most beautiful plant,” *Calypso borealis*, the fairy slipper orchid (Gisel mistakenly says it is known as “the lady slipper orchid,” which is a different genus). She ends with his 1911 journal entries written while he searched for the monkey puzzle tree, a rare species native to the Andes. Accompanied by original black-and-white engravings by Fiona King and totaling less than two hundred pages, the book is a portable reader and great introduction for those unfamiliar with Muir’s life and writings. (JL)

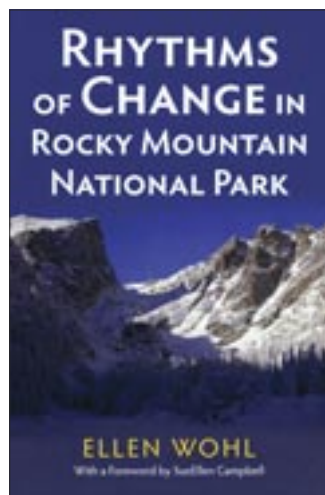
When the National Park Service was established in 1916, Yellowstone—the nation’s first park—was already forty-four years old. The early decades of Yellowstone are the subject of Diane Smith’s *Yellowstone and the Smithsonian: Centers of Wildlife Conservation* (University Press of Kansas, 2017). Smith focuses on the treatment of and attitudes toward wildlife in the park during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Yellowstone’s early years, the park served as a national source for zoo animals and museum displays. The book delves into the importance of Yellowstone to the Smithsonian Institution and explains



how the Smithsonian came to rely on the park for its animal specimens. Exhibits of preserved large mammals mounted by the Smithsonian for the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia proved immensely popular and provided a template

for further exhibition work. The Smithsonian began regularly exhibiting large taxidermies of Yellowstone animals, which served to showcase the American conquest of the western frontier. This soon evolved into the display of living animals, including bison, behind the Smithsonian Institution building in Washington, D.C., during the late 1880s. After the establishment of the National Zoo in 1890, Yellowstone remained a source for the animals the American public clamored to see. The U.S. Cavalry, which replaced the corrupt civilian administration in 1886 overseeing Yellowstone Park, filled requests by the Smithsonian and zoos for living and dead wildlife specimens. Smith recounts the developments in systems of trapping, displaying, and shipping wildlife across the country, as well as emerging conflicts between science and conservation as the park became a primary source for museum and zoo animals. The book provides insight into how two American institutions worked to educate the public while also conserving American wildlife for future generations. In addition, Smith’s work reveals how Americans understood and interpreted the American West during this era through a culture of both living and dead animal displays. (EL)

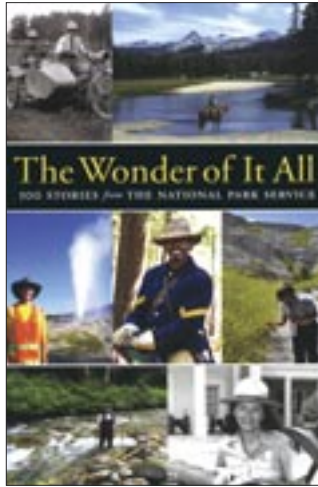
Rhythms of Change in Rocky Mountain National Park (University Press of Kansas, 2016), by Ellen Wohl, might have been subtitled “A Year in the Geologic Life of One of America’s Great Parks.” Wohl, a



professor of geology at Colorado State University who has long focused her research on the nearby park, dedicated a year to studying the effects of people “using this ecosystem over the past two centuries.” Following nature’s rhythms,

she organizes the book by the calendar and discusses what typically happens during each month—snowfall or snowmelt, the ebb and flow of tourists into the park—and what she has observed. She also incorporates a geologist’s temporal scale to address what has changed over thousands of years. Doing so allows her to address the consequences of human activity, including historical mining, logging, ranching, tourism, and the removal of predators, along with contemporary effects from fire management, air pollution, and climate change on the park’s ecosystems. To Wohl, at least two themes emerge from these observations. The first “is the fundamental unevenness of change.” A not-unusual three-day rain event in September 2013 unexpectedly, for the first time in decades, loosened thousands of cubic yards of sediment that slid into valley bottoms; nevertheless, geologic processes have barely altered the region’s topography since the last ice age. The second theme is the importance of the unseen. Diverting water through an underground tunnel and introducing exotic fish species, to name two examples, may have important consequences for freshwater ecosystems, and the nitrogen composition of the soil, which is changing for several reasons, is affecting plants and animals. Writing in the first person, the author takes the reader along on a cautionary scientific journey. When it comes to climate change and the role of humans, what is happening in this national park is happening all around the world. (JL)

One essential yet sometimes overlooked aspect of America’s national parks is the importance of the rangers and other employees who work the parklands every day. These men and women protect the parks and introduce the visiting public to some of our most precious landscapes. *The Wonder of It All: 100 Stories from the National Park Service* (Yosemite Conservancy, 2016) gathers the recollections of rangers, naturalists, and many others about their work and experiences in parks throughout the nation. In the book’s preface, Jonathan B. Jarvis, then the director of the National Park Service, states that “employees and our many park friends are, at our core, storytellers through place. I have said many times that we must speak for three entities that have no voice: the people of the past, the children of the future, and nature itself.” The one hundred



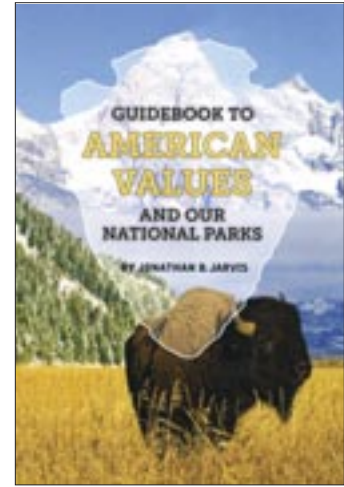
personal stories collected in this book do just that. Each story is connected to a place within the park system, revealing experiences from the past, connections to the natural landscape, and the importance of parks for future generations. The stories range from the dramatic to the powerful to the mundane. Accounts of daring rescues and near-death experiences stand alongside stories of teaching lessons to children or the simple appreciation for daily views. Together, they all beautifully illustrate the storytellers' love for the job as well as their love for the special places where they spend each workday. These engaging stories inspire the reader to visit these memorable places and to witness first-hand the important work done by those protecting and welcoming visitors to America's most cherished public lands. (EL)

Memoirs by former Park Service rangers can be equally engaging but sometimes not so laudatory. A ranger may love the job, be highly respected, but become disillusioned with the bureaucrats who run the agency. This is what happened to Robert M. Danno, a chief ranger in three major western parks who saw his career and reputation destroyed in a matter of weeks for simply doing his job. In his self-published book, *Worth Fighting For: A Park Ranger's Unexpected Battle against Federal Bureaucrats & Washington Redskins Owner Daniel Snyder* (Honor Code Publishing, 2012), Danno chronicles how his own highly decorated career in law enforcement met with ruination when he cited Daniel Snyder, the powerful owner of a professional football team, for illegally cutting down 130 protected trees in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park to improve his view of the



Potomac River. Instead of resulting in justice, blowing the whistle revealed corruption throughout the agency and consequently brought condemnation for Danno; the action the Park Service took was not to support Danno but to attack him and drive him from his job. Criminal charges were brought against him, not Snyder or the Park Service officials involved in the cover-up. The first half of the book traces Danno's exciting and admirable twenty-year career working in Yellowstone, Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, and other parks, where he also did search-and-rescue and wildland firefighting in addition to his law enforcement job, before turning to the real subject of the book—a cautionary tale of what can happen when a federal employee blows the whistle. A coda to the story: a year after the book came out in 2012, after eight years of reprisals, Danno won a settlement against the Park Service and was transferred to the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center in Missoula, Montana. (JL)

The 1970 National Park General Authorities Act observed that the National Park Service had “grown to include superlative natural, historic, and recreation areas in every major region of the United States... united through their interrelated purposes and resources into one national park system as cumulative expressions of a single national heritage.” The direct links between our national heritage and the variety of sites in the national park system are shared in *Guidebook to American Values and Our National Parks* (Eastern National, 2015), by Jonathan B. Jarvis. Written while he was serving as the eighteenth director of the National Park Service, the book ponders what national parks have to offer



Americans. In his introduction, Jarvis poses the question, “Where can someone go to find and bear witness to a host of American values in action and feel the sense of place where that value is most powerfully established and displayed?” The answer, of course, is in the national parks. Jarvis takes up familiar American values—bravery, creativity, justice, immigration, respect, honesty, exploration—and connects each to sites in the park system. The value of adventure, for instance, is connected with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail; charity is a value highlighted at the Clara Barton National Historic Site in Maryland; civil rights are honored by showcasing the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, the Selma to Montgomery National Historic trail, and other sites; and inspiration is exemplified by the Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota and Yosemite National Park in California. In addition to being a good overview of many national parks, the book is also a unique way to honor the centennial of the national park system. Connecting the park system to the foundational American values is the perfect testament to these protected sites that express what it means to be an American. (EL) □

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Donald W. Floyd

Genetically Modified Forests: From Stone Age to Modern Biotechnology,
Rowland D. Burdon and William J. Libby

Newsprint: Canadian Supply and American Demand, Thomas R. Roach

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Brooks C. Mendell and Amanda Hamsley Lang

Other Publications

A Hard Road to Travel: Lands, Forests and People in the Upper Athabasca Region, Peter J. Murphy, et al., cloth \$42.95, paper \$29.95

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Cradle of Forestry in America: The Biltmore Forest School, 1898–1913,
Carl Alwin Schenck, \$14.95

Forest Aesthetics, Heinrich von Salisch, trans. by Walter L. Cook Jr.
and Doris Wehlau, \$24.95

Forest and Wildlife Science in America: A History,
Harold K. Steen (ed.), \$14.95

*Forest Management for All: State and Private Forestry in the
U.S. Forest Service*, Lincoln Bramwell, \$10.95

Forest Service Research: Finding Answers to Conservation's Questions,
Harold K. Steen, \$10.95

From Sagebrush to Sage: The Making of a Natural Resource Economist,
Marion Clawson, \$9.95

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Harold K. Steen (ed.), \$30.00

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