

[The following is the third chapter from the book, Protecting the Sawtooth Country, 1979.]

## **Creating the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Protecting Wilderness**

by John Osborn

“We are in danger of doing what we always have done, of continuing to use the wilderness as raw material out of which to fashion culture that will seem, in our constantly more civilization-conditioned image, to be a ‘better’ world but one with less and less of its wilderness.”

--Howard Zahniser, 1960<sup>1</sup>

Such words of warning would have seemed discordant on September 1, 1972, in the Sawtooth country. On that warm, late summer’s day, near the Forest Service’s visitors’ center facing Redfish Lake and the spectacularly rugged high country, almost 400 people gathered to dedicate the newly created Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA).

The enabling legislation, given Presidential signature one week earlier, included in the Sawtooth NRA three mountain ranges: the Sawtooths, the White Clouds, and the Boulders. In withdrawing the entire recreation area from new mineral entry, and prohibiting the granting of patents on pending claims, the legislation brought to a close the most bitterly contested conservation battle in Idaho’s history.

The White Clouds were the focus of the controversy. Located in south central Idaho about twenty-five miles east of the Sawtooth range and twenty-five miles north of Sun Valley, the White Cloud range had remained virtually unknown and undisturbed until the spring of 1969.

During the previous summer, ASARCO (American Smelting and Refining Company) had discovered a molybdenum deposit at the base of Castle Peak - at 11,820 feet, the highest in the White Clouds. The economic benefits from developing the deposit would be substantial. Lasting thirty to fifty years, the mining operation might yield as much as \$1,500,000,000 in gross revenues.

Congressman James McClure, a proponent of opening the White Clouds to mining, recognized in the ASARCO venture a source of jobs and income: “Idaho has a limited economic base now and we should be slow in locking the door against utilization of our resources. I take no pride in Idaho having a per capital income among the lowest in the country.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by David Brower, “Wilderness and the Constant Advocate,” *The Living Wilderness*, Spring-Summer 1964, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter from McClure to Richard P. Hronek in defense of his position on mining in the White Clouds. Hronek was managing editor of *Idaho Statesman*. August 12, 1969.

The economic benefits would not be without ecological consequences. ASARCO's proposed open pit mine, 1.75 mile-long tailings pond, and 400 foot high dam at the base of Castle Peak would significantly impact the immediate area and could have deleterious effects to the ecology of the entire Salmon River drainage. Mining would increase silt in the streams and have toxic effects on aquatic life from exposed ore deposits and tailings (impacts compounded by additional contamination from the leaching of heavy metals).

Harmful impacts would long continue due to the open-pit type of mining. Wrote one federal official to his superior in 1970,

[the] East Fork of Salmon River is one of the most productive single tributaries of the Salmon River system for Chinook salmon. It can easily be forecast that this entire run will be wiped out and the salmon production of the Salmon River below the East Fork will also be affected.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, ASARCO's venture would destroy the spectacular beauty of the White Clouds. Thus, when ASARCO applied in the spring of 1969 to the Forest Service for an exploratory access road to the base of Castle Peak, the company stirred up a hornet's nest.

The struggle over the White Clouds spread beyond Idaho and became a national issue. In April, 1969, the Forest Service called a series of meetings to explain the situation and gather views. The Forest Service maintained that they were unable to protect the White Clouds from mining. The White Clouds had no protective status and, therefore, had not been withdrawn from mineral entry. Under an 1872 law, ASARCO was within its rights to stake mining claims and – if the claims were valid – the Forest Service would have no choice but to permit the access road.<sup>4</sup>

Also at the meetings, Idaho's governor, Don Samuelson, supported the mining interests and asked the Forest Service to issue the permit. Samuelson's stance was untenable for some officials of the governor's administration, including Ernie Day.

Ernie Day, chairman of the Idaho Parks Board, followed Samuelson at the podium and used the opportunity to resign: "I don't see any sense of being part of a team which doesn't have enough regard for our resources to better differentiate between uses."<sup>5</sup> Day then took the issue to the Sierra Club's bi-annual wilderness convention in San Francisco. As a result of his presentation and resignation, almost every conservation publication in the country did stories on the White Clouds controversy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Letter to Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife regional coordinator in Portland Oregon, from Travis S. Roberts, acting regional director. March 4, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> John H. Merriam, "Idaho White Clouds: Wilderness in Trouble," *The Living Wilderness*, Spring-Summer 1970, p. 34. The 1872 law provides that "all valuable mineral deposits in lands belonging to the United States . . . shall be free and open to exploration and purchase. . . ." Russell D. Butcher, "Let's stop Mining in our National Parks and Wilderness Areas," *American Forests*, September 1970, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Clement, p. 29.

<sup>6</sup> Rod Hunt, "Ernie Day Leaves his Mark in Field of *The Idaho Statesman*, 23 April 1972, p. 2-E. These publications included *Life*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The New York Times*. Merriam p. 34.

Political wreckage was strewn along the four-year course of the controversy. In the April meetings held by the Forest Service, Governor Samuelson gave his unqualified support to mining the White Clouds. During the following winter, while the Forest Service studied ASARCO's application for the road permit, Samuelson criticized that agency and demanded that the permit be issued in an almost daily series of news conferences.<sup>7</sup> The Governor's pro-mining stance figured prominently into his 1970 defeat for reelection by conservationist, Cecil Andrus.<sup>8</sup>

Congressman James McClure, also a proponent of mining, also risked his political future during the spring of 1972 by opposing a permanent ban on mining in the proposed Sawtooth NRA. Testifying before the Senate Interior's subcommittee, McClure lambasted a recently completed report opposing mining in the White Clouds.<sup>9</sup>

McClure said the report was "not factual," was "opinionated," and "subjective." The congressman told the committee, "I find this study offensive" and further charged such a study was unfairly "playing with the people's resources."<sup>10</sup>

Running for the Senate seat vacated by Len Jordan, McClure shifted his stance to support legislation that banned mining from the proposed Sawtooth NRA.<sup>11</sup> This legislation, established the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

Protecting the Sawtooth country from despoilation began long before the White Clouds controversy erupted. After President Roosevelt established the Sawtooth Forest Reserve in 1905 (with subsequent boundary revisions), several efforts emerged for designating the area as a National Park. First of these was in 1911 when a group of women in Idaho endorsed such a plan.

Perhaps the most significant protective action was taken by the Forest Service on October 12, 1937, when the agency established the Sawtooth Primitive Area. Continuing management under the Forest Service or redesignating the area as a National Park

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<sup>7</sup> Merriam, pp. 34, 37. The Forest Service's hesitancy was probably intentional. First, the issue was politically explosive. Travis Roberts writes: "There are political problems associated with this operation. The Governor of Idaho is strongly supporting this mining venture. The Press (*The Idaho Statesman*) opposes the mining because of the effect on the environment. There are large factions in the State of Idaho that support both sides of this problem, which may explain the reluctance of the Forest Service to move." Second, Roberts also recognized that issuing the permit would open the area to mining: "Undoubtedly such a road would open up this country to explosive mining operations and other encroaching influences. The Forest Service is studying several methods of access. . . . They are hesitating to issue a permit. They realize the implications involved."

<sup>8</sup> Chris Carlson, "McClure Swallows Bait; Stands alone in Blasting Sawtooth Report," *The Idaho Falls Post-Register*, 19 April 1972.

<sup>9</sup> To an April 5, 1972, public release from Governor Andrus, the report explicitly states that mining should not be allowed in the White Clouds area until a national need for molybdenum can be shown. The report was submitted by the White Clouds Task Force which was composed of six Department of Interior agencies, two other federal agencies, and a representative from the Governor's office.

<sup>10</sup> Carlson.

<sup>11</sup> "The Sawtooth Victory," *The Idaho Statesman*, 28 August 1972, p. 4.

managed by the National Park Service was a controversy renewed in 1960 when Senator Frank Church introduced legislation to study the area for National Park status.

In April, 1966, Church introduced a bill for establishing a Sawtooth National Recreational Area and a companion bill for a Sawtooth National Park. A senate subcommittee held hearings in Sun Valley to gather testimony on the two bills from local residents. With testimony overwhelmingly one-sided in favor of continuing Forest Service management in a national recreation area, Senators Church and Len Jordan supported a bill to create a Sawtooth NRA.

The Sawtooth NRA legislation passed in the Senate; it died in the House. Then in July Idaho learned of ASARCO's designs on the White Clouds. Church and Jordan amended, and the Senate passed, legislation including the White Clouds in the proposed Sawtooth NRA.

Not until January, 1972, did similar legislation reach the floor in the House. After differences between the House and Senate bills were resolved, legislation was finally enacted in August, 1972. The Sawtooth Primitive Area became a part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and the wilderness joined the White Clouds, Boulders, and environs in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.<sup>12</sup>

During the dedication of the Sawtooth NRA held in late summer 1972, near the shores of Redfish Lake, people spoke of responsibilities in the future and remembrances of the past. Chief of the Forest Service, John R. McGuire, outlined plans for managing the NRA. Senator Frank Church, perhaps the man most credited with protecting the Sawtooth country in modern times, said of securing protective legislation: "It has been a long fight."<sup>13</sup>

Yet, the fight to preserve wilderness had been waged long before the controversy over the White Clouds. Establishing the Sawtooth NRA was only part of a larger history to protect America's dwindling wilderness.

Only eight years before the Sawtooth NRA was dedicated, the Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Sawtooth Wilderness became part of this system with the creation of the Sawtooth NRA.

Long before the Wilderness Act – even before the tremendous “grass-roots” support of wilderness preservation that is manifest in the 1964 Wilderness Act – the U. S. Forest Service began preserving large tracts of National Forest land as wilderness. The Sawtooth Primitive Area was set aside in 1938. Even long before the Forest Service's

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<sup>12</sup> The course of legislation during the White Clouds controversy was complex. The brief account given above is summarized from the detailed account by Ann Daily, "Long Journey over for Sawtooth NRA bill," *Twin Falls Times-News*, 27 August 1972, p. 38. Virilis Fischer, "The Seesaw in the Sawtooth," *American Forests*, November 1966, p. 37, was also consulted.

<sup>13</sup> Richard P. Hronek, "Scenic Sawtooth Recreation Area dedicated by top Idaho officials," *The Idaho Statesman*, 2 September 1972.

administrative wilderness, a growing number of Americans stood in appreciation of nature and opposed destroying wilderness.

A deep appreciation of nature lay behind early efforts to set aside wilderness. Notable among these visionaries were the “transcendentalists”. Nature for the transcendentalists reveals universal spirit and, as such, is a source of morality.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was the preeminent transcendentalist of his time. “[T]he whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind,” wrote Emerson. “[In] the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in the streets or villages . . . in the woods we return to reason and faith.”<sup>14</sup>

A contemporary and disciple of Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, left a deep and lasting impression on the wilderness movement. Thoreau is, writes historian G. O. Robinson, “the guru of modern preservationists.”<sup>15</sup> Thoreau spent two years (1845-1847) on the shores of Walden Pond. He wrote from these experiences,

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.<sup>16</sup>

When one walks outward into the wilderness, he had the opportunity to go inward and explore his own mind. Thoreau spoke in Concord, Massachusetts, the words for which he is, perhaps, best remembered. “I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness.” After presenting a rejoinder to those who would champion only civilization, Thoreau concluded, “In Wilderness is the preservation of the World.” Over time Thoreau’s writings influenced many that wilderness did not exist merely to be destroyed.<sup>17</sup>

Origins of the idea of actually preserving wilderness can be traced to the 19th century. First to publicly advocate land preservation was George Catlin in 1833, a student and painter of American Indians. Catlin was greatly disturbed by the slaughter of bison, fearing the eventual extinction of bison and Indian. In an article appearing in the widely read *New York Daily Commercial Advertiser*, Catlin recommended that the Great Plains be “reserved in their pristine beauty and wildness.”<sup>18</sup>

During the last half of the 19th century lands were actually reserved. In 1864 Congress transferred to California the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove for the purpose of reserving the area for public use.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature,” *Works*, pp. 15, 16, 38, quoted by Nash, pp. 86, 89.

<sup>15</sup> Robinson, p. 168.

<sup>16</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or Life in the Woods* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.), p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> Nash, pp. 84, 95.

<sup>18</sup> Gilligan, p. 11; Nash, p. 101.

<sup>19</sup> Gilligan, p. 17.

Eight years later in 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant signed an act reserving and withdrawing “from settlement, occupancy, or sale” over two million acres in (what is now) northwestern Wyoming. This area, Yellowstone, was America’s first National Park. Buildings and roads were to be permitted. Although a National Park, Yellowstone was not a roadless wilderness.<sup>20</sup>

New York’s Adirondack Park was America’s first wilderness reservation to be held without development and has remained almost unaltered to this day. The impetus behind establishing the park was the result not of preservationist spirit but of opposition to wasteful logging methods and corruption in selling the state’s timber lands. In 1885, the state legislature preserved 715,000 acres of forest in the Adirondack and Catskill mountains:

The lands now or hereafter acquired constituting the forest preserve shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be sold, nor shall they be leased or be taken by any person or corporation, public or private.<sup>21</sup>

A tug-of-war ensued among the preservations, desiring to keep the land inviolate; the foresters (led by Dr. Fernow and Dr. Hough) insisting on scientifically managed timber production; and lumbermen, who saw valuable timber being locked up beyond their grasp. The 1885 law was revised and, in 1894, passed as a constitutional amendment. America’s first wilderness, the Adirondack Park, remained inviolate.<sup>22</sup>

A controversy in the Yosemite during the early 1900s marks the beginning of grassroots support for wilderness preservation. The controversy also marks a “parting of the ways” between conservationists believing only in regulated “use” and conservationists believing also in preserving wilderness. These two factions had been united during the 1800s against those who advocated unlimited use of the public domain. For example, a noted preservationist of this period, John Muir, had worked along with the AFA, Fernow, and Hough in support of the 1891 Forest Reserve Act. Muir was especially influential in building support for the 1897 Washington Birthday Reserves, endearing him to forestry minded conservationists.<sup>23</sup> Schism, however, followed cooperation.

Differences in outlook between John Muir and Gifford Pinchot were fundamental to the controversy in Yosemite and is an apt illustration of the vague limits of “conservation.” Gifford Pinchot believed that the Forest Reserves should be opened up to commercial use – not preserved from such use. For Pinchot, bringing the National Forest system of over 180 million acres into management forced a selection of the most pressing problems of special interests. In comparison to lumbering, mining, water power development, and grazing, Pinchot did not consider recreation pressing.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Nash, p. 108; Gilligan, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Gilligan, pp. 27-28.

<sup>22</sup> Gilligan, pp. 25-31. This amendment still stands as the controlling authority within the Park, although subsequent amendments permit damming for water supplies and highways through the preserve.

<sup>23</sup> Gilligan, p. 38.

<sup>24</sup> Steen, p. 113.

“The object of our forest policy,” Pinchot declared in March, 1903, to the Society of American Foresters, “is not to preserve the forests because they are beautiful . . . or because they are refuges for the wild creatures of the wilderness . . . but . . . the making of prosperous homes. . . . Every other consideration comes as secondary.”<sup>25</sup>

In his autobiography Pinchot writes, “Forestry is tree farming. Forestry is handling trees so that one crop follows another. To grow trees as a crop is Forestry.”<sup>26</sup> Gifford Pinchot and, through him, the Forest Service opposed any general policy of preservation and supported regulated commodity use.<sup>27</sup>

A conservationist of a different bent was John Muir, 1838-1914. Muir opposed destroying wilderness, having witnessed the devastation of the forests during his childhood on the Wisconsin frontier. Transcendentalism was central to John Muir’s love of the wilderness. The naturalist was especially indebted to Emerson and Thoreau for the transcendental themes of his work.<sup>28</sup>

Emerson and Muir met in 1871 at Yosemite Valley, beginning a friendship maintained by correspondence. In 1896, long after Emerson’s death in 1882, Muir acknowledged that Emerson had been a great influence on his life.<sup>29</sup>

John Muir, unlike Emerson and Thoreau, took up active defense of nature. Through books (which became minor best sellers) and articles (the nation’s foremost periodicals competed for his essays), Muir publicized the cause of preserving wilderness. He led in organizing the Sierra Club, founded in 1892, and was president of the Sierra Club from its founding until his death twenty-two years later. The Sierra Club was dedicated to enlisting “the support of the people and the government in preserving the forests and other features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.”<sup>30</sup> Writes R. Nash, a historian of the wilderness movement, “As a publicizer of the American wilderness Muir had no equal.”<sup>31</sup>

Defending wilderness during the 1890s, Muir supported scientific management of the Forest Reserves. “The forests must be, and will be, not only preserved, but used; . . . [yielding] a sure harvest of timber, while at the same time all their far-reaching (aesthetic and spiritual) uses may be maintained unimpaired.”<sup>32</sup>

However, with Pinchot’s persistent devotion to commodity use, such compromise was untenable. Muir broke with Pinchot over the matter of sheep grazing. The naturalist stood adamant against overgrazing. Referring to the wild flowers in California’s central valley,

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<sup>25</sup> 240 Hays, p. 41.

<sup>26</sup> Pinchot, *New Ground*, p. 31.

<sup>27</sup> Robinson, pp. 155-156.

<sup>28</sup> Nash, p. 127.

<sup>29</sup> Millard C. Davis, “The Influence of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman on the Early American Naturalists - John Muir and John Burroughs,” *The Living Wilderness*, Winter 1966-1967, p. 18.

<sup>30</sup> Nash, pp. 132-133.

<sup>31</sup> Nash, p. 122.

<sup>32</sup> “A Plan to Save the Forests,” *Century*, 1895, p. 631, quoted in Nash, p. 134.

Muir writes, “[The) arch destroyers are the shepherds, with their flocks of hoofed locusts, sweeping over the ground like a fire, and trampling down every rod that escapes the plow . . . .”<sup>33</sup>

Pinchot, in a Seattle news release in 1897, asserted that sheep grazing did little, if any, harm.<sup>34</sup> The same day as the news release, Muir confronted Pinchot. Pinchot admitted making the statement. “[I]f that is the case,” Muir replied, “I don’t want anything more to do with you. When we were in the Cascades last summer you yourself stated that the sheep did a great deal of harm.”<sup>35</sup>

Controversy in California’s Yosemite deepened the split between Muir and Pinchot. The Hetch Hetchy Valley in the Yosemite was the actual site of this controversy. Spectacularly beautiful and much like Yosemite Valley, Hetch Hetchy was incorporated into the Yosemite National Park by Congress largely through the efforts of Muir’s Sierra Club. The valley also contained a reservoir site. San Francisco, recovering from the devastating earthquake of April 18, 1906, was in need of a water supply and wanted to dam Hetch Hetchy.

Muir objected: “Dam Hetch Hetchy! As well dam for water-tanks the people’s cathedrals and churches, for no holier temple has ever been consecrated by the heart of man.”<sup>36</sup>

According to Stewart Udall, Muir considered this issue as precedent setting, for if San Francisco could intrude on National Parks, then all National Parks were open to despoilation through resource development.<sup>37</sup> Gifford Pinchot decided that San Francisco’s water supply was more important than preserving Hetch Hetchy for recreation. During critical periods, Pinchot used his influence in favor of the dam by publicly announcing that a dam would not mar the scenic beauty of the valley. In 1913 the bitter struggle came to an end. Congress authorized the construction of the dam.<sup>38</sup>

R. U. Johnson, a prominent journalist and colleague of Muir, describes Pinchot’s influence on the decision: Pinchot “contributed his great influence to the commercialization of the Valley, and but for him I believe the scheme [Hetch Hetchy dam) would never have succeeded.”<sup>39</sup>

The schism between preservation and wise-use widened: the Hetch Hetchy controversy, lasting about five years, merged scattered preservationist sentiment into a national movement. “[T]he conscience of the whole country has been aroused from sleep,” wrote

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<sup>33</sup> Muir, p. 349.

<sup>34</sup> Gilligan suggests that Pinchot probably meant regulated grazing. However, since Pinchot was politically sensitive to the need of stockmen’s support for the Reserves, he probably omitted this detail. P. 52.

<sup>35</sup> L. M. Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir* (New York: Alfred A. Knoph, 1951), pp. 275-276, quoted in Gilligan, p. 52.

<sup>36</sup> John Muir, *The Yosemite* (New York: The Century Co., 1912), p. 262.

<sup>37</sup> Udall, pp. 121-122.

<sup>38</sup> Udall, pp. 121-122; Gilligan, p. 53.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Gilligan, p. 53



Muir shortly after Congress's decision.<sup>40</sup> "To preservationists," wrote forest historian G. O. Robinson, "Hetch Hetchy became the Alamo of wilderness, a symbol and a call to arms."<sup>41</sup> With seeming prescience, Muir wrote after the Hetch Hetchy defeat, "They will see what I meant in time."<sup>42</sup>

The Hetch Hetchy controversy indirectly induced the Forest Service to recognize recreation as a legitimate use of forest land – recognition that later justified wilderness preservation as a legitimate use of forest land.

Hetch Hetchy demonstrated to the public that the National Parks were inadequately protected. Pinchot, no longer Chief Forester but still influential, opposed the creation of a separate bureau to administer the National Parks. He changed his stance for support if such a bureau would be placed in the Department of Agriculture.

In 1916, Pinchot's hopes were thwarted when Congress established in the Interior Department a National Park Service "to promote and regulate the use of the federal areas known as national parks . . . ."<sup>43</sup>

The Park Service recognized recreation as a legitimate use of public lands; the Forest Service did not. Under the dynamic leadership of Stephen T. Mather (administrative head of the National Parks from 1915-1929), the Park Service threatened to incorporate large areas of National Forest land into the National Park System. This threat added impetus to the Forest Service's accepting recreation on an equal footing with wood, water, and forage uses.<sup>44</sup>

Growing public use of the National Forests was the most significant factor inducing the Forest Service to recognize recreation as a legitimate use of forest land. The outcry for the park bureau and for an increased emphasis on recreation in managing the public lands reflected the changing mood of the country during the 1910s. Americans were "getting back to nature" in attempts to escape the hurried pace of urban life. In increasing numbers, people were turning to the outdoors to return to a "primitive way of life . . . as a remedy for worn nerves."<sup>45</sup>

The Forest Service estimated that the number of summer visitors and travelers over forest roads grew from 3,000,000 to 11,000,000 during the years 1917-1924. This growth in forest use was largely due to the automobile which, in turn, stimulated road building in the forests. From 1916 through 1921, \$33,000,000 were appropriated by Congress for construction of roads and, to a lesser extent, trails in and near the National Forests. The road development aided in controlling fires, developing the forest resources for commodity use, and generally administering the National Forests. The roads also brought

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<sup>40</sup> Letter from John Muir to Robert Underwood Johnson, January 1, 1914, quoted in Nash, p. 180.

<sup>41</sup> Robinson, p. 155.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Udall, p. 122.

<sup>43</sup> Gilligan, p. 71; Hays, pp. 196-197.

<sup>44</sup> Robinson, p. 120; Gilligan, pp. 71-72.

<sup>45</sup> Washington D.C. *Evening Star*, 11 January 1915, quoted in Steen, p. 117.

the public in pursuit of recreation – a use which foresters had not previously contended with and were not prepared to handle. Chief Forester Greeley spoke in 1924 of the impact of the mass use of forest roads by motorists:

the need for public recreation on these vast areas of national forests became so obvious, in fact it had become so great through the sheer force of people going into these areas, taking possession of them, that the consideration of recreation forced itself as a necessary and unavoidable development of the national forests.<sup>46</sup>

The Forest Service's lack of a recreation policy was changed in the face of competition from the Park Service and the tremendous growth in recreation use.<sup>47</sup>

The Forest Service officially included recreation among the other recognized uses of the forest in 1921. This action significantly expanded the Forest Service's views of the forest resource. Under Gifford Pinchot, the forest resource was developed almost wholly for commodity use. This approach, according to wilderness spokesman Aldo Leopold, was essentially an agronomist's approach and excluded other values: This concept of the forest is

as a crop to be planted, protected, tended and harvested when mature; hauled away and converted into homes, schools, churches, furniture and a broad array of wood and paper products. . . . This is the forest of industry. A forest whose contribution to society can be readily measured in dollars but still not realistically equated the aesthetic and recreational values of the standing forest.

Concern for recreation in the Forest Service effectively began in 1910 when Henry S. Graves replaced Gifford Pinchot as Chief Forester. In 1910 a professional writer employed by the Forest Service presented to the American Academy of Political and Social Science a statement recognizing recreation values in the national forests.

So great is the value of national forest area for recreation, and so certain is this value to increase with the growth of the country and shrinkage of the wilderness, that even if the forest resources of wood and water were not to be required by the civilization of the future, many of the forests ought certainly to be preserved, in the interest of national health and well being, for recreation use.<sup>48</sup>

In 1911, Graves reversed Pinchot's earlier stand on administering the National Parks. Instead of urging a shift of the Parks to the Department of Interior, Graves supported the establishment of a separate bureau of National Parks.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> In a speech before the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation. Gilligan, p. 95.

<sup>47</sup> Gilligan, pp. 71-93

<sup>48</sup> Treadwell Cleveland, Jr., "National Forests as Recreation Grounds," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, xxxv (1910), Part 2, pp. 241-247, quoted in Gilligan, pp. 62-63

<sup>49</sup> Gilligan, p. 63. Steen (p. 115) maintains that Graves opposed the creation of a new agency in the Department of Interior to administer the Parks. Steen argues that Graves believed that the Parks should be retained as part of the National Forest System, their administration being retained in the Department of Agriculture. Gilligan, (p. 64), however, presents evidence to the contrary. In a letter to the Sierra Club in

In 1918, a report on recreation commissioned by Graves was published. In addition to arguing against transferring all National Forest recreational activities and lands to the Park Service, the report suggested some of the fundamental policies for managing recreation in the National Forests.

Where two or more . . . uses can be served at the same time on the same area they are carried forward side by side, sometimes in actual cooperation. Whenever two of these uses come into conflict, some authority determines which is likely to render the greater public service. This then becomes the paramount use on the area in question; other uses are secondary, and, if they interfere seriously with the primary use, they are altogether excluded from the area. This policy is so obvious, simple, and practical that it needs no defense.

Moreover this policy need not be changed in the slightest when recreation comes to be recognized in the list of major utilities. It is, in fact, the policy already and inevitably adopted. On the principal areas of the National Forests recreation is an incidental use; on some it is a paramount use; on a few it becomes the exclusive use.<sup>50</sup>

In 1921, one year after Greeley replaced Graves as Chief Forester, the Forest Service manual contained a statement recognizing recreation values on an equal footing with timber, water, and forage values.<sup>51</sup>

This recognition was the key to preserving wilderness in the National Forests.

Many of the same factors that induced the Forest Service to recognize recreation in 1921 influenced the promulgation of a wilderness policy in 1926. First, roads diminished America's unpenetrated wilderness. "Wilderness is a resource which can shrink but not grow," wrote Aldo Leopold in A Sand County Almanac.<sup>52</sup>

Second, the National Park Service under the dynamic leadership of Stephen Mather was bent on enlarging the National Park System, usually at the expense of the National Forest System.

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1911, Graves wrote: "I am surprised and exceedingly sorry to hear that there is an impression that the Forest Service is in any way opposed to the policy of national parks. This idea is entirely contrary to the facts, for I am, and always have been emphatically in favor of a vigorous national park policy." "At one time I believed that the best plan would be to combine the administration of the national parks and the national forests. While this unquestionably would be the most economical method of administration, there are various reasons why it may be wiser to have a separate bureau of national parks. I have, therefore, given my hearty approval to the idea of a bureau of national parks and have advocated it both in private and in my public address." VIII (1911), 139.

<sup>50</sup> F. A. Waugh, Recreational Uses on the National Forests (Washington: Govt. Print. Off.), pp. 27-28, quoted in Gilligan, pp. 74-75.

<sup>51</sup> McConnell, p. 18; Gilligan, p. 76.

<sup>52</sup> P. 199.

In administering the National Parks, the Park Service was instructed by its 1916 enacting legislation “to conserve the scenery . . . and the wildlife . . . in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”<sup>53</sup> The Park Service was also “to promote and regulate the use of the federal areas known as national parks . . . .”<sup>54</sup>

Inherent in the legislation was a conflict between “conserving” and “promoting” the Parks. Mather promoted. Besides working vigorously to expand the National Park System, Mather promoted travel and developed roads and facilities within the Parks. Plush accommodations built by private investment and catering to a wealthy clientele occupied many of the most favorable sites in the parks, to the detriment of the Parks’ wilderness values. Wilderness preservation as a Forest Service policy developed partly as a political maneuver to gain the support of preservationists disaffected by the management of the National Parks and to prevent further loss of National Forest lands through National Park expansion.<sup>55</sup>

Third, preservationist sentiment was growing. Scientists, emerging as a part of this public voice, were among the first to oppose the construction of roads in the wilderness. “Large tracts of land, representing every type of physiography and of plant association, ought to be set aside as permanent reserves, and properly protected against fire, and against every type of depredation,” wrote F. B. Sumner, a member of the Ecological Society of America, in 1920.<sup>56</sup>

In 1921 the American Association for the Advancement of Science passed a resolution urging the protection of wilderness for scientific purposes. These two instances of scientific support for preserving wilderness were only part of the growing support for preservation.<sup>57</sup> Yet, the influence of preservationist sentiment should not be overestimated. The Forest Service’s efforts to preserve wilderness in the 1920s were not the result of a “grass roots” movement. Forest Service personnel, especially Aldo Leopold, stood foremost in the battle to preserve America’s diminishing wilderness.<sup>58</sup>

Aldo Leopold’s efforts to preserve wilderness areas and to build support for the idea of wilderness preservation earn him, wrote wilderness historian Gilligan, the title, “Father of the National Forest Wilderness System.”<sup>59</sup>

After Leopold graduated from Yale Forestry School in 1909, he worked for the Forest Service in game management in Arizona and New Mexico. The issue that sparked assistant regional forester Leopold into motion was a proposal to cut a road through

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<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Udall, p. 124.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Gilligan, p. 71

<sup>55</sup> Gilligan, pp. 71-72, 107-111, 221; J. Alfred Hall, “The Battle for Wilderness: Another Skirmish in the Continuing Fight,” *American Forests*, February 1962, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> Sumner, “The Need for a more Serious Effort to Rescue a Few Fragments of Vanishing Nature,” *Scientific Monthly*, X (1920), p. 236, quoted in Gilligan, p. 77.

<sup>57</sup> Gilligan, pp. 76-79, 99-101.

<sup>58</sup> Gilligan, p. 222.

<sup>59</sup> Gilligan, p. 82.

700,000 acres of only slightly developed area then in the Gila National Forest. In 1921 Leopold proposed that the area be maintained as roadless and as a wilderness preserve. The proposal met little response. Leopold turned to the media, writing articles suggesting that the area should be retained as wilderness and not opened to commodity use. Furthermore, until a final decision was made as to use, the Forest Service should protect potential wilderness areas.

Three years later, on June 3, 1924, after Aldo Leopold had worked with the forest supervisor in developing policies for wilderness protection, District (Region) III Forester F. C. Pooler established America's first National Forest Wilderness - the 700,000 acre Gila Wilderness. This decision did not emanate from Washington, D. C. By 1925, five additional wilderness areas had been established.<sup>60</sup>

"It was 1925," writes J. P. Gilligan, "before wilderness as a land use concept began to make headway in the public consciousness and in the thinking of the Forester's office in Washington. This was primarily because of Leopold's efforts."<sup>61</sup>

In July, 1928, Aldo Leopold left the Forest Service to supervise wildlife population surveys for the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Institute. Less than two years earlier, however, Chief Forester Greeley formulated a wilderness policy for the Forest Service.<sup>62</sup>

In 1926 Chief Forester William B. Greeley approved of the Gila wilderness designation and asked other districts to undertake similar action.<sup>63</sup> Greeley was not oblivious to the problem of "locking up" commodity use lands for wilderness. Wilderness must be measured against the "other obligations and requirements of national forest administration," he wrote in his 1926 Annual Report.<sup>64</sup>

In October, 1926, the Chief Forester took definite steps to formulate a wilderness policy, summarizing the situation regarding wilderness in the Forest Service Bulletin:

In wilderness areas recreation will be recognized as a highly important, if not dominant, use; and the usual protection will be afforded camp grounds . . . . Subject to such restrictions, the use of timber, forage and water should ordinarily take its normal course. . . . The policy boils down to outlining areas where the Service will build no roads and issue no recreation permits.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Robinson, pp. 156-157; Nash, pp. 183-186; Gilligan, pp. 83-86; Steen, pp. 154-155. These wildernesses are now the Grand Tetons National Park, Teton Primitive Area, Absaroka Primitive Area, Idaho Primitive Area, and Bob Marshall Wilderness Area. Gilligan, p. 85.

<sup>61</sup> Gilligan, p. 86.

<sup>62</sup> Nash, p. 191; Gilligan, p. 119.

<sup>63</sup> "[T]he frontier has long ceased to be a barrier to our civilization," wrote the Chief Forester.

<sup>64</sup> Steen, p. 155.

<sup>65</sup> "Wilderness Recreation Areas," 18 October 1926, quoted in Gilligan, pp. 101-102.

In December Greeley wrote to each western forester, officially acknowledging the establishment of a wilderness area regional system in the national forests.<sup>66</sup> Through his action, the U. S. Forest Service took the first step ever in positive planning to protect wilderness.<sup>67</sup>

Wilderness preservation was not immediately embraced by Forest Service personnel. Aldo Leopold recognized this reluctance even before Greeley accepted wilderness preservation as official policy: “It is undoubtedly a fact that foresters as a whole and especially the Forest Service, tend to be unfavorable to the wilderness idea.” Yet, Leopold was confident that “they [would] come around later.”<sup>68</sup>

When, in 1921, Leopold first published his ideas on wilderness, he met with strong opposition. Greeley’s 1926 policy also met with opposition. Although five district foresters gave qualified support to preserving wilderness, the district forester in Montana objected and urged that little publicity be given the policy. A forest supervisor in California was also recalcitrant in the face of Greeley’s new policy. This supervisor described as improbable any developments on roadless portions of his forest: “I do not see any danger of encroaching on natural wilderness country. Therefore, I am not recommending the setting aside of any wilderness areas for the Inyo [National Forest] at this time.”<sup>69</sup>

Arguments against wilderness often maintained that the concept was not in line with fundamental Forest Service philosophy of the greatest good for the greatest number for the longest time. In practical terms, opponents viewed wilderness as conflicting with attempts to develop wood, water, and forage values – the commodity uses. Furthermore, fire control would be complicated. Besides, wilderness designation would duplicate recreation policies of the Park Service.<sup>70</sup>

Summarizing opposition to wilderness Gilligan writes, “Foresters weaned on Gifford Pinchot’s use principles did not wish to prostitute the flexibility required in multiple use management by wilderness classifications which might prevent changes to meet unpredictable future demand.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Greeley requested that the foresters review plans for road construction and special use plans to ensure that wilderness values be maintained. Stipulations for the preservation included: (1) Size: Determined by natural factors and location of roads needed for protection. “The size of the wilderness area is not, in my judgment, important or subject to standardization.” (2) Economic Use: Grazing was not inconsistent with Greeley’s conception of wilderness. Timber and water uses that might emerge later would be dealt with on the basis of priority use. (3) Recreation Use: The only limitation on the number of people entering a wilderness should be the natural limitation extending from the modes of travel possible. (4) Recreation Improvements: Improved campgrounds would not ordinarily be needed. Letter to district (regional) foresters, Dec. 30, 1926, in Gilligan, pp. 104-105.

<sup>67</sup> Gilligan, pp. 101-105; McCloskey, p. 296.

<sup>68</sup> Letter to F. Reet, an industrial spokesman, 25 February 1926, quoted in Steen, p. 155.

<sup>69</sup> Letter to District III forester from Forest Supervisor Boothe, 4 January 1928, quoted in Gilligan, pp. 105-107.

<sup>70</sup> Robinson, pp. 156-157.

<sup>71</sup> Gilligan, p. 222.

Local forest officers, many of whom opposed the wilderness idea, officially retained broad discretion in designating wilderness – until 1929.

In 1929 the Washington office submitted to the district foresters a new policy on wilderness preservation: Regulation L-20. The origins of L-20 trace to L. F. Kneipp, in charge of National Forest recreation planning. Kneipp recognized in 1928 the need for delimiting wilderness lands more formally. He drew up a regulation establishing (with formal approval of the Chief Forester) primitive areas and natural areas.

“Natural” areas were for scientific use and were in response to demands for untouched research areas. “Primitive” areas comprised lands formerly designated “Wilderness” areas, a change reflecting the presence of man’s activities on lands so designated. As Kneipp, explained:

The colloquial term “Wilderness Areas” most frequently used, is a misnomer for areas prospected, grazed, logged or otherwise occupied or utilized for a half-century, threaded with trails and telephone lines, bounded by highways, scrutinized daily during the fire season by lookouts and now traversed frequently by airplanes.<sup>72</sup>

When Kneipp’s proposals were submitted to the district foresters in 1928, they were not well received. The foresters objected to designating areas in which further use of resources would be forbidden and future boundary changes disallowed. Emasculated, the regulation was finally submitted in 1929 by Chief Forester R. Y. Stuart, the Forester replacing Greeley in 1928.

According to the instructions sent with Regulation L-20, Primitive Area designation would not “withdraw timber, forage or water resources from industrial use . . . .” Furthermore, allowances were made for securing adequate fire protection – allowances which included roads, trails, telephone lines, and lookout towers.<sup>73</sup>

Regulation L-20 was, according to J. P. Gilligan, “more nearly a request for the districts to do as much as possible for the reservation of primitive conditions than a definite restrictive regulation creating primitive areas.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> “What Should We Call Protected Recreation Areas?”, *American Planning and Civic Annual*, 1 (1929), p. 34, quoted in Gilligan, p. 127.

<sup>73</sup> “Instructions Regarding Regulation L-20 sent to District Foresters and Forest Supervisors,” quoted in full by Gilligan, vol. 2, Appendix A, pp. 2- 3.

<sup>74</sup> Gilligan, vol. 1, p. 126. The section of Regulation L-20 pertaining to primitive areas: “The Chief of the Forest Service shall determine, define, and permanently record. . . . A series of areas to be known as primitive areas, and within which, to the extent of the Department’s authority, will be maintained primitive conditions of environment, transportation, habitation, and subsistence, with a view to conserving the value of such areas for purpose of public education, inspiration, and recreation. Within any areas so designated, (except for permanent improvements needed-in Experimental Forests and Ranges) no occupancy under the special-use permit shall be allowed, or the construction of permanent improvements by any public agency be permitted, except as authorized by the Chief of the Forest Service or the Secretary.” Note: Underlined areas were deleted by a change in the regulation August 7, 1930. The phrase enclosed in parentheses was

During the ten years (1929-1939) when L-20 was in effect, 73 primitive areas varying in size from 5000 acres to 3,000,000 acres and totaling 13,000,000 acres were set aside in the west. Economic activity in these areas was not altogether excluded, as allowed by Regulation L-20 and accompanying instructions. Twenty-three areas definitely included future logging use and, therefore, roads in their management plans. In eight areas besides the twenty-three, management plans called for the construction of roads for fire protection. All but ten of the primitive areas continued grazing.<sup>75</sup>

Wilderness historian Gilligan maintains that the public did not fully understand the primitive area policy. Although concessions to wood, water, and forage uses were included in the policy, the public construed the policy revision as an assertion of faith by the Forest Service in a new principle of land use. Uncertainty about the new policy is evidenced in *American Forests and Forest Life*. The magazine correctly stated the Forest Service announcement:

the primary purpose of the establishment of primitive areas is to prevent unnecessary elimination or impairment of unique natural values . . . and to conserve, so far as controlling economic considerations will permit, the opportunity to the public to observe [pioneer] conditions . . . and engage in outdoor recreation characteristic of that period . . . .

But then in the following paragraph the magazine stated: “Permanent preservation of wilderness areas in their natural state became a National Forest Policy in late March [1929].” The *National Parks Bulletin* and other conservation publications described primitive areas as no use areas, applying such adjectives as “pristine,” “virgin,” and “primeval.” Although L-20 served its initial purpose of enabling the Forest Service to publicize protecting wilderness lands, the policy as presented to the public was misleading.<sup>76</sup>

One wilderness advocate who considered L-20 inadequate and worked to change it was Robert Marshall. Much like Pinchot and Muir before him, Marshall crusaded for a cause. He dedicated himself to wilderness preservation. In 1930 while working towards a doctoral degree in plant physiology, Marshall published an article appealing for more wilderness areas.<sup>77</sup>

In *The People’s Forests* published in 1933, Marshall condemned the private forest owners’ devastation of the forest and urged public ownership for all potential forest land: “The time has come when we must discard the unsocial view that our woods are the

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added at the time of this change. L-20 was effected July 12, 1929; amended August 7, 1930; revoked September 19, 1939.

<sup>75</sup> McCloskey, p. 296; Gilligan, vol. 1, pp. 133-134.

<sup>76</sup> Gilligan, vol. 1, p. 128-131.

<sup>77</sup> “The Problem of the Wilderness,” *The Scientific Monthly*, XXX (1930), pp. 141-148, as cited by Gilligan, vol. 1, p. 174.



lumbermen's and substitute the broader ideal that every acre of woodland in the country is rightly a part of the people's forests."<sup>78</sup>

In the book Marshall recommended establishing additional National Forests and complimented the Forest Service on its administration of the National Forest System. He was not, however, altogether satisfied with the Forest Service's administration of wilderness lands.

As one of the authors of the recreation chapters in the 1933 Copeland Report, the first comprehensive survey of America's forestry situation, Marshall recommended a system for classifying recreation areas.<sup>79</sup> His definition for wilderness classification was the same as proposed by Leopold twelve years before and, like the primitive areas then under management, allowed for some commodity use.<sup>80</sup>

Marshall also sent a memorandum to L. F. Kneipp recommending that the Forest Service enlarge existing primitive areas and establish new ones. These recommendations were ill-received by regional foresters and their subordinates already content with the existing system.

Marshall, after his 1933 appointment as Director of Forestry in the Office of Indian Affairs, became alarmed over the proposed construction of roads through areas he had recommended for wilderness classification in the Copeland Report. Working through the Secretary of Interior, Marshall was able to withhold funds for the roads in prospective wilderness areas pending further study. Chief Forester F. A. Silcox, who chief in 1935, called a staff meeting in response to Marshall's action. Although the Forest Service eliminated plans for some roads, others were approved.

In a letter to the regional foresters, Silcox suggested more attention be given wilderness values, especially in light of the continued threat of the Park Service and Department of Interior: "If the Forest Service cannot fully realize the potentialities of the areas it will have little valid grounds for objection to a change in their administrative supervision."<sup>81</sup>

Robert Marshall took action to overcome Forest Service inaction. Together with other preservationists, Marshall in 1935 founded the Wilderness Society in the "hope of repulsing the tyrannical ambition of civilization to conquer every niche of the whole

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<sup>78</sup> (New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas), p. 219, quoted in Gilligan, vol. 1, pp. 175-176.

<sup>79</sup> The published report was entitled "A National Plan for American Forestry" but was popularly known as the Copeland Report since a senator by that name introduced the Senate Resolution for the survey.

<sup>80</sup> Marshall defined wilderness areas as: "Regions which contain no permanent inhabitants, possess no means of mechanical conveyance, and are sufficiently spacious so that a person might spend at least a week or two of travel in them without crossing his own tracks. The dominant attribute of such areas was the preservation, as nearly as possible, of primitive environment, and the requirement of individual effort for survival." U. S. Senate Document No. 12 '73rd Congress, 1st Session, "A National Plan for American Forestry," Washington: Govt. Print. Off., 1933, p. 471, quoted in Gilligan, vol. 1, p. 177.

<sup>81</sup> Gilligan, vol. 1, pp. 174-182.

earth.”<sup>82</sup> Marshall also financially backed the society’s publication, *The Living Wilderness*, first published in September, 1935.

The Wilderness Society, from its founding in the 1930s, has become a leading environmental advocacy group.<sup>83</sup> This, Marshall’s legacy in the conservation movement, was matched by his direct influence on wilderness policies as a Forest Service employee.

In 1937, Chief Forester Silcox appointed Marshall to head the Forest Service’s Division of Recreation and Lands. Marshall continued his crusade for wilderness preservation between 1937 and November, 1939, when he died. Marshall recommended nearly every undeveloped area over 100,000 acres on National Forests for primitive classification. Marshall also worked to replace the L-20 regulation: “Personally, I have long criticized the present Forest Service standards for primitive and natural areas. They are so broad as not to be very significant.”<sup>84</sup>

In criticizing L-20, Robert Marshall was not alone.

The L-20 regulation was attacked from within and from without of the Forest Service. From within, Assistant Forester L. F. Kneipp urged a more restrictive policy during the early 1930s. In a 1930 letter to Regional Forester Show, Kneipp recommended restrictions far beyond L-20:

... a specific and detailed management plan should be developed for each area, which will be clear cut and restrictive and mandatory. To avoid misunderstanding or unintentional departure it should be prohibitive; that is, with reference to each major activity it should tell what should not be done. The urgent need is for a plan of management which clearly will make it impossible, barring intentional departure, for any gradual infiltration of uses or modifications to eventually impair or destroy the value of the area for the purpose for which set aside.

Objections to L-20 also came from the lower echelons in the decentralized administration of the Forest Service. California’s Regional Forester Show, for example, wrote to Kneipp in 1929:

... I dislike the idea of going into this simply as a graceful gesture. If we say in effect ‘The Forest Service believes a temporary halt in opening up primitive areas is desirable, but will not stand in the way of public demands that this be done in the future, and does not propose to do more than slow down the exploitation,’ then it is easy to foretell the outcome.

Outside the Forest Service, Director A. B. Cammerer of the Park Service assailed the primitive area policy. After describing the commodity uses tending to destroy the

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted by John A. Zivnuska, “The Managed Wilderness,” *American Forests*, August 1973, p. 19.

<sup>83</sup> Gilligan, vol. 1, p. 182; Anthony Netboy, “Wilderness and the American,” *American Forests*, April 1969, p. 50.

<sup>84</sup> Letter to W. B. Wharton, 14 December 1937, quoted by Gilligan, pp. 192-193.

wilderness lands, Cammerer said, “These are the compensations which are given for maintaining certain wilderness aspects of such areas. Such practices are not permitted in parks.” These objections were probably only superficial to Cammerer’s more deep-seated mistrust of the Forest Service.

In 1939 the park director flatly stated that the wilderness policies were created to rival the National Park System. Pressure exerted by the National Park Service, conservation organizations such as the Wilderness Society, and Forest Service personnel, especially Robert Marshall – supportive of more restrictive wilderness policies – finally forced the revision of Regulation L-20.<sup>85</sup>

Regulations U-1 and U-2 replaced L-20 on September 19, 1939, laying the foundation for present Forest Service policies on wilderness. Overall, the U regulations stipulated a large amount of protection and implied a long term commitment previously lacking in administrative wilderness policies.<sup>86</sup>

Regulation U-1 designated as “wilderness areas” tracts greater than 100,000 acres. Only with the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture could wilderness areas be created or their boundaries revised. Regulation U-2 designated as “wild areas” tracts between 5,000 and 100,000 acres in size. The Chief of the Forest Service could create wild areas and authorize revision of their boundaries.

The essential differences between Regulations U-1 and U-2 and the old L-20 Regulation were that roads and commercial timber cutting would be absolutely prohibited. The Forest Service would notify the public ninety days before an area could be established, modified, or eliminated. If such changes were opposed, the regional forester would hold public hearings and submit the testimony and his recommendations to the Chief (for wild areas) or to the Secretary of Agriculture (for wilderness areas).

The U-1 and U-2 Regulations did not, however, apply to primitive areas established under L-20. A primitive area was redesignated either wilderness or wild only after a new management plan was developed and after boundary adjustments eliminated potential commercial timber, mineral zones, and private lands. Overall, the U regulations implied, wrote Gilligan, that “Wilderness and wild areas would be as permanent and unchangeable as possible under Forest Service administration.”<sup>87</sup>

Wilderness advocates hailed the new regulations; many people living near primitive areas dependent on the forest resources did not. Local opposition to “locking up” resources pressed upon forest supervisors who, in turn, expressed dissatisfaction with the U Regulations. C. N. Woods, regional forester at Ogden, Utah suggested that the policies on primitive areas were becoming more restrictive than policies of the Park Service, deviating from the Forest Service’s multiple-use policy.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Gilligan, vol. 1, pp. 138-139, 162, 193-194.

<sup>86</sup> Robinson, pp. 157-158.

<sup>87</sup> Gilligan, vol. 1, pp. 196-198; vol. 2, p. 6.

<sup>88</sup> Letter to the Chief Forester, 24 February 1940, as cited in Gilligan, p. 202.

In order to allay criticism in certain localities, the Washington office issued a directive in March, 1940, enabling a delay in reclassifying primitive areas. The directive also asked the regions to consult the head office if development was planned “in any existing primitive area, which would not be allowed under Regulation U-1 or U-2 even though the present management plan may permit it.”<sup>89</sup>

The Forest Service announced to the public that although primitive areas had not been reclassified as either wilderness or wild, they were being managed under the new regulations pending reclassification. The public was not informed, however, of the likelihood of future boundary changes.<sup>90</sup> In the directive postponing reclassification of some primitive areas, the Washington office recognized the need to retain the public’s faith:

In view of the announced policy of the Service and the Secretary’s approval of Regulations U-1 and U-2, it is believed that we must be very careful in managing our present primitive areas so as not to break faith with the expectations of those groups interested in the preservation of wilderness conditions.<sup>91</sup>

That the Forest Service could not retain this faith was the undoing of administrative wilderness.

Support for administrative wilderness eroded away during the 1940s and 1950s. The post World War II economic boom placed increasing demands on the resources of the National Forests. As Americans reached new heights of affluence and gained more leisure time, they looked to the National Forests for recreation.<sup>92</sup>

Increasingly, conflicts centered on wilderness. The Forest Service was caught on this battleground: on one side, extraction interests argued that wilderness preservation was tantamount to locking up resources. On the other side and increasingly vocal, wilderness advocates censured the Forest Service’s policies on wildland protection as inadequate.

Reclassification of primitive areas was, perhaps, the major source of agency criticism by wilderness advocates. The process was slowed by local economic interests whose opposition was recognized by the March, 1940, directive described above. In the thirteen years following the implementation of Regulations U-1 and U-2, less than one-third of the seventy-six primitive areas created under L-20 were reclassified either wilderness or

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<sup>89</sup> Forest Service Circular No. U-8, issued March 30, 1940, cited by Gilligan, vol. 2, p 9.

<sup>90</sup> Gilligan, vol. 1, pp. 201-203, 222-223.

<sup>91</sup> Letter to forest supervisors, from regional offices regarding the management of primitive areas and quoting sections of Circular U-8, 30 March 1940, cited in Gilligan, vol. 2, p. 9.

<sup>92</sup> Robinson, p. 121. From 1956 to 1970, visits in National Parks, National Forests, and Wildlife Refuges grew from 115 million to 367 million. From U. S. Dept. of Interior/Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Selected Outdoor Recreation Statistics (1971), cited in Robinson, p. 15.

wild. This was, at least in part, due to the careful examination of fire protection plans and anticipated timber needs preceding the actual redesignation.<sup>93</sup>

Reclassification often involved boundary adjustments to exclude commercially valuable land and to retain “wilderness” character. Removing valuable timberlands and reducing the size of many former primitive areas bred skepticism among the wilderness advocates. The Forest Service appeared to be yielding wilderness lands in the face of mounting demands for the forest resources.<sup>94</sup>

The agency appeared reluctant even to support wilderness preservation. Such an interpretation is evinced in Gilligan’s concluding discussion in 1954 on the history of administrative wilderness:

Since less than one-third of the Forest Service primitive areas have been reclassified . . . , this suggests there are real difficulties existing which prevent preservation of exact areas for any length of time in an undeveloped or wilderness condition.<sup>95</sup>

From this milieu emerged wilderness with statutory protections embodied in the Wilderness Act of 1964. This act, according to Forest Service historian H. K. Steen, “reflects lack of faith on the part of many recreationists in multiple use and the Forest Service.”<sup>96</sup>

Legislation creating statutory wilderness was first presented to Congress in 1956, culminating efforts begun in the late 1940s. After World War II, renewed interest in classifying and managing wilderness extended to Congress. In 1948 a House subcommittee<sup>97</sup> asked the Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress for a report on the status of efforts to preserve wilderness. The report, completed in 1949 by C. F. Keyser, stated that before too long “original wilderness . . . will have disappeared entirely. . . . If then, there is reason for preserving substantial portions of the remaining wilderness, it must be decided upon before it is too late.”

In 1951 Howard Zahniser, executive director of the Wilderness Society, drew upon the Keyser report in a presentation to the Wilderness Society’s second biennial wilderness conference: “How Much Wilderness Can We Afford to Lose?” Zahniser argued for statutory Wilderness as a means of stabilizing the wilderness system, of countering the pressure of commodity interests, and of securing authority to stop mining and construction of dams – authority the Forest Service lacked. In 1953 Gilligan<sup>98</sup> reviewed the limitations of Forest Service authority and administration as it pertained to wilderness

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<sup>93</sup> The procedure for reclassifying primitive areas is outlined in Circular U-1, cited in full in Gilligan, vol. 2, pp. 8-9.

<sup>94</sup> Robinson, p. 156.

<sup>95</sup> Gilligan, vol. 1, p. 225.

<sup>96</sup> Steen, p. 313.

<sup>97</sup> Conservation of Wildlife Resources of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

<sup>98</sup> “The Development of Policy and Administration of Forest Service Primitive and Wilderness Areas in the Western United States,” 2 vols. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1954).

preservation. In the doctoral dissertation and, in 1954, during a speech before the Society of American Foresters, Dr. Gilligan called for statutory wilderness.

Senator Hubert Humphrey became interested after listening to Zahniser's arguments presented in 1955 to the National Citizens Planning Conference on Parks and Open Space for People. On June 7, 1956, Humphrey and eight other senators introduced the first Wilderness Bill. Humphrey's action initiated a legislative battle that lasted more than eight years.<sup>99</sup>

Wilderness legislation proved to be an emotionally charged issue. Proponents of statutory wilderness included Howard Zahniser, probably the leading advocate of legislation in its long passage through Congress.<sup>100</sup>

David Brower was executive director of the Sierra Club during the 1950s. Working to secure protection for wilderness, Brower severed the amiable ties between the Sierra Club and the Forest Service. The Sierra Club became the most militant of organizations supporting statutory wilderness and a potent force in bringing the wilderness advocacy cause to fruition.<sup>101</sup> Brower supported statutory wilderness on the arguments that administrative wilderness was too flexible:

Surely there must be a role for at least two branches of the government of a nation if something as irreplaceable as wilderness [is] at stake on the nation's land. The Executive Branch could designate and guard it, but the Legislative Branch should at least recognize it and grant wilderness an automatic stay of execution. . . .<sup>102</sup>

Brower's argument was akin to the argument of Congressman John Saylor who introduced wilderness legislation in the House as a companion to Humphrey's Senate bill. Wilderness areas, Saylor wrote, "prior to enactment of the Wilderness Bill [enjoyed] only the protection of the executive or more specifically the Secretary of Agriculture, who could by the stroke of the pen remove all or part of such areas from wilderness."

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<sup>99</sup> Zivnuska, p. 19; Steen, p. 304; Michael McCloskey, "The Wilderness Act of 1964: Its Background and Meaning," *Oregon Law Review* 45 (1966): 297-298.

<sup>100</sup> Brower, p. 42.

<sup>101</sup> Steen, pp. 301-302; John A. McPhee, *Encounters with the Archdruid* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971), p. 16. According to Forest Service historian Steen, (p. 303), Brower first became attuned to inadequacies in Forest Service policy on the issue of Deadman Creek. The area involved consisted of 3000 acres of one of few remaining virgin stands of Jeffrey pine. When the Forest Service announced plans to log the area and remove diseased trees, Brower and the Sierra Club stood opposed. Steen writes, "To log in unique stands of low-quality commercial timber for the purpose of providing logs to local sawmills already doomed to shut down caused Brower to doubt Forest Service judgment." Brower's first campaign as executive director of the Sierra Club was against the Bureau of Reclamation's proposed dam that would have submerged large section— of Dinosaur National Monument. The struggle became the biggest conservation issue since Hetch Hetchy. "The Dinosaur Battle is noted," writes John McPhee, staff writer for *The New Yorker*, "as the first time that all the scattered interests of modern conservation – sportsmen, ecologists, wilderness preservers, park advocates, and so forth – were drawn together in a common cause. Brower, more than anyone else, drew them together, fashioning the coalition, assembling witnesses." Brower succeeded: The dam project was dropped. Pp. 164-165.

<sup>102</sup> David Brower, "Foreward," *The Meaning of Wilderness to Science* (Sierra Club, 1960), p. vi.

Such a course was irreversible because of the rapid growth of America: this act “once done is done forever.”<sup>103</sup>

Opponents of statutory wilderness included, at first, the Forest Service and the Park Service and – to the end – lumber, mining, power, and irrigation interests.<sup>104</sup>

Of the economic interests arrayed against statutory wilderness protection, the timber industry probably had the most to lose. This industry viewed recreational demands in general and wilderness demands in particular as the greatest threat to commercial forest land.<sup>105</sup> This stance is epitomized by A. G. Hall in the February, 1962, issue of *American Forests*:

A new threat to the commercial forests, the fear that productive forest land may be set aside for recreational and wilderness areas, has now added new impetus to the spirit of co-operation [between private and public foresters, loggers, engineers, and forest industry managers]. Many westerners feel that another common enemy has developed, one that could rank with fire, insects or diseases, if allowed to run unchecked.<sup>106</sup>

Whereas the timber industry was concerned with one forest use, the Forest Service feared statutory wilderness would endanger “multiple use”. These fears were allayed when Congress passed the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960.

The National Forests had long been managed under the principles of “multiple use” and “sustained yield,” principles scarcely mentioned in statutory law.<sup>107</sup> The source of these principles in the Forest Service is Secretary Wilson’s 1905 letter to Pinchot. The letter directed the Forest Service to establish policies from the standpoint of “the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run.” The lands were to be administered for “permanent use.”

In 1960 the Secretary of Agriculture elaborated on the importance of Wilson’s letter:

The Secretarial directive of 1905 by its references to several resources, to permanence, to use, and to goods of the whole people, and by use of the phrase [permanent use] . . . laid the groundwork and was the genesis, for both the

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<sup>103</sup> John P. Saylor, “What the Wilderness Act Does,” *The Living Wilderness*, Spring-Summer 1964, p. 11.

<sup>104</sup> McCloskey, p. 298.

<sup>105</sup> Steen, p. 295.

<sup>106</sup> Albert G. Hall, “Washington Lookout,” *American Forests*, January 1960, p. 7.

<sup>107</sup> In 1960 Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Peterson wrote, “Other than the sustained-yield unit act of 1944 (58 stat. 132), which is of limited and local application, there is no specific statutory recognition or directive to administer national-forest resources on a sustained-yield basis. Furthermore, the references above cited relate only to timber, whereas all of the renewable resources of the national forests should be, and are being, administered under sustained-yield principles.” Crafts, Part 1, P. 14.

sustained-yield and multiple-use policies which have been followed for so many years.<sup>108</sup>

Concerning the multiple use concept, at first there was little controversy. Demands on the forest were satisfied with sufficient resources. By the 1950s, however, the resources were no longer sufficient for the demand. Speaking for the Forest Service in 1955, Chief Richard McArdle said, “We are rapidly leaving behind the custodial state in management.”<sup>109</sup> The problem of balancing recreation with commodity use was particularly delicate, writes a director of forestry at West Virginia University:

The only recourse for the forest administrator in this dilemma is to remain acutely sensitive to the impulses he receives from the political sphere, from citizens, and from organized groups. It is not difficult to conjure up an image of the forest administrator adjusting his various uses to the point where the screams emanating from the various interest groups have about the same decibel count.<sup>110</sup>

From this view, Congressionally designated wilderness threatened this delicate balance, for it would place land in dominant use and would not give the Forest Service enough flexibility in managing the forests. Wilderness legislation “would strike at the heart of the multiple-use policy of national forest administration,” testified the Forest Service in 1957. The Forest Service supported a bill recognizing multiple use and sustained yield principles in the forests, extending the principle of sustained yield beyond timber to embrace other renewable resources, and protecting the forests from over-use in the face of increasing economic pressure.<sup>111</sup>

The 1960 Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act reassured timber interests with a phrase that the legislation was to be “supplemental to, but not in derogation of” the 1897 Organic Act (which referred specifically to timber and water). The bill mollified wilderness advocates, especially the Sierra Club, with a statement that wilderness was “consistent” with the multiple use concept. In 1960 the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act became law. Already

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<sup>108</sup> Letter to Congress introducing Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act, from Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Peterson, as quoted by Crafts, Part 1, p. 14.

<sup>109</sup> U. S. Forest Service *Information Digest*, 5 April 1955, as quoted in McConnell, p. 21.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Robinson, p. 269.

<sup>111</sup> When passed, the bill defined multiple use and sustained yield for the first time in statute. “Multiple Use” was defined as “the management of all the various renewable surface resources of the national forests so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people; making the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions; that some land will be used for less – than all the resources; and harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources, each with the other, without impairment of the productivity of the land, with consideration being given to the relative values of the various resources, and not necessarily the combination of uses that will give the greatest dollar return or the greatest unit output.”

“Sustained yield” was defined as “the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular output of the various renewable resources of the national forests without impairment of the productivity of the land.” Quoted in Robinson, p. 56; quoted in Crafts, Part 2, p. 31.



by 1958, however, the Forest Service no longer officially opposed wilderness legislation. A major obstacle on the road to statutory wilderness was gone.<sup>112</sup>

Opposition to wilderness legislation was further weakened in 1962 by the report of the ORRRC (the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission). This commission had been established in 1958 to inventory and evaluate outdoor recreational resources and to estimate the resources needed by 1976 and by the year 2000. The ORRRC contracted the Wildlife Research Center at the University of California at Berkeley to consider the place of wilderness in the national pattern of outdoor recreation.

This wilderness study, directed by Dr. James P. Gilligan and released as part of the ORRRC report, was “made under the inescapable influence of intense public and Congressional involvement with pending legislation to establish a national policy of wilderness preservation.”<sup>113</sup>

Primitive areas satisfy a deep-seated human need occasionally to get far away from the works of man. Prompt and effective action to preserve their unique inspirational, scientific, and cultural values on an adequate scale is essential, since once destroyed they can never be restored.

Land use agencies (the Forest Service and, to a lesser degree, the Park Service) were in the dilemma of committing land to wilderness “in the face of laws designed to promote exploitation.” Furthermore, the Forest Service lacked adequate power to fully protect wilderness: “National forest reserved areas are subject to all the preemptive legislation which applies to public land in general . . . Loss of national forest wilderness may come about through intrusion of incompatible developments over which the Forest Service has little or no control.” Therefore, the ORRRC endorsed legislation for protecting wilderness:

There is a widespread feeling, which the Commission shares, that the Congress should take action to assure the permanent reservation of these and similar suitable areas in national forests, national parks, wildlife refuges, and other lands in federal ownership.<sup>114</sup>

Opponents to statutory wilderness such as the AFA who had placed hopes on the ORRRC report were thwarted. Editor of the AFA’s publication *American Forests*, James Craig, was forced to conclude “the substance of the document’s conclusions in regard to wilderness is that there also ‘ought to be a law’ to protect it properly.”<sup>115</sup>

In the spring of 1962 President John F. Kennedy urged Congress to enact wilderness legislation on the recommendations of the ORRRC’s report. On September 4, 1964, after

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<sup>112</sup> Robinson, pp. 159-160; Steen, 306-309; McCloskey, p. 299; Crafts, Part 1, p. 14.

<sup>113</sup> Michael Nadel, “Wilderness and the Outdoor Recreation Resources Report,” *The Living Wilderness*, Spring-Summer 1962, p. 8.

<sup>114</sup> Nadel, pp. 8-13; “Outdoor Recreation Review,” *The Living Wilderness*, Winter-Spring 1962, pp. 4-7; Henry Dworshak et al., “Minority Views on S. 174,” *The Living Wilderness*, Autumn-Winter 1961-1962, p. 38; Steen, pp. 312-313.

<sup>115</sup> James B. Craig, “ORRRC Report,” *American Forests*, February 1962, p. 10.

an eight-year battle in Congress involving the introduction of sixty-five separate bills, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Wilderness Act.<sup>116</sup>

The Wilderness Act established a National Wilderness Preservation System

[i]n order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition . . . .

Land in its “natural” condition is wilderness:

A wilderness in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.

The Wilderness Act reclassified as statutory wilderness the 9.1 million acres of National Forest land earlier designated wilderness by the Forest Service. Within ten years, the Forest Service was to review 5.5 million acres classified as primitive for possible inclusion in the wilderness system. During the same period, nearly 40 million acres in the National Park System and in the National Wildlife Refuge and Range System were to be reviewed for incorporating appropriate lands into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The Wilderness Act also placed strict limitations on managing the wilderness areas. Lumbering, road building, and other commercial activity (except mining exploration which will be prohibited beginning 1984) are prohibited. Established uses such as the use of aircraft or motorboats may continue subject to restrictions by the Secretary of Agriculture.<sup>117</sup>

Wilderness preservation has indeed come far. The National Wilderness Preservation System, of which the Sawtooth Wilderness became a part in 1972, is a symbol of foresight and dedication.

During the last century, the ideas of visionaries such as George Catlin, Henry David Thoreau, and George Perkins Marsh began to alter America’s views on wilderness. Straddling the 19th and 20th centuries, John Muir publicized the need for wilderness preservation through his writings, by organizing the Sierra Club, and especially through his efforts to save from damming the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite.

During the first half of this century, a few officials of the U. S. Forest Service embodied their ideas in Forest Service policy: Aldo Leopold, L. F. Kneipp, and Robert Marshall were preeminent in originating and shaping administrative wilderness policies. And finally, during the 1950s, and early ‘60s, Harold Zahniser of the Wilderness Society and

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<sup>116</sup> Frank Church, “Whither Wilderness,” *American Forests*, July 1977, p. 11; McCloskey, p. 301.

<sup>117</sup> PL 88-577, quoted in full in McCloskey.

David Brower of the Sierra Club stood foremost among many who advocated statutory protection for wilderness. This protection was ensured when Congress passed the Wilderness Act of 1964, securing “for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> PL 88-577