

A speech to Italian leaders of nature protection and national parks at the Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, Italy, on December 5, 1976. Sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and the U. S. Department of State.

Nash, Roderick. "The Value of Wilderness." *Environmental Review* 1, no. 3 (1976): 12-25

THE VALUE OF WILDERNESS

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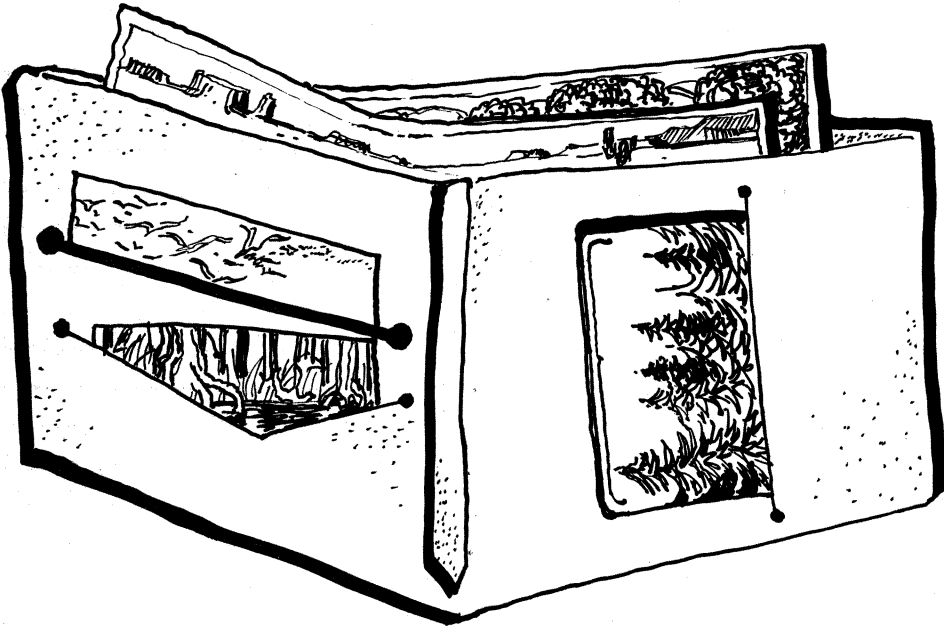
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Shortly after the Second World War, historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. wrote an essay on America's contributions to world civilization. Schlesinger identified ten contributions, among them the principle of federalism, the spirit of philanthropy, and the public school. He could have added one more—the national park. Yellowstone National Park, established on March 1, 1872 was the world's first instance of large-scale wilderness preservation in the public interest.

This concept of "wilderness" needs attention at the outset of any discussion of American scenic and recreational conservation. Not only is it an idea, and indeed a word, foreign to many cultures, but it is the objective of increasing numbers of Americans seeking outdoor recreation today. Essentially, wilderness is a state of mind. It is the feeling of being far removed from civilization, from those parts of the environment that man and his technology have modified and controlled. Although it is impossible to translate exactly the word "wilderness" into many languages, the dominant idea is the absence of man and his works. Thus in Spanish, wilderness is *immensidad* or *falta de cultura* (The absence of cultivation or agriculture). The French translation might be *lieu désert* (deserted place) or *solitude inculte* (a lonely, uncultivated place). Italian uses the more vivid *scene di disordine o confusione* which really gets to the heart of the way some people feel in an area where they are aliens.







Historians believe that one of the most distinguishing characteristics of American culture is the fact that it emerged from a wilderness in less than four centuries. The Europeans who migrated to North America in the seventeenth century settled in a wilderness. The so-called Indians, who had occupied the region for some 20,000 years, were unfortunately regarded as wild animals. The pioneers, as they were called, were principally concerned with transforming wilderness into civilization. They were the vanguard of a westward-moving empire, and they referred to the continually moving line at which their civilization abutted the wilderness as the "frontier." Clearly this term signifies in the United States something quite different from in Europe, where a "frontier" is taken to be the boundary between nations. The American frontier was the boundary between the wild and the civilized. It existed in the United States as recently as 1890. In that year the federal census published a report showing that settlement of the continent had proceeded to such an extent that the term frontier no longer had meaning. Significantly, 1890 was also the year of the last major war of Indian resistance in the American West. The white man's control of the continent and its aboriginal occupants was complete.

The early American attitude toward wilderness was highly unfavorable. Wild country was the enemy. The pioneer saw as his mission the destruction of wil-

derness. Protecting it for its scenic and recreational values was the last thing frontiersmen desired. The problem was too much raw nature rather than too little. Wild land had to be battled as a physical obstacle to comfort and even to survival. The country had to be "cleared" of trees; Indians had to be "removed;" wild animals had to be exterminated. National pride arose from transforming wilderness into civilization, not preserving it for public enjoyment. But by 1872, the year of the creation of Yellowstone National Park, the world's first, the attitude of some Americans toward undeveloped land had sufficiently shifted to permit the beginnings of appreciation. So Yellowstone National Park was designated on March 1, 1872 as "a public park or pleasuring ground" in which all the features of this 3,000 square-mile wilderness in northwestern Wyoming would be left "in their natural condition."

Until the American invention of national parks, the word "park" (or its equivalent in other languages) was synonymous with "garden." Nature in both was supposed to be pleasant. This meant cut grass, trimmed hedges, forests cleared of undergrowth, and artistic plantings. One thinks of the hanging gardens of Babylon, the estates of ancient Greece, Roman villas, Versailles, and the Tuilleries, the tradition of English landscape design—of music, philosophical dialogues, and lawn games. Gardening or park-making consisted of shaping the environment to man's will. The idea of a *wild* park was self-contradictory. The ideal environment, and the one a park was intended to display, was the pastoral, the arcadian. Wilderness was the frightening, unordered condition from which man was relieved to have emerged. Traditional parks were symbols of this emergence, of control over nature.

It is important to understand that the appreciation of wilderness, which led to the revolutionary departure of Yellowstone from the world tradition of parks, appeared first in the minds of sophisticated Americans living in the more civilized East. George Catlin, American painter of Indians and landscapes, and the father in 1832 of the idea of a national park, made the point clearly and succinctly. "The further we become separated from pristine wildness and beauty, the more pleasure does the mind of enlightened man feel in recurring to those scenes." Catlin was himself an example. He lived in Philadelphia, an Eastern city in one of the original thirteen states, Pennsylvania. Catlin was civilized enough to appreciate wilderness. Living in a city, he did not have to battle wild country on a day-to-day basis like a pioneer. For him it was a novelty and a place for a vacation. Indeed Catlin looked forward each summer in the 1830's to escaping from his Eastern artist's studio to the wilderness along the upper Missouri River.

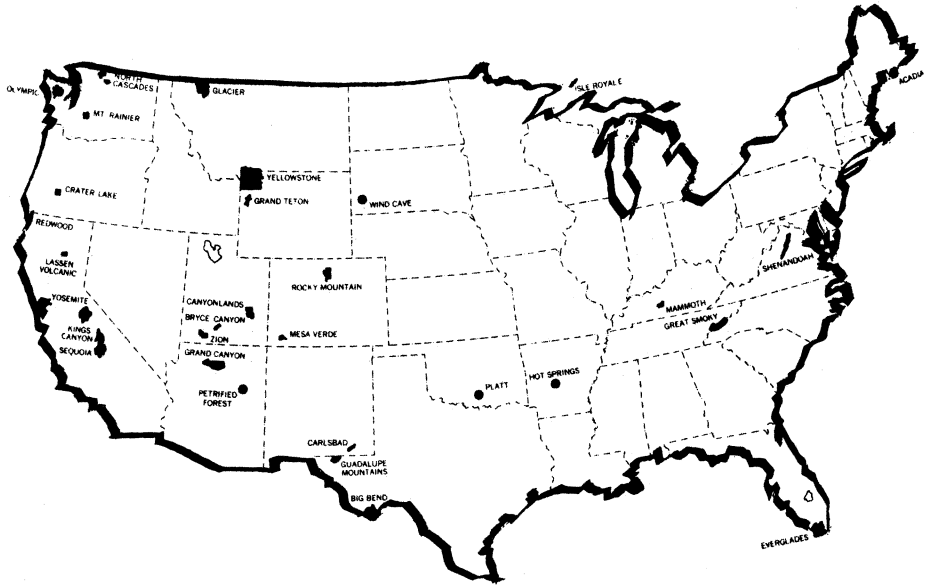
All the nineteenth-century champions of wilderness appreciation and national parks in the United States were products of either urban Eastern situations or of one of the West's most sophisticated cities, such as San Francisco. Lumbermen, miners, and professional hunters did not, as a rule, advocate scenic and recreational conservation. They lived too close to nature to appreciate it for other than its economic value as raw material. Let one additional example suffice to make the point. Henry David Thoreau, American nature philosopher, went to Harvard University and lived near Boston in the highly civilized Eastern seaboard state of Massachusetts. Thoreau believed that a certain amount of wildness (which he regarded as synonymous with freedom, vigor, and creativity) was essential to the success of a society as well as an individual. Neither a person nor a culture should, in Thoreau's opinion, become totally civilized. For this reason Thoreau advocated national parks as reservoirs of physical and intellectual nourishment. "Why should not we . . . have our national preserves," he

wondered in 1858, “. . . not for idle sport or food, but for inspiration and our own true recreation?” Of course Thoreau approved of the idea of large national parks in the West, although he did not live to see the concept realized, but he also advocated reserving wild places in settled areas. Every Massachusetts town or village, he argued in 1859, “should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, of five hundred or a thousand acres.” The public would own such places, according to Thoreau’s plan, and they would be guarded against economic exploitation of any kind. With natural landscapes disappearing rapidly from the environment of the eastern portions of the United States, arguments like those of Thoreau made increasing sense. The special American relationship to wilderness—having it, being shaped by it, and then almost eliminating it—was working to create the most persuasive case for Yellowstone and the other national parks that followed.

While recognition of the value of unmodified nature was necessary, it was not alone sufficient to explain the birth of national parks and similar scenic and recreational reserves in the United States. A comparison makes this clear. In the Far East, particularly in India, China, and Japan, a tradition of appreciating wild nature extended back to at least two thousand years before the New World was even settled. In fact Jainism, Shinto, and Taoism were forms of nature worship in which wildness took precedence over pastoral and urban environments. Yet there were no national parks or their equivalents in the Far East until after the American example. The reason was the absence in India, China, and Japan of a democratic tradition and of the idea of public ownership of the land. Their presence in the United States is the second vital factor in explaining our invention of national parks.

Just as garden-parks existed centuries before national parks, so did extensive reserves of wild forest. They were, however, *private*. As far back as records are available, kings and other nobility delighted in maintaining hunting preserves. No lord was great without his forest. Occasionally a kindly landowner permitted commoners to enjoy his private park, but more often than not he had trespassers punished harshly. Some feudal codes even made poaching a capital crime. Ensuring an abundance of game for the chase necessitated keeping the preserve in something approximating a wild condition, but in regard to clientele there was little resemblance to national parks. Similarly, the great estates of postfeudal gentry throughout the western world had the purpose of protecting land *from* the masses.

The genius of American land policy and the fact making possible the creation of Yellowstone National Park was the existence of the public domain. The roots of common ownership of the land extend back to the seventeenth century. Perhaps in reaction against the monopolistic landholding practices of feudalism and the enclosure system, the first Americans acted to protect society’s interest in the environment. Private land ownership existed to be sure, but so did the idea of public ownership and the institution of the “common.” The Boston Common dates to 1634. Seven years later the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed the Great Ponds Act, reserving larger bodies of water as a public resource open to all for fishing and fowling. The creation of the public domain, however, awaited independence and the states’ relinquishing their western land claims to Congress. New York’s 1780 cession, which started the trend, deserves more recognition than it has received as a major determinant in our early national history. Between then and 1802 the remaining six states with western land ceded their claims, and the following year the federal government purchased the vast territory of Louisiana, including the area later to be designated the

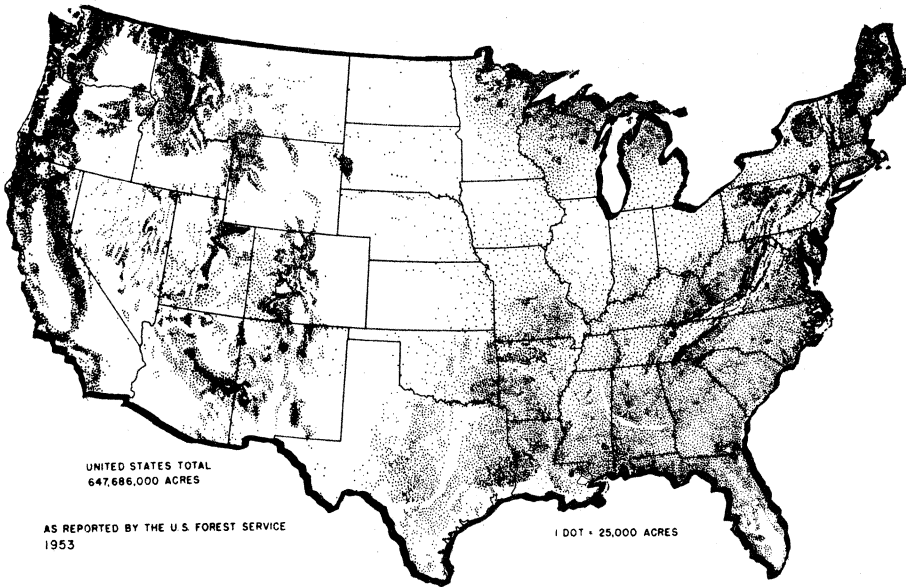


Contiguous United States showing National Parks, National Monuments, and other federal lands.

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first national park. In keeping with the democratic ideal, all this land was held in trust for the people. It was expected, of course, that private ownership would eventually replace government ownership, but the initial federal control opened the possibility of keeping some land public. When and where to make such exceptions were decided by the republican criterion of public interest.

The first legal preservation for public use of an area with scenic and recreational values occurred in 1864 when the federal government granted the Yosemite Valley to the state of California "for public use, resort and recreation." Technically, the Yosemite grant of 1864 was not the first federal act. In 1832 some hot springs in the state of Arkansas were set aside as a national reservation. The area was tiny, however, heavily developed, hardly scenic, and very much in the tradition of public spas and baths common, for example, in Europe. Carved by glaciers and the Merced River into the western slope of a mountain range in California called the Sierra, Yosemite ranks among the world's most spectacular scenic wonders. It was discovered by white men less than two decades before the act of 1864. The area reserved was only the valley floor, about ten square miles. The larger national park that also bears the name "Yosemite" did not exist until 1891.



Urban and transportation 3%

Wildlife refuges, parks,
and public installations 5%

Ungrazed forest land 23%

Desert, swamp, tundra,
and limited surface 12%

The landscape architect Federick Law Olmsted proved most perceptive in understanding the principles which justified the 1864 reservation of Yosemite Valley as a state park. Olmsted's 1865 report also illustrates how social ownership of scenic and recreational resources could be enthusiastically supported in a nation that, especially in the late nineteenth century, valued private property and a minimum of government interference with the development of natural resources by an unrestrained capitalistic economy. Olmsted began by observing that exceptional natural environments, such as Yosemite Valley, should not become private property. He explained that it was the duty of a democratic government "to provide means of protection for all its citizens in the pursuit of happiness against the obstacles . . . which the selfishness of individuals or combinations of individuals is liable to interpose to that pursuit." Until the 1860's, few political philosophers had understood this protective function of government to extend beyond economic, military, and educational consideration to those involving the enjoyment of nature. Nowhere in the documents and commentary associated with the establishment of the United States in 1776 and 1787 did the concept of "pursuit of happiness" appear to include the provision by the government of opportunities to enjoy natural scenery and outdoor recrea-

tion. Olmsted, however, argued that this was a justifiable extension of the central principle of the democratic-republican theory on which the nation stood.

Continuing his 1865 discussion, Olmsted noted how "men who are rich enough . . . can and do provide places of needed recreation for themselves." From the Babylonians to the aristocracy of nineteenth-century Europe, Olmsted explained, "the enjoyment of the choicest natural scenes in the country . . . is . . . a monopoly, in a very peculiar manner, of a very few, very rich people." This, he declared, was a tragedy because the persons most absorbed in the daily grind of constant and low-paying labor are precisely those who need occasional contact with nature. It was not just a matter of having fun. According to Olmsted, mental health depended on finding temporary relief in the beauty of nature from the pressures of civilization. The subjects of the kings of the past, he reasoned, had been dull peasants and serfs because the ruling classes monopolized chances to develop "the esthetic and contemplative faculties." Scenic beauty and outdoor recreation was, in Olmsted's mind, one of the best means to such development. It followed that the establishment and perpetual preservation of parks and recreational reserves for the free enjoyment of all the people was entirely appropriate in a democracy. Indeed it was, in Olmsted's concluding words, a "political duty" of "free governments." Throughout most of history a scenic wonder like Yosemite Valley might well have become the private sporting ground of the richest and most powerful people in the society. In the United States in the nineteenth century, it became a public park.

Besides a favorable attitude toward undeveloped nature and a democratic political tradition, the final factor explaining the American invention of national parks was simply affluence. The wealth of the United States subsidized national parks. We were and have remained rich enough to afford the luxury of setting aside some land for its non-material values. Had the United States been struggling at the subsistence level, scenic and recreational conservation would have, at the least, demanded a much harder decision. Probably they would not have occurred at all. Ironically, American success in exploiting the environment increased the likelihood of its protection. The axiom seems to hold that nature protection is a full-stomach phenomenon.

Since the time of Catlin, Thoreau, and Olmsted, American thinkers have substantially expanded the justification for scenic and recreational conservation. They have been aided considerably by changing circumstances. To a far greater extent than in 1864 and 1872, when the Yosemite and Yellowstone reservations were made, the United States is urbanized and industrialized. About 75 per cent of the population lives in cities. The amount of wilderness (both protected and unprotected and not counting the state of Alaska) is, by generous reckoning, about 180,000 square miles out of three million, or 6 per cent of the forty-eight contiguous states. Close to the same amount of land is *paved!*

In this context, so new to Americans who once believed the wilderness beyond the frontier to be endless, several arguments have emerged to become the staples in the contemporary defense of nature protection in the United States. While they are presented here in terms of wilderness, such as exists in the larger national parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite, they may be applied in slightly altered form to any open space or nature reserve. They might also be applied, with appropriate alteration, to Italy or any other nation. The summary that follows is in outline form.

Argument 1: Wilderness as a Reservoir of Normal Ecological Processes

Aldo Leopold, wildlife manager and philosopher whose efforts led in 1924 to creation of the first reserved wilderness on National Forest land in the United States, once said that wilderness reveals “what the land was, what it is, and what it ought to be.” He added that nature reserves conceivably had more importance for science than they did for recreation. What Leopold meant was that wilderness is a model of healthy, ecologically balanced land. At a time when so much of the environment is disturbed by technological man, wilderness has vital importance as a criterion against which to measure the impact of civilization. Without it we have no way of knowing how the land mechanism functions under normal conditions. The science of ecology needs nature reserves as medical science needs healthy people.

Argument 2: Wilderness as a Sustainer of Biological Diversity

It is axiomatic in the biological sciences that there is strength in diversity. The whole evolutionary miracle is based on the presence over time of an almost infinite diversity of life forms. Maintenance of the full evolutionary capacity that produced life as we know it and, we may suppose, will continue to shape life on earth, means that the size of the gene pool should be maximized. But with his agriculture and urban growth, modern man has made extensive inroads on biological diversity. Some of the changes, to be sure, have been desirable. But many are carried too far. More species have been exterminated in the last three hundred years than in the previous three million. Many other species, including some of the most awesome life forms on earth, are threatened. The whales fall into this category. The problem is that man in his shortsighted pursuit of what he believes to be his self-interest has branded some forms of life as “useless” and therefore expendable. The creative processes that produced these life forms in the first place did not regard them as such. Modern man frequently appears to be a clumsy mechanic, pounding on a delicate and complex machine with a sledgehammer.

Wildernesses and nature reserves constitute refuges where biological diversity is maintained. In such areas life forms are preserved, banked, so to speak, against the time when they may be needed, perhaps desperately. As David Brower, the American president of Friends of the Earth and a leading contemporary defender of wilderness put it, wild places hold the answers to questions man does not yet know how to ask. Putting aside for the moment the “right” of all life to exist as it was created, there is the very practical matter of the importance of biological diversity to medical science, to agriculture, and to the perpetuation of the life-sustaining forces we are only just beginning to understand. Man pounds clumsily against a delicate machine which is nothing less than the spaceship earth—the only home he has. Nature reserves represent a step away from this potentially suicidal shortsightedness.

Argument 3: Wilderness as Formative Influence on American National Character

It was not until the census report of 1890 pronounced the frontier era ended that many Americans began to ponder the significance of wilderness in shaping them as individuals and as a society. The link between American character or identity, and wilderness, was forged, as historian Frederick Jackson Turner argued so persuasively in 1893, during three centuries of pioneering. Independence

and individualism were two heritages; a democratic social and political theory and the concept of equal opportunity were other frontier traits. So was the penchant for practical achievement that marks the American character so distinctly.

If wilderness shaped our national values and institutions, it follows that one of the most important roles of nature reserves is keeping those values and institutions alive. Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States from 1901 to 1909 and the leader of the first period of great achievement in conservation, was keenly aware of this relationship. "Under the hard conditions of life in the wilderness," Roosevelt wrote, those who migrated to the New World "lost all remembrance of Europe" and became new men "in dress, in customs, and in mode of life." But the United States by 1900 was becoming increasingly like the more civilized and longer settled parts of the world. Consequently Roosevelt declared that "as our civilization grows older and more complex, we need a greater and not a less development of the fundamental frontier virtues." The Boy Scouts of America was just one of the responses of Roosevelt's contemporaries to the problem he described. Without wilderness areas in which successive generations can relearn the values of their pioneer ancestors, the American culture will surely change. Perhaps it should, but many remain concerned about cutting off the roots of their national character. And merely from the standpoint of safeguarding an historical document, a part of the national past, we should save wilderness. Once all America was wild; without remnants to refresh our memories we run the risk of cultural amnesia.

Argument 4: Wilderness as Nourisher of American Arts and Letters

Time and again in the course of history the native land has been the inspiration for great works of music, painting, and literature. What the American painter, Alan Gusscow, calls "a sense of place" is as vital to the artistic endeavor as it is to patriotism and national pride. And "place," it should be clear, has to do with the natural setting. Subdivisions, factories, and used car lots rarely inspire artistic excellence. Nature commonly does. Parks and reserves, as reservoirs of scenic beauty that touches the soul of man, have a crucial role in the quality of a nation's culture.

Certainly the United States would have a poorer artistic heritage without the existence of wild places of inspiring beauty. James Fenimore Cooper in literature, Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt in painting, and, to take a recent example, John Denver in music, have based their art on wilderness. In the case of the United States, wilderness had a special relationship to culture. It was the one attribute the young nation had in abundance, the characteristic that set it apart from Old World countries. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were among the many who, by the mid-nineteenth century, called on America to attain cultural self-reliance by basing its art on the native landscape. Nature, for these philosophers, was intellectual fertilizer. Blended in the proper proportion with civilization, it produced cultural greatness. Thoreau was fond of pointing out that the grandeur that was Rome at its zenith had its beginnings in the rearing of Romulus and Remus by that symbol of the wild, a wolf. When these wild roots became buried beneath too much civilization, Rome declined and fell. The conquerors, significantly, were wilder people—barbarians from the forests and the steppes.

Even though the notion was self-serving, American artists and intellectuals in the early years of the republic took pride in the belief that they were next in

a westward moving line of greatness beginning with Greece and extending through Rome, Spain, and England. The American wilderness, they thought, was the equivalent of the wolf who raised Rome's famous twins. It would pour raw strength and creative vitality into the growing nation. But, ironically, the growth threatened to destroy its own wild sources. Thomas Cole's five-panel painting of 1836, "The Course of Empire," illustrated the process. In the first painting Cole showed a wilderness inhabited by hunters. The second view of the same place, a few centuries later, revealed a pastoral society with villages and flocks. In the third canvas Cole presented the zenith of empire. Elaborate buildings, looking much like the climax of the Roman Empire, dominated the scene. Nature had been totally eliminated except for a mountain peak. Then, inevitably, came the destruction of empire, and the fourth panel showed wild hordes sacking the city. In the final painting there are no people. Vines and weeds are reducing the deserted city to the wilderness from which it originated.

Cole's "Course of Empire" contained a clear lesson for the United States. If it was to avoid the cyclical pattern of rise and fall, the inspiring qualities of nature had best be made a permanent part of the American environment. The point was to avoid becoming *over* civilized and decadent. One means to that end, Cole advised his countrymen, was to preserve parts of the American wilderness while civilization grew up around them. Cultural greatness, indeed cultural survival, depended on this blending of environments.

Argument 5: Wilderness as a Church

With the aid of churches and religions, people attempt to find solutions to, or at least live with, the weightiest mental and emotional problems of human existence. One value of wilderness for some people is its significance as a setting for what is, essentially, religious activity. In nature, as in a church, they attempt to bring meaning and tranquility to their lives. They seek a sense of oneness, of harmony, with all things. Wilderness appeals as a place to knot together the unity that civilization tends to fragment. Contact with the natural world shows man his place in systems that transcend civilization and inculcates reverence for those systems. The result is peace.

The Transcendental philosophers, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, were among the first Americans to emphasize the religious importance of nature. Moral and aesthetic truths seemed to them to be more easily observed in wild places than in regions where civilization interposed a layer of artificiality between man and nature. John Muir, a leading force in the preservation of Yosemite National Park and first president of the Sierra Club, also believed that to be closer to nature was to be closer to God. The wild Sierra that he explored and lived in was simply a "window opening into heaven, a mirror reflecting the Creator." Leaves, rocks, and lakes were "sparks of the Divine Soul." Muir spent little time in a building called a church, but his enjoyment of wilderness was religious in every sense of the word.

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Argument 6: Wilderness as a Guardian of Mental Health

Sigurd Olson, veteran guide and interpreter of the canoe country extending northward from Lake Superior, noted in 1946 that "civilization has not changed emotional needs that were ours long before it arose." Sigmund Freud had the same idea when he said that civilization bred "discontents" in the form of repressions and frustrations. One of the most distressing for modern man is

the bewildering complexity of events and ideas with which civilization obliges him to deal. The price of failing to cope with the new “wilderness” of people and paper is psychological problems. The value of wilderness and outdoor recreation is the opportunity it extends to civilized man to slip back, occasionally, into what Olson calls “the grooves of ancestral experience.” The leading advocate of wilderness protection in the 1930’s, Robert Marshall, spoke of the “psychological necessity” for occasional escape to “the freedom of the wilderness.”

Olson and Marshall were referring to the fact that wild country offers people an alternative to civilization. The wilderness is different. For one thing, it simplifies. It reduces the life of those who enter it to finding basic human needs and satisfactions, such as unmechanized transportation, water, food, and shelter. Civilization does not commonly permit us this kind of self-sufficiency and its dividend, self-confidence. A hike of ten miles has more meaning in this respect than a flight of ten thousand. Wilderness also reacquaints civilized people with pain and fear. Surprising to some, these are ancient energizing forces—springboards to achievement long before monetary success and status were even conceived. The gut-level fears associated with survival drove the wheels of evolution. At times, of course, they hurt and even killed, but we pay a price in achievement for entering the promised land of safety and comfort. For many it is horribly dull. They turn to crime or drugs or war to fill their needs for risk and challenge. Others find beds in mental institutions the only recourse. Wilderness recreation is a better alternative.

Argument 7: Wilderness as a Sustainer of Human Diversity

Just as it promotes biological diversity (see Argument 2), the preservation of wilderness helps to preserve human dignity and social diversity. Civilization means control, organization, homogenization. Wilderness offers relief from these dehumanizing tendencies; it encourages individuality. Wild country is an arena where man can experiment, deviate, discover, and improve. Was not this the whole meaning of the New World wilderness for those settlers who migrated to it from Europe? Wilderness meant freedom. Aldo Leopold put it this way: “of what avail are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?” For novelist Wallace Stegner wild country was “a place of perpetual beginnings” and, consequently, “a part of the geography of hope.” Somehow the preservation of wild places seemed to Americans inextricably linked to the preservation of free people. If there was wilderness, there could not be a technologically powered police state observing one’s every move and thought. Total control of nature and human nature were equally suspect in American eyes. The naturalist Joseph Wood Krutch may have said it best of all when he observed that “wilderness and the idea of wilderness is one of the permanent homes of the human spirit.”

There is another sense in which wilderness preservation joins hands with the perpetuation of human diversity. The very existence of wilderness is evidence of respect for minority rights. Only a fraction, although a rapidly growing one, of the American people seek scenic beauty and wilderness recreation. Only a fraction care about horse racing or opera or libraries. The fact that these things can exist is a tribute to nations that cherish and defend minority interests as part of their political ideology. Robert Marshall of the United States Forest Service made it plain in the 1930’s that protection of minority rights is one of the hallmarks of a successful democracy. The majority may rule, said Marshall, but that does not mean it can impose its values universally. Otherwise art galleries (a minority interest) would be converted into hamburger stands and amusement parks. The

need was for a fair division—of land, for instance—to accommodate a variety of tastes and values.

Argument 8: Wilderness as an Educational Asset in Developing Environmental Responsibility

To experience wilderness is to discover natural processes and man's dependency upon them. It is to discover man's vulnerability and, through this realization, to attain humility. Life in civilization tends to promote antipodal qualities: arrogance and a sense of mastery. Not only children believe that milk comes from bottles and heat from radiators. "Civilization," Aldo Leopold wrote, "has so cluttered [the] elemental man-earth relation with gadgets and middlemen that awareness of it is growing dim. We fancy that industry supports us, forgetting what supports industry." Contact with wilderness is a corrective that modern man desperately needs if he is to achieve long-term harmony between himself and his environment.

Wilderness can also instruct man that he is a member, not the master, of a community that extends to the limits of life and the earth itself. Because wild country is beyond man's control, because it exists apart from human needs and interests, it suggests that man's welfare is not the primary reason for or purpose of the existence of the earth. This seemingly simple truth is not easily understood in a technological civilization whose basis is control and exploitation. In wilderness we appreciate other powers and interests because we find our own limited.

A final contribution of wilderness to the cause of environmental responsibility is a heightened appreciation of the meaning and importance of restraint. When we establish a wilderness reserve or national park we say, in effect, thus far, and no farther to development. We establish a limit. For Americans self-limitation does not come easily. Growth has been our national religion. But to maintain an area as wilderness is to put other considerations before material growth. It is to respect the rights of non-human life to habitat. It is to challenge the wisdom and moral legitimacy of man's conquest and transformation of the entire earth. This acceptance of restraint is fundamental if people are to live within the limits of the earth.

The United States developed its present system of scenic and recreational conservation because of public acceptance of the eight arguments just presented. So it is that attitudes and values can shape a nation's environment just as do bulldozers and chain saws. Nature reserves exist and will continue to exist under republican forms of government only because they are valued by society.