

*(The bill) has many virtues. And it lacks many others. But I think it is wise at this moment to support it, and we have to accept that which is possible even if it is not perfect.*⁵

In its scale the Alaska Lands Act was unique in our history—for example, it more than doubled the national parklands in a single legislative action. But in its genesis, its legislative background, and its final enactment the 1980 act followed constitutional patterns that had evolved throughout the Nation's Westward Expansion. In Alaska, as in the earlier West of Yellowstone and Yosemite, individuals and groups had found values for future generations in preserved lands. They had carried their message into the political arena, there to contend with those who perceived different futures for Alaska's outstanding landscapes. Through political processes ruled by constitutional checks and balances these varied perceptions had been cut and filed to conform with one another in a roughly balanced resolution. The result came not by governmental diktat nor by the domination of any particular interest. In this drama, with all of its imperfections and inefficiencies, is found the soul and the price of constitutional government.

Notes:

1. Carl Brent Swisher, *American Constitutional Development*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1943, 126.
2. *Ibid.*, 480.
3. Robert D. Arnold, *et al.*, *Alaska Native Land Claims*. Alaska Native Foundation, Anchorage, 1976, 24.
4. Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1927, I, 285.
5. *Congressional Record*, November 12, 1980, H 10528.

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The "Leopold Report" Revisited

Editor's Note: A group of eight U.S. National Park Service professionals met in December 1986 in Washington, D.C., to prepare a task directive for the National Park Service Director's Blue Ribbon Panel on the 1963 Leopold Report. The following two papers are among the products that emerged. The paper by Dave Graber is his assignment to synthesize the views expressed and come up with a "sense of the meeting." The Bill Brown paper is simply "his own." Denis Galvin, USNPS Deputy Director, to whom all the papers were submitted, agreed with the editors of FORUM that both papers deserve to be circulated as submitted.

"A Sense of the Meeting"

David M. Graber

Action Item: 'Establish a blue-ribbon panel to examine NPS policies about natural and cultural resources and recommend how these policies may be improved.'

Preamble: We believe, given new and increasing threats facing national parks, increased social awareness of the importance parks play in our national life, and the great advances in our scientific knowledge, it is timely that an advisory group of concerned citizens conversant with the principles and techniques underlying park resource management and protection be impaneled to counsel the National Park Service in its continuing development of a long-term strategy for preservation of the natural and cultural resources in its care. The following objectives and their annotations are designed to suggest areas for the panel's attention.

Objective 1: Reexamine the principles of ecological management propounded in the Leopold Report.

The 1963 report of the Special Advisory Board on Wildlife Management for the Secretary of the Interior: Leopold, A. S. et al., "Wildlife Management in the National Parks," proposed for the first time a set of fundamental principles by which natural resources in the national parks would be managed. These principles were largely adopted by the Service. The science of ecology and its applications in natural resources management have advanced considerably since 1963; new specialties in such areas as genetic and demographic management of small and bounded populations, pollution threats, paleoecology, and ecosystem theory have much to contribute to park natural resource management. Parallel advances in historiography, anthropology, archaeology, and landscape ecology, for example, have application to park cultural resource management. The role of national parks within society, and their existence as increasingly discrepant islands in an evolving landscape certainly has changed since 1963, and no doubt will continue to do so.

- ◇ Where is 'ecosystem' management appropriate, and where is 'scene' management or some other standard preferable?
- ◇ How "wild" and "natural" can natural area parks be, and to what extent must they be manipulated, in the contemporary American landscape?
- ◇ To what extent—if any—should parks function as zoos for purposes of display or for purposes of species preservation?

- ❖ Should parks seek to conceal necessary artificialities in the management of "natural ecosystems"?
- ❖ What is the appropriate management of permanently altered ecosystems and ecosystem fragments?

Objective 2: Scrutinize NPS policies for the management of both natural and cultural resources.

Is the National Park Service effectively protecting the natural and cultural resources in its charge? Are the tools and techniques used appropriate? Are policies correctly reflecting law and regulation, and are they guiding management to appropriate ends?

- ❖ Given limited funds, is NPS correctly balancing the maintenance of existing natural and cultural resources under its charge with the acquisition and primary restoration of other seriously compromised resources?
- ❖ Should "featured" natural resources (e.g., grizzly bears, giant sequoias) be managed as ecosystem elements, or as special resources deserving of protection in their own right?
- ❖ What should be the respective policy and operations functions of the Washington office, the regional offices, and the park units?
- ❖ Where should priority and funding determinations be made?
- ❖ What policies should be adopted for park management with respect to indigenous human populations?
- ❖ How does federal wilderness legislation affect NPS policy and regulations?
- ❖ How should NPS approach the management of threats to the protection of park resources that originate external to park boundaries?
- ❖ At what level should NPS be conducting baseline inventories and monitoring resources?
- ❖ NPS manages ideas as well as physical objects. Is there an appropriate perspective for presenting parks as expressions of historic perspectives, for example?

Objective 3: Examine the functions of research and resource management in the National Park Service, and the relationship of these specialties.

The Leopold Report affirmed the necessity for well-educated and experienced professional scientists and professional resource managers within the Service. Since 1963 those disciplines have become distinct specialties and greatly expanded in numbers of staff, while the resource conservation problems facing NPS have increased in number and complexity.

- ✧ What kinds and levels of information and expertise are required to manage parks intelligently?
- ✧ Where is NPS in greatest need of more information and expertise, and how should it best be acquired?
- ✧ How should we prioritize research and resources management projects and programs among themselves and within the operations of the Service?
- ✧ What is the appropriate balance between agency-conducted research and that performed by university scientists and other extramural organizations?
- ✧ How does and how should the research/resource management interface function in the Service?

Objective 4: Propose a holistic approach to park management that defines the underlying principles of park management and identifies the elements common to all units of the National Park System.

The National Park System now encompasses hundreds of units that range in size from a fraction of an acre to thousands of square miles, that were created to preserve an historic scene, a cultural artifact, urban open space, spectacular scenery, heroic species, recreational opportunity, or raw wilderness. What common niche do these disparate elements occupy in American society today, and what will be their role in the future? What are the principles of NPS resource management and protection today?

- ✧ How are conflicting purposes within park units—object preservation, ecosystem preservation, indigenous cultural practices, legal wilderness, aesthetics, recreation—to be resolved?
- ✧ How is the enabling legislation for each park unit to be weighed against the underlying principles of the National Park System?

- ❖ To what extent should natural areas function as 'natural reserves' for scientific use in understanding natural processes?
- ❖ What are the responsibilities of NPS toward the maintenance of biological diversity, and what practices logically follow?
- ❖ Should the national park philosophy extend beyond park boundaries?
- ❖ What should be the role of indigenous peoples within park boundaries?
- ❖ What will be the consequences of the loss of buffer zones around parks, and their increasing isolation?
- ❖ How do visitors perceive their parks, and to what extent should NPS reflect present visitors' values?
- ❖ What new park protection strategies should be considered?
- ❖ Where does the National Park System fit in the context of all public lands?

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Preamble Grist

William E. Brown

The work group was called to provide a charter, a white paper, a task directive for the Blue Ribbon Panel. In the nature of such assignments the work group participants raised their sights to the Panel level. They played, at least part of the time, at *being* the Panel—but with the qualifying insights of operational experience. Their ruminations aimed to break down the rough-feed cellulose and make it digestible for the Panel's deliberations. Immanent in the cud here regurgitated should be the main concerns and questions that could move the Panel to a serious probing of the National Park System/Service, and help the Panel provide guidance for this institution's continued contribution to the Nation's higher purposes.

A sense of conservative dynamism shaped the work group effort. The traditional centrality of the System's physical resources—base for