

*The George Wright*

# FORUM

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**Volume 7**



**1990**



**Number 2**



## **Tenth Anniversary Issue**

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*The George Wright Society*

Dedicated to the Protection, Preservation and Management  
of Cultural and Natural Parks and Reserves  
Through Research and Education

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# The George Wright Forum

VOLUME 7

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NUMBER 2

## TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

*Dedicated to . . .*

**GEORGE MELENDEZ WRIGHT**  
**BERNICE ["BEE"] WRIGHT SHUMAN**

*and to their daughters:*

**MRS. SHERRY WRIGHT BRICHETTO**

*Born in 1932*

*Now living in Greenbrae, California*  
*with Husband, Richard*

*and*

**MRS. PAMELA WRIGHT LLOYD**

*Born in 1933*

*Now living in Mill Valley, California*  
*with Husband, James*



**GEORGE MELENDEZ WRIGHT**  
1904-1936

# GEORGE MELENDEZ WRIGHT

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



**BEN H. THOMPSON**

With Additional Information from the  
Writings of Lowell Sumner and Others



**G**EORGE WRIGHT'S ENJOYMENT of nature set his brief life course. He was born in San Francisco, California, June 20, 1904, to John Tennant Wright and Mercedes Melendez Wright. His mother's family was from San Salvador and his father's was among the San Franciscans of 1849. From an early age he displayed a deep interest in natural history and an aptitude for science. Because of his knowledge of plants and animals he served as natural history instructor for two seasons in a Boy Scout summer camp, when he was 14 and 15 years old. At about that age he backpacked alone through largely undeveloped country along the coast from San Francisco to the northern boundary of California.

At the University of California in Berkeley he majored in forestry under Professor Walter Mulford and minored in vertebrate zoology under Dr. Joseph Grinnell. In the summer of 1926 he and Joseph S. Dixon, Economic Mammalogist on Dr. Grinnell's staff, spent 72 days collecting birds and mammals and making life history studies in Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska. There Wright discovered the long-sought nest and eggs of a surfbird on a rocky ridge 1,000 feet above timberline. Previously, the surfbird's nest and eggs had been unknown. Thus, knowledge grows.

Joining the National Park Service in 1927, Wright was assigned to Yosemite as Assistant Park Naturalist. He and Park Naturalist Carl P. Russell often discussed wildlife conservation and the presentation of park wildlife to the public. Deer in Yosemite Valley were too abundant and tame. Cougars and other large

predators in the Park were believed to be very scarce or nonexistent. Black bears raided campgrounds for food and were fed garbage each evening several miles down the Valley from the village and lodges. A small remnant of the Tule elk, native in the San Joaquin Valley, were kept in a paddock in Yosemite Valley, as an emergency conservation measure. Hunting and trapping along the Park's boundaries were believed to affect park wildlife adversely. But the National Park Service had no full time staff or program devoted to the necessary field research on which better wildlife conservation and presentation could be based.

In 1929 Wright proposed that there be established a Wildlife Survey office and program for the National Park Service, to be funded by him until the program's value could be demonstrated and the program provided for as a regular part

of the National Park Service. Director Horace M. Albright approved the proposal and strongly supported it. Personnel of the program included Dixon as economic mammalogist, Wright as scientific aide, Ben H. Thompson as research associate, and Mrs. George Pease, secretary. Office space was leased in the Union Trust Building in Berkeley for about the first year, office and field equipment (including a truck designed and built for prolonged periods of field studies) and an excellent natural history library were provided.

As Ben Thompson recalls, Wright was a productive, orderly and systematic person. Useful office procedures were quickly formulated. Longhand field notes and research notes were typed and filed with useful cross references. Negatives and prints were each filed in separate envelopes, numbered and labeled for subject, place, photographer and date. Library books and journals were organized similar to the Library of Congress system; pamphlets and reprints were kept in orderly condition for ready access.

Preliminary surveys of the status of wildlife and the identification of urgent wildlife problems in the national parks began in 1929. In each park, effort was made to determine original and present wildlife conditions, to identify causes of adverse changes, and to try to recommend actions that would restore park

wildlife to its original natural condition, insofar as possible.

Most of the then-existing national parks and several of the large national monuments were studied in the first three years by members of the Survey. Special attention was devoted to ascertaining what was happening to rare and endangered species, such as the trumpeter swan; what were the conditions and carrying capacities of park elk and deer winter ranges; what were the causes of conflict between park visitors and park wildlife, notably black and grizzly bears; and what could be done to achieve the desired harmony.

In 1932 the Department of the Interior published a report on the Survey's preliminary findings and recommendations, entitled *Fauna of the National Parks of the United States, a Preliminary Survey of Faunal Relations in National Parks*, the first of the *Fauna* series.

The Roosevelt emergency conservation programs, particularly the Civilian Conservation Corps, spurred protection and construction programs on public lands. Many professionals were employed in these programs, including biologists assigned to the National Park Service's Wildlife Survey unit.

In 1934 Wright spent several months in Washington, D.C., working with Assistant Director Harold C. Bryant to strengthen the wildlife research program. By that time it

*"To him, perhaps, more than to any one else, must go the credit for developing a concept of conservation in which man mingles with the other animals and maintains that priceless association by intelligently restraining his own acquisitive and reorganizing tendencies."*

was being supported almost wholly by public funds and was designated as the Wildlife Division, in the Branch of Research and Education.

That summer, as part of the wide-ranging planning studies of the newly created National Resources Board, the National Park Service was assigned responsibility for preparing a report on "Recreational Use of Land in the United States." Wright was designated head of the group to carry out this assignment. Among the group were Herbert Evison, for state parks; Roger W. Toll, Superintendent of Yellowstone, for national parks; L. H. Weir, for city parks and recreation; and representatives of several USNPS di-

visions. Harlean James of the American Planning and Civic Association (and later author of the book *Romance of the National Parks*) was one of the helpful consultants. The report's

due date was November 1, and the USNPS gave it highest priority. Many days the group worked until midnight and the last day they worked all night, with George's wife, Bee, bringing in midnight snacks and coffee. In the morning the voluminous report was hand-carried by Wright to the Board, on time.

Many of the areas later established as local, state, and national parks were recommended in that report and nationwide planning for public parks and recreation areas was strengthened.

One day during preparation of that report, Wright had lunch at the old Cosmos Club with "Ding" Darling, then Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, along with Toll

and Thompson. Wright told Darling about the great value of the Red Rock Lakes region in Montana, some 50 miles west of Yellowstone, as a trumpeter swan breeding area. As many or more swans were breeding there as were in Yellowstone and Jackson Hole. It was all privately owned and swans were shot occasionally. Wright urged that the area be purchased as a trumpeter swan sanctuary. He said he would be glad to start the land purchase fund by donating \$500. Toll said he would match that. Darling said that possibly the contributions would not be necessary. The Biological Survey had some money to buy land for

wildlife refuges, and he was making a Western trip in a few days and would look into the Red Rock Lakes area: "If it is as good as you say, we may be able to acquire it as a

refuge." It was and he did.

After a December 1934 reconnaissance of St. John Island in the Virgin Islands with Bryant, Toll, and Oliver Taylor (they felt that the island was of national park quality and highly desirable), Wright returned to his home in Berkeley to continue the work of the Wildlife Division, then headquartered in Hilgard Hall on the University campus. But by the summer of 1935, the Service's wildlife studies program had increased to the point that it was desirable to have the Division's chief in Washington, D.C. Again Wright moved his family there and worked to strengthen the national parks as ecologically sound wildlife sanctuaries.

*"Rangers in the back country were on the same first-name basis with him as were luminaries in the Administration or the Cosmos and Bohemian clubs."*

In February 1936, Wright was designated as a member of a "Commission to represent the United States in conferences with a Mexican Commission to formulate policies and plans for the establishment and development of international parks, forest reserves and wildlife refuges along the international boundary between Mexico and the United States. . . ." The American Commission, in addition to Wright, consisted of US National Park Service Assistant Director Conrad L. Wirth; Toll, the Superintendent of Yellowstone and chief investigator of proposed national parks; Frank Pinkley, Superintendent of Southwestern National Monuments; Herbert Maier, Regional Officer, Region Eight; Lawrence M. Lawson, American Commission, International Boundary Commission, United States and Mexico; and Ira N. Gabrielson, Chief, Bureau of Biological Survey.

On February 25, 1936, the group was heading west after having inspected the newly authorized Big Bend National Park in Texas. George Wright and Roger Toll were riding in the first of the group's two cars. Near Deming, New Mexico, an on-coming auto blew a tire and crashed head-on into their car. Both Wright and Toll were killed, as was one of the occupants of the other auto.

Many of George Wright's accomplishments were made possible because of the support his wife gave him. At the University of California he had met Bernice (Bee) Ray of Allison, Iowa, who was to take her degree in Political Science. They were married in the Good Samaritan Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona, February 2, 1931, where George was being treated for malaria. They later held a formal marriage ceremony at St.

John's Chapel in Los Angeles. George and Bee had two daughters: Sherry, born in 1932 (now Sherry Wright Brichetto of Greenbrae, California); and Pamela, born in 1933 (now Pamela Wright Lloyd of Mill Valley, California).

Bee had no background in biology, but she strongly supported George in his work. After their marriage she went with him on nearly all of his trips into the parks, collecting information on wildlife conditions, and often camping in remote regions, as in the upper reaches of the North Fork of the Flathead River in Glacier National Park and in the Bechler River country of Yellowstone. A few months after their daughter Sherry was born, they tucked her into a snugly covered basket, with a gauze window above her face, and drove to Yellowstone in winter. Baby and basket rode in the Wildlife Survey's specially equipped truck, behind the driver's seat but in the open air—and thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

Bee and daughters accompanied Wright on his Washington sojourn in 1934. When the Wildlife Division was permanently moved to Washington in 1935, the family established a new home at the corner of 28th and O streets in Georgetown. It was there that Bee received word of her husband's fatal crash.

Soon afterward Bee and the children returned to Berkeley. The federal government had by then assumed financial responsibility for the Wildlife Division. In 1938 Bee married J. Robert Shuman of the San Francisco investment firm of Shuman Agnew. They lived in the city for the rest of their lives. Mr. Shuman died in 1982. Bee, tragically, was killed in an automobile accident in February



1986—almost exactly fifty years after George's death.

Aside from the co-authorship of the first two volumes of the Fauna series, Wright published short biological papers or notes in *The Condor*, *The Gull*, *Scientific Monthly*, *Yosemite Nature Notes*, and the *Journal of Mammalogy*. He also published popular accounts of his interests in various newspapers. He was elected a Life Associate of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1927, and served on various committees of the American Society of Mammalogists from 1931 on.

George Wright is remembered as an unusually effective champion of his cause—idealistic, hard working, highly sociable, keenly perceptive of other people, always generous, and unconcerned with personal status. At his death, Harlean James said, "I have never known a person of 31 who had as mature judgment as he had."

*"Wright was so far in the forefront of his time that his publications on wildlife management and the ecological protection of parks, though long out of print, still sound modern."*

Wright was so far in the forefront of his time that his publications on wildlife management and the ecological protection of parks, though long out of print, still sound modern. His park-by-park description of environmental problems, and the management programs proposed for their solution, could pass for surveys and plans made decades later. This was not lost on scientists of Wright's own era. In an obituary notice published in *Science*, Harold C. Bryant wrote: "To him, perhaps, more than to any one else, must go the credit for developing a concept of conservation in which man mingles

with the other animals and maintains that priceless association by intelligently restraining his own acquisitive and reorganizing tendencies."

Nonetheless, as Wright's colleague Lowell Sumner put it, "the spectacular success which attended his efforts to win acceptance of his ideas and programs on behalf on the parks was due even more to his sunny and persuasive personality than to his scientific attainments." And, as T. S. Palmer wrote in *The Auk*, Wright's "deep appreciation of the importance of conservation" was joined with "a faculty for devising practical methods of work."

Since Wright was independently wealthy, his efforts were not hampered by the subservience of position and status that often is experienced by pioneers and original thinkers in an organizational hierarchy. In addition, the most effective of all his attainments and characteristics was his warm, relaxed, unself-

consciously friendly personality. Rangers in the back country were on the same first-name basis with him as were luminaries in the Administration or the Cosmos and Bohemian clubs.

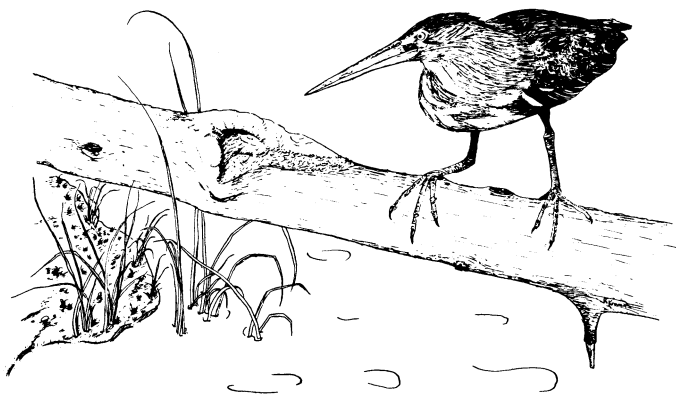
But, according to Sumner, "no matter how many reminiscences might be recorded concerning George Wright's disarming diplomacy, in retrospect it still seems almost unbelievable that such a young newcomer was able, in so short a period of time, to introduce a set of new management concepts into an old-line Federal organization, and recruit from all over the country a

team of park-oriented biologists, most of them not long out of the graduate schools, to help carry out the new ideas. To succeed, such an innovator would need an extraordinary talent for persuasiveness, or some good friends in high places. Although George relied mainly on the first, he had both. In addition he had rare good luck as well as judgement in timing his efforts to take advantage of developing national resource programs."

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# **Men and Mammals**

## **in**

### **Joint Occupation of National Parks**

**GEORGE M. WRIGHT**



READ AT THE 16TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MAMMALOGISTS, NEW YORK CITY, MAY 8, 1934; FIRST PUBLISHED IN FAUNA OF THE NATIONAL PARKS OF THE UNITED STATES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FAUNA SERIES #2, JULY 1934



**J**OINT OCCUPATION of national parks by animal and human populations is prescribed by the organic laws which define national parks. Maintenance of wildlife in the primitive state is also inherent in the national-park concept. The conclusion is undeniable that failure to maintain the natural status of national parks fauna in spite of the presence of large numbers of visitors would also be failure of the whole national parks idea.

Further, since the feasibility of preserving the aggregate of primitive wildlife on unit areas anywhere in the United States has become the center of debate between constructive idealists and vociferous defeatists, the national parks, because they represent the problem in its most complex form, have become the test case.

Today, when so much attention centers on conservation based on land classification and the development of management practices de-

signed to restore each class of land to its fullest wildlife productivity, it will be worth while to review the problems which have developed in maintaining the fauna of the national parks in a primitive state, with particular reference to those that are peculiar to them as against other kinds of wilderness reservations.

Though no categorical distinctions can be made between types of problems since there are interactions throughout and indirect influences

hardly guessed at as yet, still it is evident that park faunal problems arise from one or more of three basic causes. These are: First, adverse early influences which operated unchecked in the pre-park period, and continued into the early formative period; second, the failure of parks as independent biotic units by virtue of boundary and size limitations; and, third, the injection of man and his activities into the native animal environments.

The first two are common to all areas wherein it is desired to maintain the primitive. Moreover, they have this in common, that we may look forward hopefully to the correction in large measure of the problems which they developed. Consider, for example, some of the type of problems under these two causes. As the results of adverse earlier influences, there are problems in the re-introduction of extirpated species, restoration of species reduced to the danger point, rehabilitation of depleted habitats, and management of species become abnormally abundant because of removal of their normal controls. As the results of the failure of the parks to be self-contained, self-walled biological units, typical maladjustments are lack of winter range, ebb-flow of animals that are blacklisted outside the park areas, invasion by exotics, dilution of native species through hybridization, and exposure of natives to the diseases and influences of alien faunas. All the problems mentioned and others referable to the same two causes are recognizable as being common to primitive areas generally. Ideally one can hope that actual cures will be effected as these problems are analyzed and effective treatment evolved and applied.

The third class of problems, however—those arising out of joint occupation of the areas by men and mammals—has the dubious distinction of being the incurable. In the instance of adverse earlier influences the cause of disorder was removed when the area became effectively a national park. It only remains to undo now the damage that was done before. Where the park is an adequate biotic unit, addition of the proper areas and revamping of boundaries to follow natural faunal barriers will bring permanent removal of the basic difficulty. Progress on this front has been slow, but the adoption of a sound Nation-wide wildlife restoration plan based on planned land use should give it a great impetus.

The presence of people, and in fact of as many people as wish to come to the park, is a condition which cannot be altered; therefore the problems arising therefrom are to be dealt with as something permanent. They demand the development of a compensation technique in wildlife administration which will be put into effect and act continuously. Moreover, as park travel is steadily increasing, the problems are being constantly intensified, and it logically follows that the palliative measures including the restrictions willingly imposed by man on himself must also increase.

Though white man is in one sense part of the whole natural environment, one in the aggregate of faunal and floral species constituting the biota of the park, just as are the Indians who came via the Aleutians, and the grasses whose seeds were borne across the ocean, there are two things which set him apart even from other recent arrivals. White man's impact upon his environment

is tremendous as compared to that of all other living forms. He is as much like them as cancerous growth is like normal growth and as destructive in effect. The second thing which sets him apart and which is antidote to the first, is his unique ability to appreciate his effect on the environment. He thus becomes capable of self-imposed restrictions to preserve other species against himself. Admittedly, his object is a selfish one, just as it is when he chooses to destroy other species to use them for food, but it is a higher, more altruistic, selfishness. It is selfishness for the benefit of all individuals of his own kind and their descendants after them. And incidentally it is a selfishness which reacts beneficially upon the animals over which he holds power of destruction.

The whole national park idea is a manifestation of this second attribute of man, dependent upon his utilization of his environment to his own advantage but in contradistinction to his instinctively normal utilization of land. Within the national parks, man's estimate of the greatest values to be obtained for himself from the sum total of their native resources, dictates that he shall occupy them in such a way as to cause the minimum of modification from the aspect they presented when he first saw them.

Man, like any other exotic, cannot intrude upon an area without causing some displacement and modification of the preexistent or primitive

state, but the degree of change which he causes may be very great or relatively little. If a scientific study is made to determine how to keep the disturbances to a minimum, satisfactory results will be secured.

Let us examine those problems already known to be traceable to joint occupancy and indicate still others which may be expected. What has been done to study them and provide for their solution and what is planned by the National Park Service for the future?

First come those problems rooted in conflict between the more fundamental needs of men and animals in the parks. They are essentially by-products of occupation of common habitats.

In the early park period, the livestock concept of wildlife administration prevailed. Predators were controlled and rangers were permitted to trap fur bearers in winter

to eke out inadequate salaries. This is not to be condemned either, for it was consistent with the national parks concept in that early stage of its development. Moreover, at that time, many of the grazing animals were so depleted that first attention had to be given to saving the small breeding remnants. Some of them, such as buffalo, elk, and antelope, were so close to extinction that any action to save them was justifiable. Now that these forms are out of immediate danger with many nuclei established, it is easy to forget that this was not always so. Then, one spoke of campaigning against

*"Not long ago, it was common to speak of campaigning against carnivores as though they were something devilish, just as one did of Huns in the World War and with as little reason."*

carnivores as though they were something devilish, just as one did of Huns in the World War and with as little reason. In fact, it was only a few years ago that the principle of equal protection for all species was established.

Even from their incipency the parks recognized that the animal life would have to be protected against certain normal aggressions of civilization. Visitors must not molest the animals. Visitors must not bring dogs or, at the very least, they must be kept on leash. Domestic stock must not be pastured in the park by residents, though this was never considered to apply to riding horses.

Such simple precautions seemed enough when parks travel was light and we still labored under the illusion that there were great hidden wildernesses in the

West. Later the almost complete decimation of primitive wildlife elsewhere greatly enhanced the importance of the parks as last refuges at the same time that the influx of thousands of visitors raised the question as to whether the park wildlife could stand the pressure. For the first time we began to glimpse the multitude of ways in which the animal and human elements conflicted.

Realization of the problem meant the elimination of the needless harm to animal life which was attendant upon poisoning around barns, burning of meadows, and so on. Maladjustments of this type which are in

the accidental class are now corrected as fast as apprehended. They are not the permanent problems in joint occupation.

Once all species are given full protection insofar as the right to live their life cycles unmolested is concerned, and park visitors are at the same time enjoined against taking any step as individuals to protect themselves against the animals, problems in animal harmfulness to man arise. Few species are actually dangerous to human life, but some are injurious to property, others to man's special interest in certain natural features of the park, while still others are inimical to his comfort and esthetic senses.

The rattlesnake is, of course, a traditional enemy but, nevertheless, a greatly overestimated one. The

*"The visitor, instead of seeing animals disjoined from their natural habits and drawn out of their natural haunts to be presented spectacularly to him on as intimate terms as possible and with the minimum expenditure of energy on his part, should in fact be presented to the animals."*

proper practice is to destroy rattlesnakes when encountered at human concentration points but to permit them to go unmolested elsewhere.

Coyotes, rabbits, and squirrels may act as carriers of diseases communicable to man.

Epidemic outbreaks of such diseases constitute emergencies abrogating all regular rules and regulations and calling for heroic but temporary and specifically applied local treatment.

Among mammals, the various species of bears can be considered as being physically dangerous. Because visitors cannot carry firearms, this

danger is real, and if the park administration protects the bears against the visitors it must protect the visitors against the bears. For this reason, individual bears of bad character are destroyed. But the bear problem is due very nearly 100 percent to the abnormally intimate contacts which human beings have sought to establish with the bears and not to the innate ferocity in bear nature. The subject, therefore, is properly referable to that category of problems involved in the manner of presentation of the visitors to the wildlife and will be treated later.

Mammal damage to property is of small significance. Since the offenders are not to be destroyed, recourse must be had to isolating the property from the animals. The real difficulty here comes in inculcating the basic administrative policies so deeply that recourse to this kind of treatment will always be first

thought, replacing the instinctive reaction to kill. For example, in Mount McKinley National Park considerable damage is sustained from the porcupine gnawing on buildings. The immediate proposal was local control by shooting. But such an objectionable course was unnecessary. Moreover, since the porcupines of this region migrate locally, serious reduction of the park porcupine population could result from prolonged application of such treatment. At present, the offending

porcupines are trapped and moved elsewhere. In all likelihood, a permanent solution to this problem will be found through cooperation with the Branch of Plans and Design of the National Park Service in development of an acceptable porcupine-proofing. This then will become standard for all structures where such damage occurs.

Cases in which animals prejudice the comfort of the visitor or abuse his esthetic senses demand the development of similar technique. Where skunks insisted on sharing man's

houses with him, they were once trapped and drowned. Now they are trapped and removed to remote sections. It is a safe prediction that skunk-proof basements will be standard in the future.

Where animals prejudice man's special interests in the natural features of the parks, the involvements are greater. The scene of man's

special interests is out in the park proper and more often than not in the most sacred areas, whereas the troubles discussed above are usually in the development areas, which are exceptions from the remainder of the park areas in nearly every way.

The inroad of fish-eating mammals upon game fish is detrimental to the special interests of one group of visitors. Nor can we be oblivious to the perfectly understandable hostility of the fish culturist whose business it is to keep the park streams

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well-stocked. But the logic of the arguments that the fisherman is a privileged character in a national park wherein nothing else but fish can be taken; that, in so doing, he is depriving the fish-eaters of their food supply; and that he must restore fish to the streams and lakes for the benefit of these creatures as well as himself, has been so forcefully demonstrated, that there is no longer any question of controlling species predatory upon fish. For purposes of practical administration, exceptions have to be made in the case of individual animals doing unusual damage around rearing ponds or hatcheries.

Finally, since man is superior, and endowed with every advantage, it would be miserable admission of defeat if he could not find ways of solving these simple problems of animal injury to man without resorting to campaigns of destruction which ruin the primitive and impoverish the aggregate of natural phenomena which, in reality, is the park.

In turning to a consideration of maladjustments of the reverse order, those involved in the repercussions of civilization upon the wild mammals both by direct effect and indirectly by disturbance of environments, we come to grips with the key problems in national parks administration.

Consider first the unavoidable factor of actual physical displacement. All construction projects today must conform to the master plans which specifically limit developments to certain excepted areas. The guiding principle is that all the roads and buildings necessary to the accommodation of both permanent employees and transients shall be compacted into the smallest possible space. Though this technique is in its

infancy, rapid progress is being made. Approved practice today often calls for erection of apartment-type dwellings to secure economy of ground space.

For better control and to accord with the most advanced scientific thought on the subject, the research reserves program developed by the Ecological Society of America has been adapted to national parks use under a plan proposed by the Wildlife Division of the National Park Service. Under this scheme the whole of the park becomes a primitive area with the exception of certain fixed and well-defined areas to which developments must be limited. The excepted areas include right-of-way for roads and site for camps, hotels, and utility groups. The primitive area, which is in the park proper, must remain untouched except for fish culture, trail development, and insect and fire control practices. For scientific study and to serve as control experiments, specific areas within the primitive area may be set aside as permanent or temporary research areas. In these, fish planting is prohibited. To make this program satisfactorily effective, the park should be surrounded by a buffer strip of the maximum width possible, in order to isolate it from external influences. Success of this measure must depend on whether adjacent lands are in public or private ownership and on the degree of cooperation which can be secured.

Adoption of this plan will mean reduction of the displacement factor to the practical minimum. In order that neither enjoyment and use of the park nor the primitive status of its wildlife shall be jeopardized, men must live on less and less ground and do more and more journeying forth to see the wildlife. There is



ever-increasing restriction on the camping privilege. Before long, no one will camp in the park except in a developed camp site in which the location of car stall, fireplace, table, and tent have all been predetermined by the Branch of Plans and Design. Though such a degree of seeming restriction upon freedom is naturally abhorrent, the parks are our most precious bit of wilderness and must be safeguarded. The vast areas outside the parks provide ample space for those who would camp as they please.

In addition to the impingement by large numbers of people upon the faunal habitats, causing a contraction in the total animal populations, there are certain corollary maladjustments which develop. In all of the national parks every bit of available range forage is needed for native game. Both company and Government saddle-horses have been given the range needed by the park wild animals for so long that the practice is rooted in tradition and is hard to change. Nor can it ever be eliminated entirely. Nevertheless, a great improvement has been effected by maintaining careful jurisdiction and exercising good range management. Riding horses maintained in the park for visitor use are not brought in until the season starts and are taken out of the park as soon as it is over. Numbers are limited to the demand. And what is more beneficial than anything else, the horses are herded high upon the summer range instead of being allowed to impoverish the critical winter game range.

A few species of mammals which thrive on civilization, notably coyote and ground squirrel, tend to increase and spread in the wake of development and, by very virtue of their

aggressive characteristics, to impinge upon native forms whose niches they preempt. In such cases, control is clearly indicated. In parks such as Glacier and Yellowstone, however, the coyote, while it is undoubtedly more abundant than formerly, may perform a useful function as a salutary control on herbivorous forms in place of the mountain lion and wolf, which formerly filled that role.

Finally, among the problems of joint occupation, there is the large and complex category of problems involved in the manner of presentation of wildlife to the visitor. That there are such problems is due indeed to the very perversion of what should be the relationship between the animals and the visitors. The visitor, instead of seeing animals disjoined from their natural habits and drawn out of their natural haunts to be presented spectacularly to him on as intimate terms as possible and with the minimum expenditure of energy on his part, should in fact be presented to the animals, so as to see them at home behaving primitively in their primitive environments.

Probably the most typical and certainly the best known problem resulting from the manner of presentation is that of bears in Yellowstone. To show how this problem was analyzed and what progress has been made toward its solution, the following excerpts are quoted from *Fauna of the National Parks of the United States*, Volume I, published in May 1932, by the National Park Service:

The manner of presentation of bears in this and other parks has been to feed large quantities of garbage in arenas, there being one or more of these according to the distribution of human population centers. This has brought about unprecedented concentration of

bears in small areas in Yellowstone. What are some of the adverse or possible adverse effects upon the bears resulting from this manner of presentation?

(a) The intimate association of many bears at one time on the feeding grounds must facilitate the spread of diseases or parasites which may be endemic in bears in Yellowstone, or of any diseases which may be introduced among them.

(b) The garbage itself, including the remains of domesticated animals, may introduce parasites.

(c) The rich concentrates in the garbage are an unnatural food for bears; and if feeding of them is continued for many bear generations, injurious physiological changes in the make-up of the bears are exceedingly likely to occur.

(d) The garbage season is coincident with the tourist season and not with the bear requirements. As a result of this uneven distribution of food, there is likely to be a scarcity of feed at the critical times. If it is true that because of this unnatural condition, there is a genuine possibility that the cubs born in the winter will suffer until eventually degeneration of the race will take place as a result.

(e) Inasmuch as the garbage is concentrated in areas a few yards square, the old bears are able to dominate the situation at the expense of the younger animals. It is possible, on the other hand, that the young animals learn only the feeding habits of their elders; and not being trained to rustle their natural foods, become the small, scrawny, hold-up bears so common on the Yellowstone roads.

(f) The garbage pits must cause a desertion of the niche formerly occupied by the bears in the summer time, thus further disturbing normal biotic relationships in the park.

(g) Garbage feeding attracts the bears to the vicinities of the food stores of campers and encourages a lack of fear in man. The bears offend man, who has the whip hand, so that the bears are bound to be the sufferers in the end.

(h) Bears appear at their worst on the garbage platform, so that their characters,

in the minds of the visitors, suffer as well as does very probably their physical well-being from this manner of presentation.

To conclude, it might be said that this manner of presentation of bears is very likely to be to the ultimate detriment of the bears. Certainly it is responsible for much of the injury to man.

In the two seasons which have elapsed since this analysis of the Yellowstone bear problem, certain corrective steps have been taken, and there is measurable improvement. Garbage feeding has been eliminated except for the Canyon and Old Faithful bear shows. Back-door feeding of bears and feeding of bears by visitors has been greatly reduced and eventually will be completely eliminated. Approximately 100 troublesome black bears and a very few bad-actor grizzlies have been destroyed. The number of bear complaints reported in the 1933 season was about 60 percent less than for the preceding year. For 1934 an allotment for bear-proof refuse containers and food safes has been secured for one campground. If this experiment proves successful, all campgrounds will be bear-proofed as fast as funds can be made available.

Not only with bears in Yellowstone but wherever any animal has been garbage-fed, hand-fed, petted, and tamed, the results have been detrimental to both the animal and to man in the park. Moreover, such practices have no national parks value, since the city zoo can satisfy this sort of human craving far more successfully. If we do not present park animals wild and in their natural background, we do not present a wildlife picture of national parks significance.

In arranging for the presentation of the visitor to wildlife it must be

remembered that birds and mammals in the immediate vicinities of roads and development areas are of relatively greater value because they are the ones which are most apt to be seen. Roadside clean-up tends to make the part of the park seen by visitors sterile of wildlife. Therefore it should be kept to the absolute minimum. Office orders urging caution to preserve wildlife values in conduct of Emergency Conservation programs have been issued, and close supervision is exercised. Still it is difficult successfully to combat human zeal in making the woods as tidy as possible.

The general recommendations calculated to secure the best values to the visitor from park wildlife and at the same time to avoid destruction of the primitive status of that wildlife are that the wilderness be permitted to come up as close as possible to human concentration areas, that park animals be not pauperized or tamed, and that ingenuity be exercised to introduce visitors to the animals' environments without their presence having adverse effects.

This country has now been explored and occupied from coast to coast and from Canadian to Mexican boundaries. The haphazard development and cropping of natural resources has proved so enormously wasteful and unproductive of benefit to our citizenry that the future national welfare in this respect has been seriously threatened.

Under a reclassification of lands to secure the maximum benefit from

each type, wildlife will find some place everywhere. The percentage value accorded to wildlife may be very small in some cases, but it will be considerable for most lands and on some, such as marsh, desert, and rugged mountain types, wildlife values will outrank all others.

Conservation thus is seen to be not an end in itself or a creed over which men fight according to personal prejudice, but a means for securing the maximum cropping of natural resources without destruction of the productive capital. The forms of cropping include the realization of sporting, economic, esthetic, and scientific values.

Certain areas in public ownership will always be dedicated to the preservation of wildlife in the wilderness condition. Because the modifying influences exerted by human populations would ordinarily prevent the realization of this objective, administrative practices must be developed to correct and prevent modification of the original natural conditions.

The national parks are one among the various types of areas which are designated for the preservation of the primitive. Because the parks are

set aside both for preservation of natural conditions and for use by the people at large, they have not only to cope with problems resulting from adverse influences and problems of adverse external

influences, but they are confronted also with the problems resulting from joint occupation.

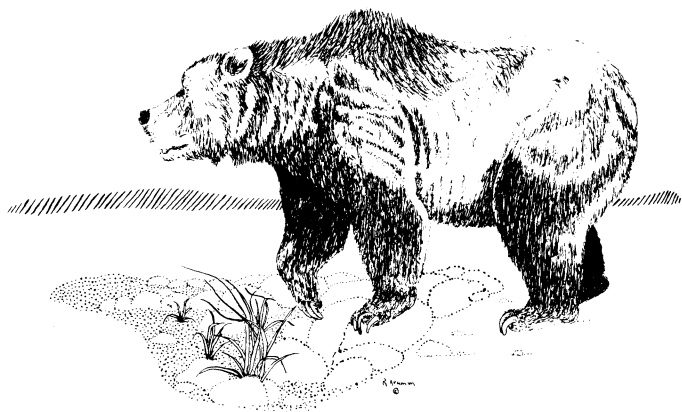
*"Consecration to the task of adjusting ourselves to the natural environment so that we secure the best values from nature without destroying it is not useless idealism."*

These problems are of such magnitude that some observers have concluded that only the childish idealist, pathetically blind to the practical obstacles, would attempt to accomplish the thing. There are others who believe the effort is warranted. Much of man's genuine progress is dependent upon the degree to which he is capable of this sort of control. If we destroy nature blindly, it is a boomerang which will be our undoing.

Consecration to the task of adjusting ourselves to the natural environment so that we secure the best

values from nature without destroying it is not useless idealism; it is good hygiene for civilization.

In this lies the true portent of this national parks effort. Fifty years from now we shall still be wrestling with the problems of joint occupation of national parks by men and mammals, but it is reasonable to predict that we shall have mastered some of the simplest maladjustments. It is far better to pursue such a course though success be but partial than to relax in despair and allow the destructive forces to operate unchecked.



# GEORGE M. WRIGHT'S WILDLIFE DIVISION

In 1967, Lowell Sumner compiled a history of biological research in the U.S. National Park Service in which he listed the names of those who were members of the Wildlife Division in the period 1936-1940—representing what George Wright had managed to put together between 1929 and 1936. Of those listed, Victor H. Cahalane, Russell K. Grater, and Ben H. Thompson are current members of The George Wright Society.

NAME	PRE-WWII DUTY STATION
H. P. K. Agersborg	Richmond, Virginia
Daniel B. Beard	South Miami, Florida
R. M. Bond	Portland, Oregon
A. E. Borell	Santa Fe, New Mexico
Ashley C. Browne	San Francisco, California
Victor H. Cahalane	Washington, DC
David Damon	Custer State Park, South Dakota
William B. Davis	Yellowstone National Park
L. M. Dickerson	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Joseph S. Dixon	San Francisco, California
Fred H. Dale	Glacier National Park, Montana
W. S. Feeney	Des Plaines, Illinois
Raymond Fleetwood	[unknown]
Russell K. Grater	Denver, Colorado
H. E. Hart	Omaha, Nebraska
H. A. Hockbaum	Mariemont, Ohio
W. J. Howard	Richmond, Virginia
H. M. Jennison	Great Smoky Mountains NP
Maynard S. Johnson	Boston, Massachusetts
L. Floyd Keller	Zion National Park, Utah
Willis King	Great Smoky Mountains NP
David Madsen	Salt Lake City, Utah
W. B. McDougall	Santa Fe, New Mexico
Harlow B. Mills	Yellowstone National Park
Adolph Murie	Omaha, Nebraska
Fred Mutchler	Atlanta, Georgia
Robert T. Orr	San Francisco, California
Fred M. Packard	Rocky Mountain National Park
Clifford C. Presnall	Washington, DC
Charles Quaintance	[unknown]
Dwight Smiley	San Francisco, California
James O. Stevenson	Washington, DC
Arthur Stupka	Great Smoky Mountains NP
Maurice Sullivan	Acadia National Park, Maine
Lowell Sumner	San Francisco, California
O. B. Taylor	Richmond, Virginia
Ben H. Thompson	Washington, DC
George M. Wright	Washington, DC



**PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION  
INVESTIGATING POTENTIAL PARKS ALONG THE  
BORDER BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES,  
FEBRUARY 1936**

This photograph was taken at Big Bend National Park, Texas, shortly before the auto accident which claimed George Wright and Roger Toll. From left to right are: Wright; Dr. Ball of the US Biological Survey; Sr. Galicia of Mexico; Connie Wirth, then the Assistant Director of the US National Park Service; Toll; Sr. Ibarra of the Mexico City Forest Service; and Sr. Trexenia, Forest Ranger, Chihuahua. The photo is the property of Ben Thompson; identifications were made by Thompson and Wirth.



# The George Wright Society

## The First Ten Years

DAVE HARMON

**T**he George Wright Society grew out of a need that became apparent during the first and second Conferences on Scientific Research in the National Parks (in 1976 and 1979, respectively). The need: an instrument of continuing duration, dedicated to the exchange of information within the community of researchers, managers, and other professionals, to give continuity to the broad range of topics having to do with cultural and natural park and reserve management and preservation. Such a need is from time to time underlined by vacillations and changes in government policies concerning parks, by budget restrictions, and by other vicissitudes that make for broken chains of information.

With that in mind, the George Wright Society was founded on August 18, 1980, by two former Chief Scientists of the U. S. National Park Service, Drs. Theodore W. Sudia and Robert M. Linn. By the end of 1981, there were 112 charter members.

From the beginning, the Society's emphasis has been on multidisciplinary synthesis. The aim is to get out integrated information in a form useful to the goal of better park management. This "cross-talk" is what makes the Society different from subject-oriented, professional peer organizations.

One way to think about the Society's first ten years is as the beginning of a continuing dialogue. Getting exchanges of ideas going has been the chief accomplishment of the Society so far. On the surface it might seem that the Society's task has been simple: merely to provide a "room" where people can get together to talk. These conversations have been in print (in the pages of the Forum) and in person (at the Society's Conferences on Research and Resource Management in the National Parks and Equivalent Reserves). But of

course, as anyone who's tried to organize a journal or put on a conference knows all too well, the task is far from simple.

### The Forum

The first number—little more than a newsletter at that stage—was published in the summer of 1981. Since then, the hallmark of the journal has been its holistic approach to cultural and natural resources. The Society's emblem—part of Earth as seen from somewhere above the surface of the moon—captures this notion. It symbolizes the biosphere within which our cultural, historical, and natural heritage has evolved. It was conceived of by Vernon C. (Tom) and Patsy Gilbert (Tom was the first President of the Society) and the final design was by Charlie Wise (a starving student who earned part of his keep by contributing art work to the Forum). The "typesetting" was done on an electronic typewriter from 1981 until 1984, when a computer finally came to the aid of this art, followed by a laser printer in 1985. The actual printing was done in a basement printshop with rather makeshift equipment until 1988, when it was

learned that a local printer could do the job better for not much more in cost. Counting the issue you now hold, there have been a total of twenty-five, as well as an author's index, some separately published reports, and reprints of individual articles.

Over the decade, many articles in the Forum have explored threats to the parks. In the very first issue, Roland H. Wauer contributed a useful historical perspective called "Are the National Parks in Peril?" Wauer reminded us that "internal threats" to the parks' integrity are nothing new. "While we are fighting for protection of the National Park System from its enemies, we may also have to protect it from its friends." That could have been written yesterday, but Robert Sterling Yard said it 68 years ago; as Wauer so justly remarked, "No statement was to prove more prophetic or enduring."

Also in 1981, the Forum published a major report on animal problems and related management needs in national parks. The authors were Durward Allen, Larry Erickson, E. Raymond Hall, and Walter Schirra. Wild boars, grizzlies, burros, and wolves were part of the report's focus, as were exotics in general, wildlife over-population, and the feasibility of reintroductions. The report concluded that there are three principal reasons for animal problems in the parks: (1) The parks were not set up as ecological entities; (2) Species have been lost from original communities, leaving maladjustments which must be compensated for; (3) Humans have added exotics. (Ironically, George Wright had come to virtually the same conclusions fifty years earlier; see his "Men and Mammals in Joint Occupation of

National Parks" elsewhere in this issue.)

Though the Society is named for a naturalist-scientist, cultural resource concerns have been an important part of the dialogue from the beginning. Carl Abbott's 1981 article "Historic Preservation: Facing a Crucial Choice" called for rehabilitating historic buildings, streets, and districts so that they "play a role in the normal daily lives of their communities," not stand apart as beautiful but detached monuments. F. Ross Holland, Jr., followed up with an article showing how it's being done in places like Lowell, Massachusetts.

Both the Winter and Spring 1983 issues were given over to cultural resources papers presented at the 1982 conference. These included articles on agricultural ecosystems, rural cultural landscapes, historic archeology, and the Historic American Engineering Record.

As the Forum entered the middle years of the decade, its contents diversified even further. There were think pieces on the broad meaning of the parks (e.g., western parks and the American character, national parks and foreign affairs). One of the country's leading environmental philosophers, J. Ronald Engel, contributed a long essay in 1985 on promoting the development and adoption of environmental ethics. Readers learned about the USNPS Advisory Board's survey of overcrowding. There were reprints of classic articles (Grinnell and Storer's "Animal Life in the Yosemite") and comments on touchstone documents (such as the Leopold Report).

These "middle years" also saw a most innovative series of contributions from Thomas W. Lucke. Be-



tween 1982 and 1986 he published five essay-reviews of law-school journal articles concerning national parks. With a deft, clear style, Lucke—himself the holder of a law degree as well as a USNPS employee—showed Forum readers that the law journals were really not such an unlikely venue for “park talk.” In fact, Lucke showed us that quite a bit of challenging thinking on parks was appearing in their pages. His invaluable guidance to this otherwise neglected literature was cut short by his untimely death in 1987.

The last three years or so have seen a continuing stream of articles on issues of global significance: extinction, conservation biology, and global climate change among them. Major articles have included Ronald Johnson's case study of cultural resources' role in the economic revitalization of western Pennsylvania; Theodore W. Sudia's analysis of the mission, function, and structure of the National Park Service; an essay by Alston Chase on parks and education; Paul Schullery on separating media myth from reality in the story of the great Yellowstone fires of 1988; and Durward Allen's 1990 essay on environmental ethics, “Social Morality and Resource Use.”

Through the pages of the Forum, members of the Society have been put on the “cutting edge” of several topics. For example, the University of Wisconsin Arboretum's pioneering work on ecosystem restoration was profiled in a 1982 article by William Jordan III, several years in advance of the late-eighties surge in articles, newsletters, and books about the topic. And essays on topics of truly enduring interest have appeared throughout, such as “When Are You Going to QUIT?”, Rolf Peterson's

answer to skeptics of long-term research projects.

With such a wide range of interests finding a home in these pages, doubtless the Forum has appeared, at times, to be an inchoate mass of information. But recall the Society's goal: to be an instrument of continuing duration, dedicated to the exchange of information, to give continuity to the broad range of topics having to do with cultural and natural parks. In the decade to come, we want to redouble our efforts to turn the Forum dialogue toward a discussion of continuities—between cultural and natural resources; between a park's “internal” communities of plants and animals and historic landscapes and visitors, and its surrounding “external” communities; between local and regional and global issues.

## The Conferences

In 1982 the Society continued the series of conferences on Scientific Research in the National Parks which had been started in 1976. The first two conferences, in 1976 (New Orleans) and 1979 (San Francisco), were co-sponsored by the National Park Service and the American Institute of Biological Sciences. The assumption of sponsorship by the Society brought with it an important broadening of the conference agenda. Henceforth, the conferences would include research related to cultural as well as natural resources —“anthropology through zoology,” as a 1982 Forum announcement put it.

The 1982 gathering, held in the Auditorium of the Main Interior Building in Washington, D.C., was a “Strategy Conference on the Protection of Cultural and Natural Re-

sources: A Research and Education Agenda for North America." As the first conference co-sponsored by the Society (with the U.S. National Park Service), addressing both cultural and natural subjects for the first time, it was a "feeler" for the way to go in future years. Proceedings from this conference are available only on microfiche from the National Technical Information Service.

In July 1986 the Society met at Colorado State University, Fort Collins. The conference was built around the theme of "The Interrelationship of Man and the Environment." The proceedings of this conference, in eight volumes, were published by the Society starting in 1988. Each paper given at this conference was published if the author wished it to be, which resulted in a bit more than the Society probably should have committed itself to. But it did.

Tucson was the scene of the 1988 conference, whose theme was "Parks and Neighbors: Maintaining Diversity Across Political Boundaries." A wide range of neighbors—private landowners, Federal-State, Nation-Nation—were discussed as well as a host of other subjects.

## The Future

To take us to the new century, a ten-year platform is being decided by our membership at the El Paso conference, November 12-17, this year. No doubt it will contain many ideas for specific things the Society can do to carry out our mission of promoting research and education.

But beyond this, there are some general goals the Society would like to meet in the coming years. One is to truly "internationalize" the dialogue in the Forum. It need hardly be said that challenges to parks and equivalent reserves are increasingly

becoming global in nature, if for no other reason than the prospect of worldwide, wrenching climate change. We are going to be actively soliciting submissions on international topics and are strongly encouraging authors to "deparochialize" their manuscripts. (Hence our fledgling attempts to make reference to the "USNPS" rather than "NPS" or "the Service.") In a similar vein, we are hoping to achieve more overseas distribution of the Forum, conference proceedings, and other Society occasional publications; currently, the Forum is sent gratis to all Canadian national parks and to a few individual overseas subscribers. And, of course, we want to get more members from other countries. Our next conference happens to fall in 1992—the year of the Columbus Quincentenary, the U.N.'s international development conference, and the fourth decennial World Conference on National Parks. These events serve to reinforce the increasingly multinational character of conservation efforts.

As Jean Matthews put it in a 1981 Forum editorial, there is a pervasive, though usually unstated, moral imperative running through our dialogue of the past ten years. The imperative is that there is a profound, solemn, and sometimes dire responsibility that comes with the evolutionary accident of human dominance over this planet. According to Matthews, one could couch this responsibility in terms of "caring," which makes it an invitation to action, or in terms of "consequences," which makes it a threat. The latter (a negative) begs resistance to the problem by nay-sayers; the invitation to action is the only way to which humankind has ever been known to react favorably. This is our hope. And this is our future.

# A LISTING OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE GEORGE WRIGHT SOCIETY, 1980-1990

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### **INCORPORATOR**

Robert M. Linn

### **INCORPORATING DIRECTORS**

Durward L. Allen

Vernon C. Gilbert

Albert G. Greene, Jr.

Robert M. Linn

Pamela Wright Lloyd

Harry W. Pfanz

Theodore W. Sudia

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### **SECRETARIES**

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John G. Dennis

Clay E. Peters

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Jean Matthews

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## **August 1989-December 1991**

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Jonathan W. Bayless

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Kheryn Klubnikin

Stephen D. Veirs, Jr.

### **FORUM EDITORS**

Jean Matthews

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### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Robert M. Linn

## **October 1990-**

### **DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

David M. Harmon



# THE GEORGE WRIGHT FORUM ♦ THE FIRST TEN YEARS

## VOLUME 1 • NUMBER 1

Editorial	i
George M. Wright 1904–1936	1
<i>Ben H. Thompson</i>	
Are the National Parks in Peril?	4
<i>Roland H. Wauer</i>	
Notes on Two Important Conferences	7
<i>Vernon C. Gilbert</i>	
Notes:	8
DC Chapter Meets	
Triennial Conference-1982	
The IRS and Us	
The GWS Logo	
Walter B. McDougall, 1883-1980	
James E. Cole, 1903-1981	
Charter Members	10
The Membership-A Status Report	11

## VOLUME 1 • NUMBER 2

Editorial	1
Historic Preservation-Facing a Crucial Choice. <i>Carl Abbott</i>	3
Comments on Carl Abbot's Article	4
<i>F. Ross Holland, Jr.</i>	
Ecosystem Responses to Acid Precipitation: Isle Royale National Park	6
<i>J. Robert Stottlemeyer</i>	
Report to Secretary of the Interior James G. Watt: A Review and Recommendations on Animal Problems and Related Management Needs in Units of the National Park System	9
<i>Durward L. Allen, Larry Erickson, E. Raymond Hall, and Walter M. Schirra</i>	
Chronology of Landmark Documents: Concerning Wildlife Resources of US National Parks	33
Long-Term Research: An Answer to When Are You Going to Quit?	35
<i>Rolf O. Peterson</i>	
Charter Members of The George Wright Society	39
Notes	40
Authors, References, Illustrations	41

## VOLUME 2 • NUMBER 1

Conference Announcement	ii
Society Election of Officers and Board Members	iii
Editorial: The Long Haul	1
A Voice from the Wilderness: about the Guest Editorial. <i>Jean Matthews</i>	2
Glacier National Park: An Island in a Sea of Development-A Guest Editorial. <i>Jack A. Stanford</i>	2
The Park Library: Rare Materials and Easy Marks. <i>Thomas W. Lucke</i>	6
The Conservation of Agricultural Land Resources: The Role of the American Farmland Trust. <i>Douglas P. Wheeler and Stephen F. Harper</i>	9
The Relevance of Carrying Capacity: To National Parks and the World	16
<i>Clay E. Peters</i>	
Domestic Tranquility and the National Park System: A Context for Human Ecology. <i>Theodore W. Sudia</i>	22
Evaluation of New Areas for the National Park System: The Great Basin Study	25
<i>Ronald W. Johnson</i>	
Conferences: Science is Stirring!	28
<i>Jean Matthews</i>	
Pseudoergocytes	29
<i>Neil J. Reid</i>	
Notes	30
Sigurd F. Olson, 1899–1982	33
New Members	34
Authors, Illustrations	34

## VOLUME 2 • NUMBER 2

Editorial	1
Letters and Commentary	4
Computers and the Field Research Station. <i>J. Robert Stottlemeyer</i>	9
A Computerized Flora of the National Parks. <i>James P. Bennett</i>	14
Computers and Land Conservation	17
<i>Larry E. Stein</i>	
Resource Information Tracking System (RITS). <i>Roland H. Wauer</i>	22

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum	25	Making Nature Whole: Fifty Years of Ecosystem Restoration at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum <i>William Jordan, III</i>	35
Planning: An Arid Land Case <i>Perry J. Brown &amp; Michael J. Manfredo</i>		Historic Maritime Resources	43
Computer Notes	34	<i>J. Revell Carr</i>	
New Members	41	Isle Royale's Submerged Resource	52
Program for the Triennial Conference	13	<i>Bruce E. Weber</i>	
Triennial Election of Officers and Board Members	16	Announcements	55
		The 19 October 1982 George Wright Society Election Results Olympic Wild Fish Conference, March 24–26, 1983	
		Nicholas Louis Scrattish, 1942–1982	56
<b>VOLUME 2 • NUMBER 3</b>		<b>VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 1</b>	
Editorial	1	Editor's Note	1
Letters and Commentary	3	Agricultural Ecosystems	2
Regional History and the National Parks: In The Great Lakes Area <i>Arthur F. McEvoy</i>	4	<i>Douglas P. Wheeler</i>	
Indians and the National Parks: Of The Great Lakes <i>H. Paul Friesema with Sarah J. Friesema</i>	9	Protecting Rural Cultural Landscapes: Finding Value in the Countryside	15
Carrying Capacity: In Great Lakes National Parks. <i>Thomas A. Heberlein</i>	15	<i>Robert Z. Melnick</i>	
The Role of Science In The Great Lakes National Parks. <i>Mark Reshkin</i>	18	Rehabilitated Historical Properties	31
Air Pollution Threats to National Parks: In The Great Lakes Region <i>T.V. Armentano &amp; O. L. Loucks</i>	23	<i>H. Ward Jandl</i>	
The National Park Service: In Law Reviews and Law Journals <i>Thomas W. Lucke</i>	36	Upper Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River: A Process to Protect a Rural Landscape <i>Richard V. Giamberdine, Lawrence E. Beal, Keith B. Dunbar &amp; Ronald W. Johnson</i>	42
Cultural Resource Management's Role: In The New Areas Study Process <i>Ronald W. Johnson</i>	40	Creole Defined in an Ethnohistorical Context: Jean Lafitte National Hist- orical Park. <i>Larry Van Horn</i>	50
New Members	44	Natt Noyes Dodge: 1900–1982	52
Reviews	45		
<b>VOLUME 2 • NUMBER 4</b>		<b>VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 2</b>	
Editorial	1	Historic Archaeology: And Reshaping the Myths of American Origins <i>Mark P. Leone</i>	1
Recommendations from the Conference Workshops:	2	M A B and Its Biosphere Reserves	17
Cultural Resources	2	Project: A New Dimension in Global Conservation. <i>William P. Gregg, Jr.</i>	
Natural Resources	4	Technology, Environment, and the Historic American Engineering Record. <i>Donald C. Jackson</i>	32
The US National Park System's Cultural Resources <i>F. Ross Holland, Jr.</i>	8	A Curious Finding: From National Park Service Anthropology <i>Lawrence F. Van Horn</i>	37
Barrier Beaches: Special Management Problems. <i>Paul J. Godfrey</i>	12	Review: Extinction	38
Will the Real Archeology Please Stand UP? Comments on the Status of American Archeology, ca AD 1982 <i>W. James Judge</i>	17		

Society Notes	40	Urban Soils of Washington, DC	15
<b>VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 3</b>		<i>John R. Short &amp; James C. Patterson</i>	
Editorial	1	Natural Resources Management: Trend	24
A Data Base Management System: for	2	or Fad? <i>Roland H. Wauer</i>	
Cultural Resource Managers		Extinct Carnivores Entombed in 20	29
<i>Frances Joan Mathien &amp; W.</i>		Million Year Old Dens & Agate	
<i>James Judge</i>		Fossil Beds National Monument,	
Report on the International Working	16	Nebraska. <i>Robert Hunt</i>	
Conference: New Directions for		Review: <i>Ecological Conditions in Na-</i>	40
Conservation of Parks		<i>tional Forests and in National</i>	
<i>Roland H. Wauer</i>		<i>Parks</i> , by C.C. Adams, 1925.	
Cooperative Regional Demonstration	32	<i>J. Robert Stottlemeyer</i>	
Projects: Environmental Education		Society Notes	43
in Practice. <i>Vernon C. Gilbert</i>		<b>VOLUME 4 • NUMBER 2</b>	
The National Park Service in Law	40	National Parks and Foreign Affairs	1
Reviews and Law Journals: an		<i>Theodore W. Sudia</i>	
Update. <i>Thomas W. Lucke</i>		The National Park Service in Law	6
An Outdoor Laboratory: The Indiana	42	Reviews and Law Journals: A	
Dunes. <i>Florence Broady</i>		Second Update. <i>Thomas W. Lucke</i>	
Park Superintendent Responds: to	46	Promoting the Development and Adop-	13
"Acid Rain" Article. <i>Doyle Kline</i>		tion of Environmental Ethics	
Reviews	49	<i>J. Ronald Engel</i> , with an introduc-	
Aldo Starker Leopold: 1913-1983	53	tion by <i>William E. Brown</i>	
<i>Bruce M. Kilgore</i>		Reviews:	35
<b>VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 4</b>		America's National Parks and Their	
Editorial	1	Keepers, by R.A. Foresta. 1984.	
Biological Research and Management	3	Reviewed by <i>Robert Stottlemeyer</i>	
in the National Park Service: A History		Analyzing Activity Areas: An Ethno-	
<i>Lowell Sumner</i>		archaeological Study of the Use of	
Get the Facts, and Put Them to Work:	28	Space, by Susan Kent. 1984.	
Comprehensive Natural History		Reviewed by <i>Larry Van Horn</i>	
Research Program for the National		Society Notes	41
Parks. <i>Howard R. Stagner</i>		<b>VOLUME 4 • NUMBER 3</b>	
Research in the National Parks	39	The Paradox of Repeating Error:	1
<i>Horace M. Albright</i>		Yellowstone National Park from 1872	
Rationalizing Management of Natural	48	to Biosphere Reserve and Beyond	
Areas in National Parks		<i>Robert D. Barbee &amp; John D. Varley</i>	
<i>David M. Graber</i>		Managing for Uncertainty: National	4
Non-Ecological Principles for Park	57	Parks as Ecological Reserves	
Management. <i>Rick Smith</i>		<i>David M. Graber</i>	
A Few Convictions. <i>T. Destry Jarvis</i>	58	From Grizzlies to Geysers: Science	7
<b>VOLUME 4 • NUMBER 1</b>		Challenges Tradition in Yellowstone	
Vestal Fires and Virgin Lands: A	1	National Park. <i>Robert D. Barbee &amp;</i>	
Historical Perspective on Fire and		<i>John D. Varley</i>	
Wilderness. <i>Stephen J. Pyne</i>		Building a Science Program for the	12
Western Parks and the American	13	National Park System	
Character. <i>William E. Brown</i>		<i>John G. Dennis</i>	

The Philosophical Basis for National Park Management <i>Brian C. Kenner</i>	22
Society Notes	38

#### **VOLUME 4 • NUMBER 4**

George M. Wright: 1904-1936 <i>Ben H. Thompson</i>	1
The Changing Role of Protected Areas in Planning and Development <i>Joanne Michalovic</i>	5
The National Park Service in Law Reviews and Law Journals: A Third Update. <i>Thomas W. Lucke</i>	15
National Parks and Domestic Affairs <i>Theodore W. Sudia</i>	19
1986 Conference on Science in the National Parks, July 13-18, Fort Collins, Colorado	27
The George Wright Society Triennial Election Results	30

#### **VOLUME 5 • NUMBER 1**

Digressions	1
Animal Life in the Yosemite <i>Joseph Grinnell &amp; Tracy Irwin Storer</i>	2
Grizzly Country <i>Theodore W. Sudia</i>	10
The National Park Service in Law Reviews and Law Journals: A Fourth Update. <i>Thomas W. Lucke</i>	14
700-Year-Old Ceramic Pot Discovered at Isle Royale National Park <i>Bruce Weber</i>	18
A Needs Assessment-Based Review of the National Park Service Science Program in the Rocky Mountain Region. <i>Katherine P. Kitchell</i> With Reviews by: <i>William E. Brown &amp; J. Robert Stottlemeyer</i>	21
Brief Note on Mrs. J. Robert Shuman <i>Ben H. Thompson</i>	27
Society Notes	28

#### **VOLUME 5 • NUMBER 2**

The Bicentennial of the Constitution and the Alaska Lands Settlement <i>William E. Brown</i>	1
The "Leopold Report" Revisited: "A Sense of the Meeting." <i>David</i>	4

<i>M. Graber</i> ; Preamble Grist <i>William E. Brown</i>	23
National Park System Advisory Board Report: "Overcrowding in the National Parks." <i>George Barley &amp; S. J. DiMeglio</i> , with <i>Priscilla R. Baker</i>	26
National Park System Advisory Board Questionnaire on Overcrowding in the Parks	31
New Options for Park Protection <i>Robert H. Gartner &amp; Theodore W. Sudia</i>	38
Notices	38
Thomas William Lucke, 1940-1987	38

#### **VOLUME 5 • NUMBER 3**

Announcing: Proceeding from the 1986 Conference	i
Announcing: Plans for the November 1988 Conference on Research in the National Parks and Equivalent Reserves. <i>R. Roy Johnson</i>	ii
The Future of Science in the National Parks: Positive Directions, New Opportunities. <i>Raymond Herrmann</i>	1
Development of Significant Cultural Resources to Promote Economic Revitalization: A Case Study in Western Pennsylvania <i>Ronald W. Johnson</i>	13
Economic Values of Wildlife and Fisheries: What Importance are Those Values in Decision-Making? <i>Al Lovaas</i>	29
Review: "El Niño in the Galapagos Islands: The 1982-1983 Event" by <i>Gary Robinson &amp; Eugenia M. del Pino</i> . Reviewed by <i>Lloyd L. Loope</i>	33
Letters and Notes <i>Javier G. Perez Calvo</i>	37

#### **VOLUME 5 • NUMBER 4**

Society Notes	iii
Remarks by <i>William Penn Mott, Jr.</i> at the Fourteenth Annual Natural Areas Conference	1



The National Park Service in the Temporary Society: Creating a Learning Agency. <i>Richard Greenough &amp; J. Douglas Wellman</i>	7
The Mission and The Function and Structure of the U.S. National Park Service. <i>Theodore W. Sudia</i>	19
The Politics of Community Resource Management. <i>Robert L. Arnberger</i>	35
Northern and Remote Parks: Development, Management and Impacts. <i>Chip Dennerlein</i>	45
The Role of Research in Wilderness. <i>David M. Graber</i>	55
Preliminary Schedule of Activities: Third Triennial Membership Meeting and Fifth Triennial Conference	60

### VOLUME 6 • NUMBER 1

Preface	1
Values and Purposes of The National Park System. <i>William E. Brown</i>	2
Wolves Approach Extinction on Isle Royale: A Biological and Policy Conundrum. <i>Rolf O. Peterson &amp; Robert J. Krumenaker</i>	10
Remarks of <i>George B. Hartzog, Jr.</i> at the Fifth Triennial Conference of The George Wright Society	16
The Role of the National Park Service in American Education. <i>Alston Chase</i>	24
Some Comments on Natural Resources Management. <i>Al Lovaas</i>	31
Global Ethic: Fostering Parks in America. <i>J. Hauptmann, James Donoghue &amp; Theodore W. Sudia</i>	35
National Parks in the 21st Century. <i>Theodore W. Sudia</i>	38
Feral Fish and Kayak Tracks: Thoughts on the Writing of a New Leopold Report. <i>Paul Schullery</i>	41
Society Notes	47

### VOLUME 6 • NUMBER 2

Culture, Science, Nature...and the Beringian Connection. <i>William E. Brown</i>	1
First Asian School on Conservation Biology: A Trip Report	7

<i>Cat Hawkins</i>	
The Appalachian National Scenic Trail: A Neverending Story. <i>Pamela Underhill</i>	13
Tandem Tracking for Research and Resource Management. <i>Charles L. Douglas</i>	21
Functions of Natural Science Research in National Parks. <i>Gary E. Davis</i>	26
Let's Bet the Ranch and Learn the Game. <i>David A. Mihalic</i>	32
Evaluating Science in the National Park Service. <i>Theodore W. Sudia &amp; Nicholas J. Chura</i>	37
Society News	50
Triennial Election Results	
1990: 6th Conference on Research in the National Parks and Equivalent Reserves	

### VOLUME 6 • NUMBER 3

The 1990 Conference El Paso Where, When and What—and a First Call for Papers	1
The Longing of the Lodgepole Pine. <i>Daniel Grego</i>	3
Prescribed Burning Opportunities in National Parks of the Northeastern United States. <i>William A. Patterson &amp; Mary K. Foley</i>	4
Introduction to the Role and Effect of Fire in Greater Yellowstone. <i>Dan E. Huff</i>	12
The Story Itself: Lessons and Hopes from the Yellowstone Fire Media Event. <i>Paul Schullery</i>	17
The National Parks: Political Versus Professional Determinants of Policy. <i>John Freemuth</i>	26
Potpourri	11 and 38
Society Notes and Notices	39

### VOLUME 6 • NUMBER 4

Planning for Global Climate Change Research: An Example from Sequoia-Kings Canyon. <i>David J. Parsons, David M. Graber &amp; Nathan L. Stephenson</i>	1
--	---

Regional Conservation Management Relative to NPS Policy and the Conservation Ethic <i>Stephen C. Nodvin</i>	10
Social Morality and Resource Use <i>Durward L. Allen</i>	16
Remembering Lowell Sumner <i>M. Sumner, G. Collins, G. Sprugel, O. L. Wallis, R. Linn</i>	36
Arctic Grizzly...A Time in the 1950s <i>Lowell Sumner</i>	39
Society News, Notes & Mail	43
<b>VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 1</b>	
Translating Scientific Information into Park Management at the Operational Level. <i>Susan L. Consolo</i>	2

A Future for the Everglades <i>Robert L. Arnberger</i>	8
Citizen Mobilization in the Fight to Save the Golden Gate Eucalyptus <i>Judd A. Howell</i>	18
Hunting in the National Park System <i>Al Lovaas</i>	28
The Stanley A. Cain Papers: -Of Museums, Parks, and the Many Interests of the Public -Some Research Needs of the National Park Service	32
Agenda for the El Paso Conference	39
Society News, Notes & Mail	53



# Membership in the Society

The George Wright Society was founded August 18, 1980. It is chartered in the State of Delaware, in accordance with the laws of the State of Delaware and of the United States of America, as a nonprofit educational and scientific organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and maintenance of cultural and natural parks and reserves through research and education.

Membership is open to those who are "interested in promoting the application of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom to the management of the resources of natural and cultural parks, sites, and equivalent reserves." Annual dues are: Regular Member, \$25; Student Member, \$15; Sustaining Member, \$500. Life Memberships are \$250. Annual subscription rates to The George Wright Forum only (without membership in the Society) are: Libraries, \$25; Individuals, \$20. Dues, contributions, and subscriptions are tax-deductible for US citizens.

## Materials Submitted for Publication

The editorial board welcomes articles that bear importantly on the objectives of the Society—promoting the application of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom to policy making, planning, management, and interpretation of the resources of natural and cultural parks, sites, and equivalent reserves around the world. The Forum is distributed internationally; submissions should minimize provincialism and aim to broaden international aspects and application.

**Language of Submission** Current readership is primarily English-speaking, but submissions in other languages will be considered; in such cases an English summary should be prepared.

**Form of Submission** We strongly urge authors to submit articles on computer disk. This eliminates troublesome re-keying. Almost any Apple Macintosh disk can be read in its original format (please indicate the version of the software). Otherwise, send an ASCII-file disk; both 3.5" and 5.25" double-density formats are acceptable. (No high-density disks, please.) A double-spaced manuscript must accompany all submissions in case there are compatibility problems.

**Style** The Forum contains articles in varied fields: history, geology, botany, zoology, archeology, management, etc. Please follow your field's conventions for citations, bibliographies, and so on. Normally these various styles will be retained in the Forum.

**Illustrations** Submit line drawings, charts, and graphs as nearly "camera-ready" as possible. If submitted in a size that exceeds the Forum's page dimensions, please make sure the reduction will still be legible. The preferable form for photographs is black-and-white (matte or glossy) prints. Medium contrast makes for better reproduction. Color prints and slides may not reproduce as well, but are acceptable. Half-tones from newspapers and magazines should be avoided if at all possible. Please secure copyright permissions as needed.

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