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Park, Forest, and Wilderness

Over the last 150 years, various levels of government in the USA have set aside and managed public lands according to various landscape ideals, including “park,” “forest,” and “wilderness.” Although often confused, each of these intellectual models implied different land management policies, usually backed by different constituencies. Above all, each ideal accurately reflected values specific to the time and circumstances that brought it about. Shifts in national attitudes towards public land management revealed changing perceptions of society’s desired relationship to the natural world. Landscape ideals were in this sense civic ideals, serving to define the essential character of American society through its relationship to a “nature” which was to be managed, exploited, enjoyed, glorified, or left alone, depending on the ideals espoused. This history may of particular interest today, during an era in which various new ideals of landscape management are struggling to be born.

The American “park” arose in the 19th century as an agent of environmental reform, and in the process it became public art in the most profound sense. The 1830s and 1840s were a period of city-building, not unlike our own of the last several decades, that defied precedent in the pace and scale of urbanization. By mid-century, vast grids of new streets were built up around New York, Baltimore, Chicago, and dozens of other cities. Within a space of a generation, entire populations were separated for the first time from any direct access to expanses of open space. The park was advocated, under these circumstances, as an instrument of “preservation,” in the sense that municipal governments were urged to acquire certain places and preserve them from

the direct effects of this geographic modernization. Preservation as a public park, however, has always implied a transformation; preserving landscapes has never been a passive act. In New York’s Central Park, for example, lakes were excavated and greenswards were graded in order to transform mere land into landscape, and a place into a park. Such “improvements,” though, were only part of the project. Just as significantly, other portions of the park site were left unaltered except for the additions of carriage drives and paths. In the northern, less-disturbed portion, the existing landscape character of the park site was to be “interfered with” as little as possible, according to the park’s designers (Beveridge and Schuyler 1983, 119). Dense woods,

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rock outcrops, and scenic views made the landscape picturesque, and required little alteration or improvement. These areas today remain among the few places in which the pre-industrial character of Manhattan Island can still be experienced.

Central Park successfully conflated the ideas of "improvement" and "preservation," and in the process became an embodiment of 19th-century civic ideals: a living representation of the physical health and mental well-being many felt the industrial city had removed from everyday life. Park-making was thereafter established in the USA as an integral and mitigating aspect of modernization. The large landscape park secured more healthful and feasible civic forms for an evermore industrialized, urbanized republic. As a work of public art, the park landscape could be emotionally appreciated according to the conventions of picturesque aesthetics; iconographically it expressed a conviction that the modernization of the nation could continue without losing values and experiences deemed essential to human happiness. It was in parks that Americans demonstrated the ability (or inability) to come together as a diverse community, unified by certain shared values. It was in parks that we constructed civic models (in the form of roads, buildings, or other facilities) that attempted to recapture an imagined, pre-modern relationship between society and nature, by estab-

lishing a human presence that once again "harmonized" with its landscape setting.

The ideology of the 19th-century landscape park was not limited to the urban scale or the context of municipal government. In 1864, Congress granted the Yosemite Valley to California, provided that the state government maintain public ownership in perpetuity for the purposes of "public use, resort, and recreation." The state was also charged with the "preservation and improvement" of the valley, a mandate at the heart of the park idea. If later characterized as a contradiction, the mandate to both preserve Yosemite Valley and make it accessible to the public made perfect sense to 19th-century park advocates. The great theorist of both Central Park and Yosemite Valley was Frederick Law Olmsted, who advanced the park idea in both cases. Olmsted considered access to scenic areas a requirement for human happiness. In 1865 he therefore described "improving" Yosemite Valley as a park as "a political duty of grave importance," because unless government acted to make places like Yosemite Valley available to the many, the benefits of experiencing scenic beauty would inevitably be monopolized by the few (Tolson 1993, 64; Ranney 1992, 488-516). The republic that had recently been preserved at such bitter cost would therefore have failed in its most basic obligation to its citizens: to maintain opportunities for

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all members of society to pursue and achieve happiness.

For Olmsted, public enjoyment provided the ultimate purpose and rationale for landscape preservation, whether at Central Park or Yosemite Valley. Preservation of a place, and the public's use of the place, were part of the same landscape ideal. "Preservation and improvement" were therefore a single undertaking, as the Yosemite legislation suggests. For Olmsted, the landscape park allowed individuals a "sense of enlarged freedom," while allowing groups to come together on common ground, "unembarrassed" by their different economic conditions or ethnic origins (Olmsted and Vaux 1967 [1866], 98-102). Olmsted's park (ideally) was a populated and tolerant landscape, in which a rapidly diversifying society assembled and affirmed commonly held values, above all the value of preserving and appreciating "natural" scenery. Landscape preservation was justified, ultimately, as a means to preserve society itself.

The theory described by Olmsted shaped a generation of intensive park-making in the USA by municipal, state, and federal governments. But the park was not the only landscape ideal to come out of the decades following the Civil War. The public "forest" was also advocated as an alternative to the park for the management of larger state reservations and, above all, for federal

lands in western states. Park and forest advocates were at first natural allies and pursued many of the same goals. In 1883, for example, the New York State legislature created the Adirondack Forest Preserve in order to both preserve scenery and protect watersheds and water flows vital to commercial shipping. Charles Sprague Sargent, who was both a silviculturist and a landscape designer, helped draft the 1885 legislation that dictated the preserve should "be forever kept as wild forest lands" (Donaldson 1963 [1921]). In California, Sequoia and Yosemite national parks were created by Congress in 1890, again in large part out of a desire to protect watersheds from rapacious logging and grazing. Irrigationists in the San Joaquin Valley depended on seasonal water flows from the Sierra Nevada, and other economic interests, in turn, depended on the farmers. The result was the creation of vast parks in the mountains (Sequoia and Yosemite national parks) and an end to most logging and grazing within their boundaries (Dilsaver and Tweed 1990, 62-73).

But after 1891 park legislation was no longer the only means to limit logging and protect watersheds, at least on federal lands. That year Congress passed the Forest Reserve Act, which allowed the president to simply declare "public reservations" on any forested land in the public domain. Within 20 years, four

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presidents had declared 150 million acres of federal forest reserves (later renamed national forests). If at first it was unclear how national forests would differ from national parks, in 1897 Congress officially opened the forests to timber sales, grazing, and other commercial development. In 1898, Gifford Pinchot arrived at the Division of Forestry (a bureau of the Department of Agriculture), and his influence grew steadily, especially once Theodore Roosevelt became president. In the first decade of the new century, Roosevelt and Pinchot enlisted the political support of western stockmen and irrigationists, who favored policies that defined national forests in terms of multiple economic use (even if such use involved fees and permits), rather than as vast parks. The policy of multiple use relied on the fact that, if properly regulated, logging and grazing could continue in the forests without threatening seasonal water flows. In 1905, jurisdiction over the forest reserves was transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Division of Forestry (renamed the U.S. Forest Service), where Pinchot had complete control over their management (Steen 1991, 26-27; Williams 1989, 403-415).

For Roosevelt and Pinchot, the national forest was a landscape that embodied the ideals of Progressive Era "conservation." Once millions of mostly mountainous, forested acres were retained in the public domain as

national forests, scientists working for the federal government (including foresters, reclamation engineers, and biologists) could control the exploitation of timber, water, and grass. It was felt that scientific forestry, hydraulic engineering, and "game management" could define sustainable practices and assure perpetual yields of products. Objective science was to replace the venality and graft that had been the basis of federal land management for too long. Science also took precedence over the aesthetic concerns of scenic preservationists. For Pinchot, locking up resources in vast parks made as little sense as leaving them to be destroyed by robber barons. Pinchot felt that the park idea was obsolete, or at least it should be limited to "city parks," which he felt had nothing to do with western land management. National parks, he felt, should be transferred from the Department of the Interior to his agency, where they also could be managed essentially as national forests, free of "sentimental nonsense." Dam construction, grazing, and logging would then be permitted in national parks as well as forests, effectively eliminating any distinction between the two.

The reaction to this threat among scenic preservationists and park advocates resulted in the creation of the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior in 1916. Congress established this new agency to manage the national parks specifi-

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cally as parks. This implied a mandate, again, to “preserve and improve” the parks, or, as it was stated in the Park Service organic legislation, to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same,” with an additional reminder to do this in a manner that would leave the parks “unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (Tolson 1933, 9-10). This language has often been described as a “dual mandate.” But again, preservation and improvement were indivisible parts of one undertaking: the conceptual and physical transformation of land into landscape, and place into park. Although science certainly had a role in this transformation, at its heart it remained an artistic process of designing roads, trails, and other conveniences that allowed a large and diverse public to visit a place without degrading its visual character or the quality of the aesthetic, emotional experience it offered. Park advocates such as Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Horace J. McFarland, described “park development” as the only appropriate form of exploitation for national parks, which they emphatically differentiated from the national forests.

Over the next several decades, NPS landscape architects and planners developed the “rustic” identity of national park architecture and facilities, which has since become so

strongly linked in the public’s imagination with the experience of scenery and the appreciation of nature itself. The forest, however, remained a powerful, alternate landscape ideal: the symbol of Progressive government by disinterested scientists and other experts. But the enormous popularity of national and state parks in the 1920s and 1930s disproved Pinchot’s conceit that the park no longer had a place in the management of large tracts of public land. During Franklin Roosevelt’s administration, only highway construction drew a larger share of New Deal largesse than new park development. In addition to the expansion of the National Park System, hundreds of state and municipal parks were established. In one indication of shifting priorities, Roosevelt’s secretary of the interior, Harold L. Ickes, pressed to have jurisdiction over the national forests transferred back to the Department of the Interior, where, presumably, they could be managed more like parks, with an emphasis in favor of recreational uses over extractive industries.

But new controversies also swirled around the park idea during the 1930s, and a new landscape model was espoused by preservationists who felt strongly that neither the park nor the forest reflected their ideal of preservation in an era of ever-intensifying urbanization. Robert Sterling Yard at the National Parks Association, Robert Marshall at the Wilderness Society, Arthur Newton Pack at the

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American Nature Association, and Rosalie Edge at the Emergency Conservation Council, among others, decried what they saw as overuse of national parks. The true mandate of the Park Service, they felt, was preserving the integrity of "primeval wilderness," not facilitating automotive camping, hiking, skiing, or any of the other increasingly popular activities described as "outdoor recreation." In practice this meant finding a way to reduce the number of people and automobiles in parks, not developing frontcountry landscapes to further accommodate them. In 1936, the National Parks Association and a coalition of other groups suggested designating the larger, western parks as a "National Primeval Park System," since they felt the standards for "the original system" had been diluted as NPS diversified its activities and pursued recreational planning as well as the development of new "national recreation areas" and historical parks (Miles 1995, 148-149).

By the end of the decade, a growing number of critics were accusing the Park Service of abandoning its traditional mandate to preserve natural areas unimpaired. But definitions of both "preservation" and of "natural" were shifting. If anything, NPS was in fact clinging too stubbornly to the traditional theory and practice of park-making that had guided its actions since 1916. The new "wilderness" advocates were not demanding a return to a traditional

role for the Park Service as much as the adoption of new models and policies. These proto-environmentalists were advocating a new landscape ideal—wilderness—that embodied the notion that preservation should be for its own sake, not for the sake of efficient multiple use (forests) or for the sake of public enjoyment of nature (parks). For wilderness advocates, public enjoyment could be just as destructive as logging or mining, especially if access by automobile were involved.

By the late 1920s, both the Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service had already established administrative "wilderness" designations for certain areas. At the Park Service, wilderness designations came about as part of the "master planning" process developed by chief landscape architect Thomas C. Vint in the late 1920s. Vint supported the "protective attitude toward wilderness values" that he observed growing already by that time, but he also felt that his mandate "included the words 'for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.'" If public access were not necessary, he noted, his job would be considerably simplified: "The development plan [of the park] could be limited to the construction of an effective barrier around the boundary. The administration would not need to go beyond an adequate control to prevent trespass." The master plans drawn up by Vint and his colleagues typically restricted

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development in a park to a narrow road corridor. Outside of these "developed areas," the plans usually zoned the remaining areas of the park as "wilderness," a designation that did not preclude trails, ranger cabins, and immediately adjacent roads and trailheads. The plans also employed a more restrictive (and more controversial) zone, the "research area," that limited access of any type. Such administrative designations were subject to change periodically as park master plans were revised, and they did not exclude park "wilderness" from parkwide management policies (including predator extermination and fire suppression) that could have major environmental implications. Nevertheless, national park master plans became a vital means not only of planning and designing developed areas, but of limiting their extent (Vint 1938, 69-71; see also Tweed 1980, 8-10).

If conflicting definitions of wilderness were already apparent in the 1930s, the controversy intensified during the post-war period as pressures on public lands increased. In the early 1950s, when the Bureau of Reclamation proposed a major dam for the Echo Park area of Dinosaur National Monument, the Park Service failed to condemn the idea forcefully enough at the outset (although NPS Director Newton B. Drury was fired in 1951 largely because of his opposition to the dam).

The dam was later defeated, not by the Park Service, but by a new coalition of private non-profit organizations, including the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society, and their allies in Congress (see Harvey 1994). Recreational pressures on public lands also increased dramatically in the post-war years, and NPS Director Conrad L. Wirth, and his chief planner, Vint, felt an obligation to modernize the park system and make it functional in the context of post-war society. By the early 1950s, unprecedented millions of visitors were arriving in the parks, virtually all in their own cars. Roads, campgrounds, and sanitary facilities were overrun, and park superintendents lacked the staff and basic facilities to meet the increased demand for services. In 1956 Wirth unveiled his plans for "Mission 66," a ten-year program designed to convince Congress to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on road widenings, parking lots, and visitor centers, as well as housing and training for new park staff. Congress responded with everything Wirth asked for, and initially Mission 66 was hailed as a great success (Wirth 1980, 237-284).

But for wilderness advocates, the Park Service could no longer be relied on to limit recreational development in national parks any more than they could be counted on to stop federal dam construction at Dinosaur. These early environ-

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mentalists built up their organizations and exploited growing influence in Congress to advance their own preservation agenda. Often led by David R. Brower, executive director of the Sierra Club, wilderness advocates almost immediately questioned why Mission 66 placed such a high priority on new construction, as opposed to some other means of preservation. For this new generation of advocates, "preservation and improvement" of national parks no longer seemed a feasible goal, since "improvement" implied "wilderness" would be compromised in the bargain.

But neither NPS planners nor wilderness advocates really addressed the inherent contradiction between the concept of a public park, an area defined by public access to natural beauty, and the new ideal of wilderness, which advocates described in terms of the absence of any sign of human activity. The Echo Park controversy had presaged conflict between the new environmentalists and the Park Service, and Mission 66 exacerbated the controversy. Wirth and his cadre of park planners and managers could not accept a definition of "park" that excluded the frontcountry development that made public access convenient. They felt the backcountry was wilderness enough (and would be protected adequately), and that developed areas should continue to be redeveloped as necessary to meet

increased demand. Environmentalists, for their part, could not accept a definition of "park" that, for whatever reason, continued to allow road widenings, motel construction, and ever growing numbers of visitors and their cars (even if they were limited to existing frontcountry areas). They felt that backcountry wilderness, under such pressures, would never be protected enough, and that the money would be better spent on scientific research to more fully understand ecological systems. Scenery might be preserved through traditional park management; but the ecology of biological systems would continue to be degraded in ways that were not necessarily evident to non-scientists.

Faced with the destructive force of what Aldo Leopold called "mechanized recreation," and which Edward Abbey later described as "Industrial Tourism," by the 1950s wilderness advocates had abandoned what had been the central theory of park making: that preservation could be achieved through planned development for public access and appreciation (Leopold 1970 [1949], 269-272; Abbey 1970 [1968], 45-67). Wilderness advocates, especially Howard C. Zahniser at the Wilderness Society, bypassed NPS and lobbied Congress directly to pass legislation that would allow legal designation of "wilderness" that would not be subject to the administrative discretion of federal

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agencies. For Zahniser and other advocates, wilderness was defined as an area “retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements,” where “man himself is a visitor who does not remain” (Dilsaver 1994, 277-286, citing the Wilderness Act of 1964). The Park Service, recognizing perhaps the difference between this definition and its own, opposed the wilderness legislation. But by this point the new landscape ideal had captured the public imagination—along with considerable political backing—and Congress passed the Wilderness Act in 1964. Over the next 30 years, Congress went on to designate almost 100 million acres of wilderness out of the nation’s public lands, mainly in national forests, but also in the backcountry of many national parks.

Although the national park has always evoked “wilderness” in the public imagination, Congress defined the new, official wilderness in almost the opposite terms: as scenic areas to be kept inaccessible to the public (wilderness) as opposed to areas to be made accessible to the public (parks). The basic theory of post-war wilderness, in fact, did not belong to the tradition of park-making that had guided the creation of the National Park System, as well as state and local parks, up to that point. The idea of wilderness had not been developed by landscape designers, regional planners, or for that matter, scientists.

The postwar landscape ideal of wilderness derived from the poetic and literary traditions of Richard Payne Knight, Wordsworth, Thoreau, John Muir, and Aldo Leopold. Firmly rooted in the Romantic preference for rugged, uncontrived beauty, the landscape model of wilderness implied there should be no land management at all—that nature should be free from any human “improvement” in order to preserve its more authentic, more “natural” form.

Advocates insisted that wilderness should be managed according to scientific principles, but wilderness itself was not a scientific idea. Historians of the wilderness movement have emphasized the literary development of the concept (Huth 1990; Nash 1982). Some leading figures of the movement, such as Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson, were indeed scientists, but even they are remembered for their writing and their activism, not their scientific research. Science, in fact, suggests the wilderness ideal was fairly problematic in terms of its official (i.e., Wilderness Act) definition. The impacts of early Native American land management practices, for example, as well as the effects of induced changes in the make-up and numbers of wildlife populations, suggest that few landscapes in North America have, historically, escaped some level of human influence. Fire suppression, insect extermination,

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and predator poisoning are more recent examples of widespread disturbances that have affected landscapes later designated as wilderness. In many cases, in fact, disturbed natural systems and relationships must be repaired or restored in order to successfully “preserve wilderness,” and so some level of human “improvement” is necessary after all (Jordan 1994; Cronon 1995).

The landscape ideal of wilderness also implied a profoundly different civic model than that of the park. Since Olmsted’s day, American landscape ideals have been closely allied with new urban and regional planning proposals. The development of municipal park systems, for example, was the earliest form of American city planning. Regional and national parks were designed as ideal expressions of how society and nature could be brought together in unified “harmony.” But wilderness was defined in terms of keeping society and nature apart, and the urban form most closely linked to wilderness is the private world of expansive, post-war subdivisions. The wilderness movement flourished as vast subdivisions were developed around almost every American city. The new suburbs sought to provide pleasant views, as well as private outdoor settings for picnicking, lawn games, swimming pools, and even playground equipment. Families that had lived in urban row houses needed

the amenities of developed public parks; once ensconced in large, private residential landscapes, their taste for communal recreation withered.

Like the subdivision, wilderness was a private landscape in the sense that it was experienced individually, or as part of a small, self-selected group. Designated out of public lands, wilderness nevertheless was not a landscape in which a large and diverse group (the “public”) was expected to appear. Activities in wilderness—presumably limited to hiking, mountaineering, and a few other pursuits—usually were taken up by relatively few members of a narrow demographic group. In its social dimension, at least, wilderness echoed the exclusivity and privacy that made new, low-density suburbs popular among the middle class during the same period. Wilderness met a desperate need to preserve remaining natural areas from any form of exploitation (including recreation) at a critical time. But wilderness could never serve, as the park had, to assemble a diverse society in a mutual confirmation of commonly held values. As the landscape ideal of post-war America, wilderness reflected, like the subdivision and the corporate park, the general preference of a more affluent society for more private space.

There are, as environmental historian William Cronon has

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recently noted, troubling aspects to the wilderness ideal. Which is not to say that many more millions of acres of public land should not be designated as wilderness. Such legislation has been a vital and successful instrument of landscape preservation for almost 40 years and should continue to be aggressively employed. The trouble arises when we do not also recognize the continued necessity and viability of other landscape ideals, including the park and forest, which should be, with wilderness, mutually reinforcing models for land management. Recognizing the different, sometimes conflicting goals of American landscape ideals perhaps can help clarify current public land controversies and begin to answer the question: Where is the American park headed in the next century?

For over 150 years now, the American park movement has helped ensure that the general public would continue to have the opportunity to appreciate and enjoy scenic beauty. In the 1850s, this meant making municipal landscape parks at the edges of expanding urban grids to prevent people from being cut off from easy access to open ground and landscape scenery. Our situation today is comparable. The vast, low-density cities we have built over the last half-century may seem different from the endless urban grids of 19th-century row houses, but in one sense they are having a similar effect: sprawling de-

velopment is eliminating convenient, meaningful access to the nearby natural world. The designation of millions of acres of official wilderness has been an unparalleled achievement, but meaningful experiences of nearby natural landscapes (that do not qualify as wilderness) have become harder and harder to come by. And when public landscapes are visited, their condition—whether an abandoned city park, an overexploited forest or grassland, or an overcrowded national park frontcountry—suggests a civic vision in crisis.

Nowhere is the problem more evident than in our larger and more popular national parks, such as Yosemite. Despite sometimes grievously overcrowded frontcountry facilities, the parks are not really being “loved to death.” Although there continue to be serious problems maintaining the overall ecological health of the parks (most of which originate outside park boundaries), wilderness designations (and Park Service administrative policies) have helped ensure that, in many parks, the backcountry remains uncrowded and managed at least with the intent of preserving wilderness values and protecting natural systems. This aspect of national park management, although underfunded and always in need of more and better scientific research, has made consistent progress over the last 30 years.

During the same period, however,

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critics have continued to denounce the failure of NPS to adopt “science-based” land management policies. A reporter for the *Washington Post* recently suggested that, “like an old drunk ... reaching for the bottle,” the Park Service was addicted to its development-oriented ways. Other critics have suggested that Park Service “tradition” has prevented the agency from looking to science as the basis for park management (Kenworthy 1999; see also Sellars 1997). The resilience of this tradition can be explained, however, in part by the fact that the parks—specifically the frontcountry—remain, after all, parks; that is, NPS continues to be charged with providing for the safety, convenience, and enjoyment of a vast public. The agency therefore remains concerned with park management as well as wilderness management. If, in the backcountry, decisions can be based completely on scientific data, landscape design and environmental engineering continue to be essential disciplines if, in the frontcountry, meaningful civic spaces are to be created and restored while minimizing the impacts of large numbers of visitors.

In frontcountry “park” areas what is needed—as Mark Daniels, a Department of the Interior landscape architect, put it in 1914—is “some sort of civic plan” (Department of the Interior 1915, 15-20). In order to preserve scenic landscape character and prevent the debasement of the

visitor’s experience of that scenery, there must be a civic vision centered on the reality of bringing together a large and diverse public for the common purpose of enjoying scenic beauty. We cannot hope to apply management policy appropriate to backcountry wilderness to the frontcountry park, at least with any success. But in many cases this has been the emphasis of national park planning since the 1970s. And when critics decry the deplorable condition of the National Park System, they are usually not describing backcountry problems (as serious as those may in fact be); rather they are outraged by the traffic jams, confusion, and substandard services that often characterize the frontcountry experience. The deplorable condition of the frontcountry is the inevitable result of the lack of a civic vision necessary for the successful management of “park” landscapes.

Another challenge park managers will continue to face in this century will be how park systems should be expanded, if indeed that is still a desirable goal. It will be small consolation if, as our last vestiges of nearby open space, habitat, and local natural beauty disappear, we nevertheless successfully defend our designated wilderness system (as vital as the integrity of that system is). In a society that values only the landscape ideal of wilderness, the experience of the natural world will all but disappear for the vast majority of

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people. This is exactly what has been happening during the last 30 years, as lives are lived increasingly within the private confines of subdivisions, automobiles, shopping malls, and corporate parks.

The best hope for American parks and public landscapes may be the ability to understand and manage them in terms of multiple landscape ideals. The advocates and users of parks (automotive tourists, for example), forests (hunters, loggers, outfitters), and wilderness (hikers, climbers, scientists) should be united in the common goal of landscape preservation. More often we remain isolated by the conflicts inherent in different landscape ideals. When such differences can be reconciled, good things happen. When the interests of scenic preservation and utilitarian conservation came together in 1885, for example, the Adirondack Forest Preserve (later the Adirondack Park) resulted. The Adirondack Park still offers a compelling example of a "park," which is a six-million-acre patchwork of private and state-owned land. Since 1971 the Adirondack Park Agency has been authorized to determine appropriate uses for public lands, and also to regulate development on private land within the park. As a result, the Adirondack Park combines the strongest wilderness preservation law (embedded in the state's constitution), zoned levels of appropriate recreational uses

(including hunting), and regulated logging and other development (on the park's private lands).

As the original "blue line" park, the Adirondack Park remains unique in the USA, although some variation on the blue line (or "green line," or "heritage") park has long been suggested as the national park of the future. More recent initiatives in comprehensive, regionally coordinated land management and regulation have suggested related directions for developing new landscape ideals. Since 1984 Congress has designated 18 national heritage areas, for example, and has even provided some funding for them (as well as a vague management role for the Park Service). National heritage areas do not involve acquisition or direct management of land, but are public-private initiatives to encourage local governments to preserve regional scenery and character while promoting non-destructive forms of economic growth, especially tourism. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt also recently launched a "national landscape monuments" initiative, in which large areas of federal lands have been designated national monuments by executive proclamation. These new national landscape monuments (including Grand Staircase-Escalante and Grand Canyon-Parashant) will remain under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, not

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NPS—a move which will allow increased protection within the context of “flexible management alternatives,” including hunting and limited extractive industry (Babbitt 2000, 24-25). Even the new model of the habitat conservation plan, an attempt by the federal government to deal with endangered species issues on a regional basis, hints at what may be a new kind of collaborative, comprehensive landscape ideal taking shape at the federal level.

In the meantime, the very nature of the role of governments in landscape preservation has changed dramatically over the last decade. The initiative for landscape preservation—especially at the regional level—is shifting from park and conservation bureaus to the many private non-profit “land trusts” proliferating across the country. Other private non-profit organizations have been inspired by the regional (and non-political) boundaries of large ecosystems to suggest landscape planning initiatives of impressive scope. From the

Yellowstone-to-Yukon Conservation Initiative, to the 26-million-acre Northern Forest of New York and New England, advocates are seeking a regional, comprehensive approach to preserving landscapes and natural resources within the context of networks of economically sound local communities.

Whatever form new landscape ideals may take, it seems likely that the private sector (especially private non-profit organizations) will have as great a role as their government “partners” in the protection and management of public landscapes. It also seems clear that emerging landscape ideals today often attempt to combine the virtues of park, forest, and wilderness in order to propose comprehensive approaches to the preservation of regional character, natural resources, and local economies. It remains to be seen, however, whether today’s preservation advocates can understand one another’s landscape ideals well enough to find common ground.

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