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THE POLITICS OF WILDERNESS CONSERVATION

By C. ALLIN

Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. 1982. Pp. 304. \$27.50.

The Politics of Wilderness Preservation is a scholarly survey of wilderness policy from the time of American independence until passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) in 1980. Although Professor Allin acknowledges a personal sympathy for wilderness preservation, his overall treatment of the subject is fair and even-handed.

The book is comprehensive; there is sufficient coverage of issues to give an overview of the subject, and an in-depth analysis of key legislation. Allin surveys the early history of American public land policy, drawing heavily on such leading authorities as Paul Gates and Marion Clawson. He analyzes in detail the legislative maneuvering and in-fighting which preceded passage of the Wilderness Act and ANILCA.

His discussion of the political history of ANILCA is particularly timely and valuable. Original sources are cited. Especially useful are the extensive citations to hearings, reports and the Congressional Record in the chapters on ANILCA and the Wilderness Act.

Professor Allin's perspective is that of a political scientist. Some of his most interesting insights concern the impact of interagency rivalries on the evolution of wilderness policy. For example, he observes that the Forest Service created "primitive areas," the administrative land designation which was the predecessor of the first wilderness areas, as a defensive maneuver to forestall further designations of national parks out of lands already designated as national forests.

Allin concludes by projecting that there will be only relatively modest increases in the size of the present National Wilderness Preservation System. He opines that the percentage of designated wilderness to total agency landholdings may eventually range from a high of 70 percent for Park Service lands to a low of 5 to 10 percent for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

The stated focus of this book is the politics of wilderness preservation, and not wilderness management. Nonetheless, it is unfortunate that Allin did not discuss in more detail the politics of wilderness management. One significant development is that the Fish and Wildlife Service and, in the future, the BLM will be managing extensive wilderness areas. Allin observes that the Park Service and the Forest Service have adopted quite different approaches to wilderness management. It would be interesting also to have his views on the development of wilderness management

policies by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the BLM, in light of those agencies' organic legislation, internal politics, and established user groups.

For this Alaskan reviewer, another shortcoming is that the book does not adequately analyze the impact of ANILCA on Alaska, or explain why some local groups opposed parts of ANILCA. For example, the book does not address whether the size, number, and configuration of the new parks and refuges in the state might effectively block overland access to many large tracts of state and private land, as has been claimed by some pro-development groups. Nor does the book discuss the unprecedented inclusion within the boundaries of these new parks and refuges of hundreds of thousands of acres of private land conveyed to native corporations under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Notwithstanding this minor criticism, this is an important and useful book and deserves reading by all concerned with American public land policy.

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