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## W.R.D. Sewell and Wilderness

Derrick Sewell is not a name that will be closely associated with wilderness studies by many readers. Nevertheless, the link tells us much about the man, and about the topic. Derrick Sewell was a Renaissance Man. He refused to stay confined within one narrow speciality. He was a firm believer in Geography as an eclectic discipline that synthesised information from a broad spectrum to bring to bear on particular problems. Over the length of his academic career he brought his special strengths, a prodigious appetite for work combined with a clear analytical mind, to bear on many different problems. Wilderness designation was the latest of these problems.

A glance at Derrick's obituary appearing before this article will convey some idea of the breadth of his interests and accomplishments. He carved his world-wide reputation in the resources field largely through his work in water resources and perceptions and attitudes studies. Even within these fields though, he was not content to confine himself to one particular aspect or region. His early water contributions were mainly related to economic aspects in Northern American situations;<sup>1</sup> later works show a broad diversification to problems from all over the world.<sup>2</sup>

This interest in water resources widened to embrace resource management questions as a whole.<sup>3</sup> He was a firm believer in the necessity for social scientists to engage in applied research. Few graduate students will forget Derrick's first blunt question on their prospective research, "what

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1. E.g., Sewell & Marts, *The Application of Benefit-Cost Analysis to Fish Preservation Expenditures*, LAND ECON., Feb. 1959, at 48; Sewell, Crutchfield & Kates, *Benefit-Cost Analysis and the National Oceanographic Program*, 7 NAT. RES. J. 361 (1967).

2. W. SEWELL & D. SMITH, WATER PLANNING IN AUSTRALIA: FROM MYTHS TO REALITY (1985); W. SEWELL, INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATIONS IN WATER MANAGEMENT: THE SCOTTISH EXPERIENCE (1985).

3. E.g., W. SEWELL & H. FOSTER, ENERGY POLICY FOR AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE (1983) (Energy, Mines and Resource Occasional Paper, Ottawa) (Subject—Energy); Sewell & Foster, *Environmental Risk: Optimising Management Strategies in the Developing World*, 1 ENVTL. MGMT. 45 (1976) (Subject—Hazards); Sewell, *Environmental Perceptions and Attitudes of Engineers and Public Health Officials*, ENV'T AND BEHAV., March 1971, at 23 (Subject—Perceptions and Attitudes); Dearden & Sewell, *From Gloom to Glory and Beyond: The Northern American Mountain Recreation Experience*, in THE ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION ON MOUNTAIN AREAS IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA 1 (N. Bayfield & G. Barrow eds. 1985) (Subject—Recreation); Sewell, *Environmental Impact Assessment: A Trans-Pacific Review*, 2 NORTHWEST ENVTL. J. 31 (1986) (Subject—Environmental Impact Assessment); Sewell, *Geographers, The Policy Process and Education*, 5 OPERATIONAL GEOGRAPHER 23 (1984) (Subject—Policy).

is the burning issue?" Everyone had to have one and be able to explain precisely why it was in flames. Another firm belief that will be remembered by past graduate students is the Great Hypothesis Debate. Not only did one have to have a Burning Issue, one also had to have, as Derrick always did with his work, a very clear specification of the research hypothesis. Unfortunately in the Debate, one team would have the no-win task of arguing against hypothesis-driven research, knowing full well that eventually they were heading for the guillotine.

These aspects of how Derrick conducted his graduate classes give insight to the way he worked himself. He was extremely well-organized and methodical, thorough in his preparation, and yet gifted with an innovative way of approaching problems and seeing them clearly. He thrived on the study of complex problems of an emerging nature related to decisionmaking, conflict resolution, jurisdictional disputes and the assessment of social values. It was these abilities, compiled with Derrick's appetite for work, that brought him into contact with the wilderness problem.

British Columbia encompasses within its jurisdiction some of the most varied biogeoclimatic units in the world. They range from sea level to glacial ice-caps, from semi-desert conditions to the boreal forest. This very diverse landscape has also been the store-house of resources from which previous generations of British Columbians have prospered. The forests have been logged, the hills mined and the valleys flooded for hydro-electric power. Over the past decade this pro-development orientation has met increasing resistance from lobby groups trying to protect some of the remnant ecosystems as park areas. These protests have ranged from rallies and demonstrations through to physical blockades of resource extraction activities. They have been very high profile.<sup>4</sup>

In late 1985 the Government of British Columbia realized that these were not an isolated set of unrelated issues, but that a major problem existed in the province relating to wilderness protection. A task force, known as the Wilderness Advisory Committee (W.A.C.) was struck to advise the Government on the issue. The committee was asked, "to consider the place of wilderness in a changing society, one in which choices among resource uses will become increasingly difficult and in which decisions we make today will profoundly affect the lifestyle we enjoy tomorrow."<sup>5</sup> In addition the committee was asked to recommend the fate of sixteen proposed wilderness areas in the province and eight boundary changes to provincial parks. The committee was given three months to file its report.

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4. Two in particular, Meares Island and South Moresby Island, repeatedly made headlines on the national news.

5. B.C. WILDERNESS ADVISORY COMM., *THE WILDERNESS MOSAIC* 2 (1986).

Derrick Sewell was invited to be a member, and was later elected vice-chairman of this committee. The composition of the committee was important, not only because it was very contentious when announced, but because it was also significant to Derrick's interest in wilderness. The Government invited a representative of the International Woodworkers of America, a past-president of the British Columbia Chamber of Mines, a forestry professor (whose University chair is funded directly by the forest industry), the vice-president of a lumber company, a fisheries biologist (and eminent academic), Derrick Sewell and a well-known Canadian barrister to chair the committee. No representatives of the pro-preservation lobby were invited. Following public outcry, an environmental advocate was invited to join the committee.

The committee worked full time on its allotted task, establishing a Secretariat and holding public hearings throughout the province. The wilderness allocation problem in British Columbia had stumped various Government committees. Many thought that the W.A.C. would be similarly ineffective. The hearings were boycotted by major environmental groups<sup>6</sup> protesting the composition of the committee, its restrictive mandate and the unrealistic time frame. The committee also operated in winter and all members were not able to personally visit the areas in question. Furthermore, the Government was not willing to provide any financial support for the volunteer environmental groups to prepare their case against the heavily funded and well organized forestry and mining lobbies. Despite the fact that some 70 percent of the province is under some form of native land claim, including practically all the areas under discussion, the committee was also instructed not to concern itself with native interests, nor was there native representation on the committee.

The British Columbian Government could not have appointed to the committee a man better equipped than Derrick Sewell to examine this seemingly intractable problem. An academic lifetime of analyzing other complex resource-management problems elsewhere had provided an excellent base for this intense brush with the wilderness question. It is not possible to isolate Derrick's contribution in the final document although it has been acknowledged as major by other members of the committee, particularly with respect to the recommendations on the process whereby such issues should be resolved in the future. He later published a monograph in conjunction with a graduate assistant comparing the wilderness decisionmaking process in New Zealand, Australia and British Columbia.<sup>7</sup>

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6. For example, the Sierra Club.

7. W. SEWELL & J. DUMBRELL, *WILDERNESS DECISION MAKING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EXPERIENCES—BRITISH COLUMBIA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND* (Cornett Occasional Papers No. 5, 1987) (Dep't of Geography, Univ. of Victoria, B.C.).

The Wilderness Advisory Committee presented its report<sup>8</sup> in March 1986 outlining the results of its deliberations. Two months later the recommendations were accepted "in principle" by the Government and are now being implemented (with varying degrees of alacrity and difference to the original recommendations) as described by O'Riordan later in this volume.<sup>9</sup> The details of each recommendation are not germane to this discussion. However, it is to the credit of the committee that they did reach a consensus on all the issues. Neither the pro-development nor the wilderness preservation lobbies were totally happy with the recommendations. On balance it would seem that the latter came out on top. Thousands of hectares of wilderness have since been moved into some form of protective status in the province as a result of the recommendations. However, two of the major process-oriented recommendations of the committee, to establish wilderness legislation and form a permanent extra-government advisory body of public representatives on wilderness matters, have been ignored.

The "jewel in the crown" of the area-specific disputes was South Moresby Island, the southern portion of the Queen Charlotte group off the coast of British Columbia. This area has become known as the "Canadian Galapagos" due to the high number of endemics found there and is also characterized by exceptional biological productivity, especially the rain forests at low altitude, the intertidal zone and surrounding oceans.<sup>10</sup> The area had become the major focus of wilderness protection in Canada and established a wide lobby of support both nationally and internationally.<sup>11</sup> More briefs were received by the W.A.C. on South Moresby than all the other areas put together.

It was apparently the most difficult of the issues for the committee to come to an agreement on. In the end they presented what to them seemed like a pro-wilderness stand with 94 percent of the area recommended for protection. This did not please the logging company which had rights to cut in the area nor the pro-wilderness lobby who saw the outstanding six percent to be absolutely crucial to the integrity of the park. Since the recommendation, considerable debate has taken place between the various interests, particularly the Haida nation, who have claimed the area as part of their ancestral homeland, and the federal and provincial governments. In July 1987, a memorandum of understanding was signed between

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8. B.C. WILDERNESS ADVISORY COMM., *supra* note 5.

9. O'Riordan, *Derrick Sewell and the Wilderness Advisory Committee in British Columbia*, 29 NAT. RES. J. (1989) (this issue).

10. See ISLANDS PROTECTION SOC'Y, *ISLANDS AT THE EDGE: PRESERVING THE QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS WILDERNESS* (1984).

11. Dearden, *Mobilising Public Support for Environment: The Case of South Moresby Island, British Columbia*, in PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL JOINT MEETING OF THE PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE, ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL OF ALBERTA 62-75 (1987) (invited presentation by P. Dearden).

the two levels of government to proceed towards establishing a national park reserve that would encompass the outstanding six percent not included by the W.A.C. Despite this amendment there is no doubt that the strong recommendation of the W.A.C. that a national park be established was a major factor in bringing the park to fruition. If the W.A.C. has no other legacy than this, then this gift alone to the family of world-class protected areas would be a very significant contribution.

If Derrick had written this article, as originally planned, he would draw attention to Moresby as the "jewel in the crown." A separate paper looking in greater depth at the South Moresby case and comparing it with the Franklin Dam issue in Tasmania was already in the final stages of preparation and has been included in this issue.<sup>12</sup> His other favorite topic was the decisionmaking process and how such a diverse committee came to terms with the issues and proceeded towards consensus.<sup>13</sup> The book by Fisher and Ury first published in 1980, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*,<sup>14</sup> was a major influence in this regard. The book, based on the experience with a Harvard University research project on negotiations, outlined the differences between positional and principled bargaining. Fisher and Ury suggest that principled bargaining is much more likely to lead toward satisfactory outcomes and it was this approach that was taken by the W.A.C. It was obviously successful.

Derrick Sewell was not without his detractors. Few prominent scholars are. Some considered him an opportunist, due to his forementioned proclivity for changing his focus as new problems emerged. He would make no apology for this. Neither will I. Others felt that perhaps he had concentrated too much on somebody else's problems. Over the last 20 years Derrick was advisor to many different national governments, the United Nations and the World Bank. Yet he was seldom prominent in resource debates in his own province, British Columbia. The wilderness issue brought Derrick Sewell back to British Columbia and he soon became well known, not only for his analytical insight and piercing questions during public hearings, but also because of his humor and warmth. He will be sorely missed not only on the academic stage as researcher and mentor, but also by the thousands of other people who met Derrick across the table over the wilderness issue. Who knows what future contributions

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12. Sewell, Dearden & Dumbrell, *Wilderness Decisionmaking and the Role of Environmental Interest Groups: A Comparison of the Franklin Dam, Tasmania and South Moresby, British Columbia Cases*, 29 NAT. RES. J. (1989) (this issue).

13. See, e.g., Sewell, "Getting to Yes" in *the Wilderness: The British Columbia Experience in Environmental Policy Making*, in Festschrift (G. Robinson ed., in press) (publication to honor Professor Wreford J. Watson, Dep't of Geography, Univ. of Edinburgh); Sewell & Rankin, *Decision Making in the Wild: The B.C. Wilderness Advisory Committee and Beyond*, 2 CANADIAN ENVTL. MEDIATION NEWSL. 9 (1987).

14. R. FISHER & W. URY, *GETTING TO YES: NEGOTIATING AGREEMENT WITHOUT GIVING IN* (1984).

he might have made to the wilderness field? It is fitting that this special issue of the *Natural Resource Journal* on wilderness, suggested by Derrick, is dedicated to his memory.

In preparing a special issue of this nature, three questions should be addressed: what is the rationale for the issue, what particular aspects of the topic need to be covered, and what is it hoped to achieve? Attention will be directed to each in turn.

It is now 25 years since the first wilderness legislation in the world was enacted, the 1964 Wilderness Act<sup>15</sup> in the United States. Wilderness has proven to be a popular concept. Not only has wilderness flourished in its birthplace, the U.S., but the concept, if not the enacted legislation, has spread to many areas of the globe. Thus wilderness has developed from a somewhat parochial issue into one of almost universal interest. It seemed fitting to take stock of the issue given this geographical dispersal in addition to the well-nigh 25 years of management experience.

The first four papers in the issue address this concern. George Stankey introduces the topic by tracing some of the historical antecedents, followed by Bob Manning who examines the rationale behind wilderness and the particular values that wilderness offers society. Recreation has been the main use associated with wilderness in the United States and Bob Lucas has been involved with studying wilderness recreation as long as any one. In his paper he summarizes our current state of knowledge regarding wilderness use in the United States and allows himself some interesting speculations as to the future. These three papers provide the U.S. context and experience with the wilderness concept. The next paper, by Hal Eidsvik—the Chairman of the IUCN Commission on National Park and Protected Areas—expands this to an international perspective. Eidsvik questions the applicability of a rigid U.S.-based wilderness definition to the rest of the world and suggests his own, one that does not necessarily disqualify an area as wilderness due to presence of indigenous peoples. He continues by providing a broad brush treatment of the status of wilderness throughout the world, and suggestions of some of the major protected areas that would qualify as wilderness. His paper is based largely on the data in the Protected Areas Unit of IUCN's Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge, England. As Eidsvik points out, this source is the best currently available, but still woefully inadequate to convey an accurate picture on global wilderness.

From this broad background, both historically and geographically, more specific studies are used to illustrate the current status of, and problems with, wilderness designation in other countries. Two countries, Canada and Australia provide the bulk of the work due partly to their relative

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15. Wilderness Act of 1964, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1131-1136 (1982).

similarity to the U.S. situation, the remarkable parallels between each other, the quantity of research available on wilderness in these two countries and the broad range of issues that can be demonstrated. In each case broad overviews of the current status of wilderness are provided by Nelson and Davis for Canada and Australia respectively. These are followed by more detailed examinations of particular case histories. O'Riordan takes a look at the most highly politicized wilderness decisionmaking context in British Columbia, Canada, and provides a perspective on the follow-up to the Wilderness Advisory Committee recommendations discussed earlier in this Introduction. Kellow takes a similarly highly-charged situation in Australia, that of the Franklin River controversy in Tasmania—and gives an insightful account of how it developed and was ultimately resolved.

These case histories are of much broader applicability than just the particular locations, or even countries where they occurred. They amply demonstrate the highly politicized nature of the wilderness decisionmaking process and the various strategies that have been employed to influence such strategies. In particular they both illustrate the key role played by environmental interest groups in the establishment of wilderness areas. Although most countries have a government agency or agencies charged with establishing wilderness areas (often in the form of national parks) their resistance is often token to the demands of the more established resource extraction agencies. In both the Franklin and Moresby cases only prolonged and confrontational behaviour by the interest groups succeeded in protecting the areas from further extractive activities. The paper by Sewell, Dearden and Dumbrell highlights the role of the interest groups in each case, describes the similarities and differences and attempts to place the disputes within a broader spatial and temporal context.

Much the same can be said about Graham Yapp's paper in terms of its broad applicability. Although ostensibly about one wilderness area in Australia—Kakadu National Park—it discusses a number of highly relevant generic issues, such as the use of fire in wilderness management, the perceptions of wilderness of different interested parties and, most critically, the role of native peoples in management of wilderness. Some of these same themes are subsequently explored by Sadler in a Canadian context through an analysis of the establishment of the North Yukon National Park in the Arctic. This paper not only contributes this polar perspective and further illustrates differences in wilderness perceptions but also ties in with the role of wilderness in sustainable development, a theme developed more fully by Dearden in the concluding paper.

This collection of papers illustrates the transformation of wilderness from a mainly U.S. concern to a very complicated, internationally-relevant, resource issue. In many ways wilderness has come to epitomize



the difficulties in resource management: the difficulties of assessing environmental intangibles, the problems of resource trade offs, the difference between long and short term planning horizons, and other similar problems. These issues will not go away, and constitute a major and continuing challenge to resource professionals that can only become more urgent as resource pressures increase and options diminish.

It was in recognition of this spirit of urgency that this special issue was suggested. The collection forms a basis and springboard for further investigations based upon this summary of the past and critical examination of current cases. Despite the importance of wilderness issues there is, as yet, no academic journal devoted to the problem, nor one on national parks. Much research tends to be in-house and of restricted visibility and distribution. This special issue is one attempt to enlarge the circle of concern regarding wilderness issues and resource decisionmaking in society.