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# **Wilderness in Canada: Past, Present, Future**

## **ABSTRACT**

*This review and analysis of recent thought on wilderness issues in Canada is largely based on papers prepared for the 1985 National Park Centennial—Heritage for Tomorrow—as well as the 1985 Arctic Heritage Symposium and the 1986 British Columbia Wilderness review. Among the major topics are: 1) historical and perceptual differences in wilderness across the country, and between Canada and the United States; 2) wilderness in the context of national parks and protected areas, regional development, comprehensive land use and marine and coastal areas; and 3) native and local people and wilderness.*

*The development of the wilderness idea in Canada is reviewed as well as associated concepts such as the "bush." Differences in the history of wilderness thinking are described for the various broad regions of Canada, notably the eastern or Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the west, and the north. The wilderness idea has been and is relatively strong in western Canada largely because of the early twentieth century diffusion of United States ideas, the activities and writings of the Sierra Club, and United States emigrants in the 1960s and 1970s.*

*The paper also addresses issues such as federal/provincial differences over national park, provincial park and other institutional arrangements for use and protection of wilderness and other wildlands. Attention is directed to the question of the implications of fire, disease and pest control policies. All these things challenge the meaning and utility of wilderness and associated concepts such as national parks and protected areas. The genetic, hydrologic, heritage and other functions of these areas all are underlined, however, as is the need for a more cooperative and comprehensive approach to use, planning and management of wildlands generally.*

## **THE CHANGING WILDERNESS IDEA**

Wilderness is an idea and like many other ideas its meaning has always been hazy and rather ill-defined. The concept has tended to be a big one.

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It has comprehended large, gross images such as the primitive and the pristine and generally has not been clear about details on the ground.

The meaning and significance of wilderness has also tended to vary through space and time along with changing environmental, cultural, and political circumstances. In this respect the citizens of the United States of America are renowned for their relatively high awareness of and general commitment to the idea of wilderness as expressed in the high Sierra, the great Cascades, or remote Alaska. The English, on the other hand, are recognized as thinking more about nature, species such as birds, or valued landscapes such as the Lake County, the Broads, or the Moors. These landscapes have generally been considerably modified by man and are seen as owing much of their special character to certain land use activities and cultural traditions.

Like other big ideas, wilderness is also a myth. In other words, its current meaning is largely inherited from the past when it developed power to guide human actions. It was seen as important by many people, as something basic to their lives and environment, a natural heritage for their offspring.

### UNITED STATES ORIGINS

Like other big ideas or myths, wilderness seems to be largely a product of the thought of one people who made it a part of their culture and then spread it to other places and folk. Thus, the inventors of wilderness, in the sense of a primeval, relatively untouched, awesome, and challenging land—a vignette of the past at the time that the white men came—were the people of the United States, who found the wilderness during their search for something distinctly American which would rival the great cities and civilizations of the Old World.<sup>1</sup> The grandeur and glory of the wilderness is exemplified by Church's paintings of the Hudson River valley or by Moran's of Yellowstone. Such images are seen as giving the United States prestige as a rising star among the nineteenth-century nations of the globe.

In the United States the wilderness image soon became linked with the concept of the national park, another idea whose meaning has changed with time.<sup>2</sup> For our purposes it suffices to see the national park initially as a piece of land whose special features and beauty caused the federal government to set aside, reserve, or protect it against lumbering, mining, and other economic activities which would destroy its special qualities.

In the seminal 1820s view of the Philadelphia lawyer and artist, George

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1. H. HUTCH, *NATURE AND THE AMERICAN* (1983); R. NASH, *WILDERNESS AND THE AMERICAN MIND*, (1967); J. SAX, *MOUNTAINS WITHOUT HANDRAILS* (1980).

2. A. RUNTE, *NATIONAL PARKS: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE* (1979).

Catlin, a nation's park would include both the land and its inhabitants. A national park on the northern Great Plains would comprehend not only the bison, the wolves, and the grasslands, but also the Blackfoot, the Sioux, and the other mounted nomadic Indians whose way of life Catlin so much admired and wished to preserve. Ironically this culture was already undergoing major change from its pre-European pedestrian mode as a result of the introduction of the horse. The Spanish brought the animal to Mexico and the south in the early 1500s. It quickly diffused north reaching the Canadian prairies before 1800 and the arrival of the earliest French and English traders.

Eventually, however, in spite of the efforts of Catlin and others, the native people and their culture were virtually eliminated from the wilderness image which was transformed into one of a land—a veritable garden of Eden—largely untouched and unspoiled by man. As this myth was established so too were Yellowstone, Glacier, and other remote national parks, administrative or institutional devices to preserve and protect the wild for the Americans of the future.

As the wilderness and the national park ideas unfolded during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States, so, too, did the scientific knowledge which helped reveal dynamic challenges to the rather static wilderness image. Examples include greater understanding of vegetation changes such as forest succession, the impacts of fire control on vegetation and wildlife, and the relationships among wildlife species as well as vegetation, soils, and other aspects of what increasingly came to be seen as evolving nature. Eventually the ecosystem concept emerged in the 1930s, underscoring "the connection of everything to everything else," and also the problems posed by a merely protectionist as opposed to a management approach to wilderness.

In Canada the detailed history of the wilderness concept has been different from the United States. In both countries the fundamental idea that wilderness changes in space and time holds true.<sup>3</sup> In Canada, however, relatively little reference to or use of the wilderness idea was made until after the turn of the twentieth century. Certainly the idea never attained anything approaching mythical status as it did in the United States. It was not an icon for a people and a nation.

One searches the journals of the Northwest or Hudson's Bay Company traders long and hard for any fullsome reference to the wilderness idea in the United States' sense.<sup>4</sup> These very practical men were for the most part exploiters of the resources of the country. Their principal interest lay

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3. J. G. NELSON, *MAN'S IMPACT ON THE WESTERN CANADIAN LANDSCAPE* (Carleton Library No. 90, 1976); J. G. NELSON, *CANADA'S WILDLANDS* (Working Paper Series No. 4, 1977) (School of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Waterloo, Ontario).

4. J. G. NELSON, *THE LAST REFUGE* (1973).

in the nature and amount of wildlife available for trapping or for subsistence. They largely saw the native people as inefficient and difficult, inclined too much to dancing, eating, and relaxing rather than the exertions of trapping and the trade. Similar things could be said of the lumbermen in eastern or western Canada or of fishermen on the sea coasts of the Great Lakes. Canadians were and remain a rather utilitarian people whose national consciousness found expression in standards such as the maple leaf and the beaver rather than the wilderness and the bald eagle.

The wilderness image—or even images of the wild—were not as strong motivators for the development of national parks and other institutions in Canada as in the United States.<sup>5</sup> The idea of the national park spread from the United States and was linked, in the beginning, with protection of hot springs at Banff which were rather similar to those in Yellowstone. In Canada and the United States the valuing and protection of hot springs, geologic features and scenery were strong initial stimuli. In both countries also protection of vegetation, wildlife, and other elements of what is now termed the ecosystem gradually came to be part of the *raison d'être* of the expanding idea and role of the national park. Eventually the national park came to be seen as the device that would protect areas that were representative of major natural regions in both countries.

In Canada and the United States conflicts arose between the lumbermen, miners, ranchers, and other users of wildland resources and the managers of the national parks. These conflicts have always been more visible and of greater public interest in the United States than Canada in part because of the mythical quality of the strong wilderness image behind the national park concept in the United States. Thus, the notion of great national conservation battles over Hetchy Hetchy, Hell's Canyon or other dam proposals for beautiful wild places is not an uncomfortable one in the land of the bald eagle. However such terminology and such events are not as much in line with the more compromising style of Canadians.

There have been no John Muirs in Canada, no near religious propagators of the values of wilderness, articulate, impassioned, and tough defenders of sacred high mountain ground such as that of the high Sierras against sheep or other interlopers. We have had no spokesmen for the wilderness with such power and persuasiveness as to be able to found the preservationist school of thought or institutions such as the Sierra Club.

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5. Brown, *The Doctrine of Usefulness: Natural Resource and National Park Policy in Canada, 1887-1914*, in *THE CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS: TODAY AND TOMORROW* 94 (J. G. Nelson & R. Scace eds. 1968) [hereinafter *CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS—1968*]; Nelson, *Man and Landscape Change in Banff National Park: A National Park Problem in Perspective*, in *id.* at 111; E. HART, *THE SELLING OF CANADA: THE CPR AND THE BEGINNINGS OF CANADIAN TOURISM* (1983).

Yet there have been strong supporters of wilderness in Canada, although generally in the more reasoned way referred to earlier. Such a man was James Harkin, an early director of the national park service set up by the Canadian federal government in 1916. Although not the first director, Harkin was the first great spokesman for wilderness in the Dominion of the day. His views and those of his successors to the present time stem from United States' ideas; that is, wilderness thought from the American hearth.

Harkin attempted to balance the wilderness idea with policies and measures to promote the growth of the Canadian national park system. He felt the need for public and certainly for political support. He accepted the automobile and roads in national parks very early on and linked them with the promotion of tourism as a money earner and as a basis for widespread knowledge and appreciation of the national parks. In the 1930s he linked road development with tourism potential and with government funding of construction jobs for many unemployed on projects such as the Banff-Jasper national park highway along the Continental Divide in the Canadian Rockies.

A commercial orientation in the planning and management of national parks was certainly not new in Canada. Indeed a fundamental reason for the creation of the first national park at Banff in 1885 was to protect the newly discovered hot springs which would serve as a spa in the European sense, although there were other contemporary examples at places such as the Arkansas hot springs in the United States. It was for such basically commercial reasons that the Canadian Pacific Railway and the federal government teamed up to promote Banff and other national parks in nineteenth-century western Canada.

Over the years up to World War II, other national parks were slowly created in the Dominion, often for reasons that had relatively little to do with wilderness in the United States sense of the term.<sup>6</sup> Wood Buffalo National Park on the Alberta-Northwest Territories border was created in 1922 to serve as a wildlife reserve for the disappearing bison.<sup>7</sup> More wide-ranging roles for Wood Buffalo as a national park have slowly developed over the years, although with some major deviations from the classical United States wilderness and national park models. Thus, native people have continued to hunt in Wood Buffalo National Park since its inception.

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6. W. LOTHIAN, *A HISTORY OF CANADA'S NATIONAL PARKS* (1977); Scace, *Townsites and Other Facilities and Services in Canadian National Parks*, in *CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS: TODAY AND TOMORROW* 770 (J. G. Nelson, R. Needham, S. Nelson & R. Scace eds. 1979) (Conference II, Univ. of Waterloo, Ontario) [hereinafter *CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS—1979*].

7. J. FOSTER, *WORKING FOR WILDLIFE: THE BEGINNING OF PRESERVATION IN CANADA* (1978).

Point Pelee National Park in Ontario was created in 1918 primarily as a refuge for ducks and other migratory waterfowl. Some farming, cottaging, and other activities continued for many decades, only being phased out as this small national park became a day use area in the 1970s and 1980s. However, sport hunting for ducks has continued as a controversial activity in Point Pelee National Park up to the present day.

Bay of Fundy National Park in the Maritimes was created during the depression of the 1930s for reasons which were similar to those for the Great Smokies National Park in the southern Appalachians. In those economically depressed times, agricultural failure, tax defaults, and farm abandonment were widespread. The establishment of a national park with attendant road construction and potential tourism would create some jobs immediately and more in the future.

Much of the land had been cut, burned, grazed, ploughed and used, sometimes by Scottish migrants in crofter fashion. But this land could be protected, to regrow as forest, and as habitat for deer and other relatively "gentle animals." There seems to have been little thought of Bay of Fundy as home for cougars, wolves, or other "noxious animals," in tune with the conservation thought of the time. Thus, wilderness might rise like a phoenix from the ashes, to paraphrase Byrne,<sup>8</sup> who found that Banff itself had gone through a similar change between the 1880s and the 1960s. It passed through fires, mining, lumbering, and other activities and impacts, to achieve wilderness status, albeit a wilderness that was much different in vegetation composition, successional status, and wildlife populations than formerly.

For purposes of clarity, the foregoing paragraphs are not intended to deny any consciousness of wilderness and the wild in Canada historically. For aside from administrators such as Harkin, we have had "wilderness writers" such as Charles Roberts and Ernest Thompson Seton.<sup>9</sup> Canada has also produced important landscape painters such as Tom Thompson, A. Y. Jackson, and other members of the Group of Seven. More recently, scientists such as Ian McTaggart Cowan have expressed a concern for the wild which has manifested itself largely in wildlife research and writing, some of it relating to national parks. The thoughts of people such as Cowan link with the ideas of biologists such as the late Douglas Pimlott or John Theberge or concerned citizens such as Bruce Littlejohn.<sup>10</sup>

This more current writing, undertaken largely during the last three

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8. A. BYRNE, *MAN AND LANDSCAPE CHANGE IN THE BANFF NATIONAL PARK AREA BEFORE 1911* (Studies in Land Use History and Landscape Change, National Parks Series No. 1, 1978) (Univ. of Calgary).

9. J. POLK, *WILDERNESS WRITERS* (1972).

10. CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS—1968, *supra* note 5; CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS—1979, *supra* note 6; J. THEBERGE, *WOLVES AND WILDERNESS* (1975).

decades, presents an image of wilderness for Canada which is much more comparable with the United States wilderness idea. Indeed, since the ecology decade of the 1960s United States environmental thought has spread into Canada as part of what can best be viewed as a growing worldwide concern about human effects on the environment. The 1960s was also the decade of the Vietnam war. For this and other reasons, many young Americans migrated to Canada where they often began to push vigorously their image of wilderness as a basis for making judgments about land use activities and planning proposals, particularly for national parks.

About 1970, much of this concern focused on the controversy over the Banff National Park-Village Lake Louise complex, a development proposal for ski, hotel, condominium, parking and other facilities, put forward more or less jointly by the Imperial Oil Company and the Canadian government. Basically this proposal with its infrastructure for thousands of visitors was seen as a violation of the wilderness image in the United States' sense, or perhaps in the sense of Harkin in his more aesthetic moments. The Village Lake Louise proposal became a conservation battle in the United States' sense. Concern about the complex spread across the country and widespread opposition to it by the National and Provincial Parks Association, now the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and many other groups and individuals ultimately led to its demise.

The Village Lake Louise controversy and lesser conflicts over national park master plans at about the same time are events that mark the elevation of the classical wilderness concept to a position of new eminence in Canada. The idea became much more widely known and figured in thinking about park planning in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, and other provinces and contexts in Canada.

### THE NATIVE VIEW AND THE LAND CLAIMS ISSUE

Even as the classic idea of wilderness played a stronger role in parks planning as well as in rural land use proposals generally, so too did it encounter somewhat different ideas or movements which emerged during the period of large scale economic development in Canada since 1960. A major idea or force in this regard is the surging interest of native people in control of the land. This interest is most visibly expressed in the so-called land claims process or movement which arose in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly as defense, oil and gas exploration, mining, and other activities spread in the great northern hinterland of Canada. What were seen by many Canadians as large, unproductive expanses of public domain, were seen by native people and their supporters as land which the people had traditionally used and occupied. Moreover, some of these native people, notably the Inuit of the Arctic, had incomplete or no



agreements with Canada. They had transferred no land to the public domain in the way that this had been done by treaties in southern Canada.

The native peoples' land claim, ownership, and control issues came to a head in two contexts. In the first context, Parks Canada (now the Canadian Park Service) the agency responsible for national parks, decided, following strong representations by the native people, to allow the continuance of hunting, trapping, and similar traditional activities in proposed northern national parks. Furthermore, all new northern national parks established after 1972 were to be considered as park reserves whose final ownership and management arrangements would await ultimate agreement on land claims between the federal government and the native people. This position has been continued since that time and has received the support of other key actors, notably the Yukon and Northwest Territories governments, which have become more organized, influential, and visible as the North has opened up since 1960.<sup>11</sup>

The move towards greater flexibility in considering the possible continuance of hunting, trapping, collecting, and other traditional activities by northern native people has also spread to comparable activities by local residents in newly created national parks in the south. Instead of completely eliminating all pre-existing activities in new national parks or in wilderness zones in certain provincial parks in line with the classical idea of wilderness, Parks Canada and other federal and provincial agencies have become increasingly willing to allow continuance of these historic and often low impact activities. They are now generally viewed as having considerable importance to the livelihood, culture, and well-being of rural groups and communities. The continuance of these activities is also now seen as scientifically appropriate by many observers on the grounds that native and local people have for centuries—from time immemorial—often been an active part of ecosystems proposed for national park, wildlife sanctuary, or other status. After much conflict over this issue since the early 1970s in the maritime provinces of eastern Canada, concessions have been made by the federal government to allow for continuance of collecting, snaring and certain traditional activities in national parks in accordance with conservation safeguards. Interestingly enough, this move to recognize the human presence and role in wild areas finds parallels increasingly in other countries, notably in the so-called Third World, where pressure from current land use activities in hinterland areas makes con-

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11. Kovacs, *National Overview for Canada on National Parks and Protected Areas in the Arctic*, in *ARCTIC HERITAGE: PROCEEDINGS OF A SYMPOSIUM* 529 (J. G. Nelson, R. Needham & L. Norton eds. 1987) (Ass'n of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, Ottawa, Ontario).

ervation essential, but the displacement of people for parks difficult if not impossible.<sup>12</sup>

The second major context in which the wilderness ideal, native peoples' land claims, ownership, and control issues have been highlighted was during the mid-1970s Berger Hearings for the proposed McKenzie Valley pipeline. In concluding his review of the many impacts that this pipeline would have on environment and local people, Tom Berger recommended a ten-year moratorium. The basic intent was to provide time for better planning and also for native people and northern residents to develop better means to deal with the major changes that the pipeline would bring.

Through his Canada-wide hearings and his report, Berger and his colleagues brought the frontier/native homeland paradox to the fore and underlined the different perceptions that southern Canadians and native people often have of northern lands.<sup>13</sup> Berger also put forward the notion of a wilderness park as part of any land claims settlement with the people of the McKenzie delta area. The site for this new type of national park would be the north slope of the Yukon, west of the delta. The innovative aspects of the wilderness park proposal involved strict control over tourism in the same sense as national parks traditionally exert control over mining, lumbering, and the like, as well as protection of hunting, trapping, and other longstanding economic and cultural activities of native people. Such a policy would create a different kind of national park and different kind of wilderness than that generally associated with the classical American model during the last half century or more.

### BORDERS AND THE PROTECTIONIST PHILOSOPHY

Another very basic idea that has emerged since the 1960s to pose challenge to the classical wilderness model in Canada and other countries, is the tendency to see wilderness and national parks as not so much reserved or apart from surrounding lands as merging with them in economic and natural ways. The interface between wilderness, national parks, and surrounding lands originally developed into a rather hard one. Lumbering, sports hunting and other controlled activities would often stop abruptly at park borders. Thus, the 1960s master planning for Banff and other Rocky Mountain national parks was conducted quite independently

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12. *MANAGING PROTECTED AREAS IN THE TROPICS* (1986) (compiled by J. MacKinnon, K. MacKinnon, G. Child & J. Thorsell, Int'l Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Gland, Switz.); *NATIONAL PARKS, CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF PROTECTED AREAS IN SUSTAINING SOCIETY* (J. McNeely & K. Miller eds. 1984).

13. T. BERGER, *NORTHERN FRONTIER, NORTHERN HOMELAND: THE REPORT OF THE MCKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE INQUIRY* (1977).

of any detailed thought about or interaction with owners or managers of private and public lands adjoining the national park. Incompatibilities between wilderness zoning within such parks and ranching or other activities on adjoining land not surprisingly developed in such circumstances. Furthermore, although a considerable amount of management, such as culling of elk or other wildlife, occurred in Banff and other national parks, the basic management philosophy and practice was to prohibit and protect rather than to study, select, and guide as, for example, with the current interest in controlled burning to produce vegetation types wanted for historic or for other reasons.

Although it is gradually changing, this protectionist philosophy, with relatively little foundation in management based on scientific research and environmental monitoring, is still very much with us and is surely a major challenge for the future.<sup>14</sup> For example, insect populations and outbreaks are still managed differently within and without national park borders. Animals of all kinds migrate across these borders and so must be subject to management by many parties.

Activities that have always crossed the borders of Canadian national parks and other types of wilderness areas are recreation and tourism. These activities have led to development of touring roads, campsites, downhill ski runs, and townsites such as Banff and Jasper. There has also long been strong concern about their effects on ecosystems and scenery in wild areas. Concern about gross disturbance of the wilderness view and wild ecosystems was a principal reason for opposition to Village Lake Louise. In this case, and in many others like it, planners, managers, and citizens sought to find the proper balance between highly valued wilderness and recreation, tourism, and related business activities within the national parks and other highly protected areas.

One big step from a policy of protectionism to one of management was the introduction of zoning systems which would separate incompatible activities from each other. Zoning lands within the national and provincial parks as well as other protected areas became a principal means of accommodating the post-1960s surge in recreation and tourism while attempting to protect the wilderness or natural resources for which the protected areas were set aside in the first place. Planning to meet the recreation and tourist needs of the increasingly prosperous and mobile Canadian population of the post-1960s was a basic factor in the establishment of new parks in the Maritimes and other parts of the country.

Today these responses and associated changes have led to a number

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14. HERITAGE FOR TOMORROW: CANADIAN ASSEMBLY ON NATIONAL PARKS (R. Scace & J. G. Nelson eds. Vol. 1, 1986 & Vol. 2-5, 1987); Eidsvik, *International Considerations and Canadian Conservation Futures: Some Reflections*, 17 ENVIRONMENTS 7 (Summer 1985).

of basic challenges to the protectionist philosophy, changes which make it impossible in many cases to continue relying on an ill-defined wilderness image and a border mentality. In some cases, such as skiing and winter sports, the development of roads and other facilities and their environmental effects has been very marked within or near wilderness areas in the national parks. Yet these developments and effects are very difficult to control because they are so closely linked to and driven by ideas developed and pushed by interests outside national park areas. External agencies have sometimes planned and created different types of wildlands and recreational opportunities which have put pressure on what were rather remote wild areas in adjoining national parks. An example is Kananaskis Country, a complex of parks and recreational opportunities developed by the Alberta government on land on the southeast border of Banff National Park.

### COORDINATED APPROACHES

Various attempts have been made to coordinate public and private planning and management to reduce land use conflicts and unwanted environmental effects in wilderness areas generally. Thus, UNESCO (United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization) has supported the creation of Biosphere reserves under its Man and Biosphere (MAB) program, headquartered in Paris, France.<sup>15</sup> Biosphere reserves are intended to provide for natural areas representative of ecological regions, research areas, and for harmonious landscapes or systems whose valued qualities are a result of long continued human activities. Biosphere reserves are being promoted globally. Canada currently has four in the vicinity of Waterton National Park, Alberta,<sup>16</sup> Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba, Long Point Peninsula, Southern Ontario, and Mount Saint Hilaire, Quebec, respectively.

Another approach to more coordinated management of wildlands is the Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) concept which has been used in northern Canada.<sup>17</sup> This approach involves mapping abiotic (ecology, geomorphology, hydrology), biotic (plants, wildlife), and cultural (ar-

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15. Francis, *Biosphere Reserves: Innovations for Co-operation in the Search for Sustainable Development*, 17 ENVIRONMENTS 21 (Summer 1985).

16. Lief, *Biosphere Reserve Resignation: Its Applicability to Canadian National Parks—The Waterton Pilot Project*, 17 ENVIRONMENTS 37 (Summer 1985).

17. J. THEBERGE, J. G. NELSON & T. FENGE, ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS OF THE YUKON TERRITORY (1981); P. GRIGORIEW, J. G. NELSON & J. THEBERGE, A BOUNDARY DELINEATION MANUAL FOR NATIONAL PARKS: THE ABC METHOD (Occasional Paper No. 4, 1985) (Heritage Resources Centre, Univ. of Waterloo, Ontario); Smith, Nelson & Theberge, *The Role, Identification, Designation and Implementation of Environmentally Significant Areas in the Northwest Territories*, in ARCTIC HERITAGE: PROCEEDINGS OF A SYMPOSIUM, *supra* note 11, at 364.

chaeology, history, land use, ownership) characteristics of a special area, identifying the most significant natural and cultural features and processes and linking these with the most appropriate set of institutional or management arrangements.

This method leads to two basic kinds of management arrangements. In the first case the natural and cultural qualities of the area are amenable to planning and management by a dominant agency cooperating with other concerned agencies, groups, and individuals. An example here would be a large national park cooperating with many groups on surrounding lands in what might be termed the buffer zone. In the second case the natural and cultural qualities are so diverse that joint planning and management by a number of public and private agencies and groups is necessary. This second type of management system has been referred to as the institutional mosaic.<sup>18</sup>

Two other approaches to coordinated management of wild and/or rural lands are reasonably well known in Canada. The first, the protected landscape, is of European origin and is associated for example with regional parks in France, and areas of outstanding natural beauty or heritage coasts in England.<sup>19</sup> In such cases a mixture of private and public land is managed to protect or to sustain the valued natural and cultural qualities of the area in question. In this type of approach the stress is not on concepts such as wilderness or ecosystem, but rather on nature and/or landscapes which owe much to the hand of man.

An associated approach of United States origin is the green-line park which has been promoted by organizations such as the National Parks and Conservation Association [NPCA]. The green-line park is an attempt to tie together a quilt of fragmented parks and private wild, crop, and other land into an integrated whole. Various public and private agencies, groups, and individuals work together in committees or commissions to coordinate management of these diverse areas. Both the protected landscape and the green-line park idea are becoming more relevant for smaller wildland areas in eastern Canada.

Another example of a coordinated approach to planning and management in Canada is the cooperative heritage area concept of Environment Canada, Parks. Here, an attempt is made through funding and other support from the federal government to bring varied federal and provincial agencies and other groups together to plan and manage a wildland that transcends and involves them all. However, cooperative heritage areas have been little used in Canada. Two current examples are the Mackenzie

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18. Nelson & Grigoriew, *Institutional Arrangements for an Individual ESA*, 14 ENV'T CONSERVATION 347 (1987).

19. P. PRITCHARD, VIEWS OF THE GREEN (1985) (National Parks and Conservation Association).

"Grease Trail" across British Columbia and a primarily historical area in the lower Red River Valley, Manitoba.

The reasons for the lack of many formal cooperative approaches to wilderness and related land management in Canada is complicated and has to do with several factors. One factor is a traditionally strong reliance on government to provide for wilderness and other aspects of our natural and cultural heritage. A second factor is that funding for such government work has been substantial until recent years, although this is less true since more depressed economic times began about 1980. Finally, lack of cooperation arises from past availability of substantial amounts of public land in remote areas and traditional federal/provincial rivalries.

One area which is developing well under cooperative planning and management is the Niagara Escarpment in Ontario.<sup>20</sup> Here a sinuous complex of cliffs, caves, forests, and other features stretching for hundreds of miles and rising hundreds of feet among surrounding agricultural, industrial, and urban land is being used and protected through a system that coordinates the interests and efforts of many provincial and local government agencies and private owners. A combination of methods has been developed to do this, including 105 publicly owned parks, the zoning of land according to different environmental and use characteristics, a permit and review system, a Niagara Escarpment Planning Commission and other measures to coordinate land purchase, and planning generally. The Niagara Escarpment example is of special interest because it illustrates how difficult and time consuming a coordinated planning approach can be. The Niagara Escarpment process has been underway for about twenty years and will take many more before its success can be assured.

### A PERSPECTIVE ON CURRENT WILDERNESS VIEWS IN CANADA

One way of gaining some insights into current overall Canadian views of wilderness is to review the recently published proceedings of the *Heritage for Tomorrow* citizen review and planning process.<sup>21</sup> The Canadian Park Service (then "Parks Canada") supported the regional caucuses in different parts of Canada which were the heart of this participating process. One reason for the Canadian Park Service support was to celebrate the centennial of Banff National Park. Another reason was to give citizens an opportunity to evaluate not only national park but other protected areas as well as heritage policy generally in Canada during the last

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20. McKibbin, Lewis & Shaw, *Protecting the Niagara Escarpment*, 42 J. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION 78 (Mar.-Apr. 1987).

21. HERITAGE FOR TOMORROW: CANADIAN ASSEMBLY ON NATIONAL PARKS, *supra* note 14.

century or so. Another basic reason was an interest in developing ideas for the next one hundred years.

The regional caucuses were given core funding to conduct discussions and meetings, as well as studies of heritage policy and practice and areas which might benefit from protected area status. During approximately an eighteen month period, reports were prepared by the caucuses and tabled along with a national issues paper at a Canadian assembly held in Banff in September, 1985. These reports varied in the degree to which consultation with the wider public took place. However, they all involved some public meetings and presentations by an array of conservation and development agencies and groups.

As far as results are concerned, the national issues paper manifests concern about wilderness to a considerable degree. This interest is linked to wildlife concerns and to native people, tourism, and other issues brought forward by participants in various parts of the country. The British Columbian report provides the strongest support for the classical concept of wilderness, although comparable ideas can be found in material prepared by members of the Prairie provinces caucus.

The Ontario caucus report also supported planning and management along the lines of the classical wilderness model for several new wilderness parks proposed for the northern part of the province. Some significant references to wilderness were also made in the Yukon and Northwest Territories documents, although these reports reflected a strong interplay between classical wilderness ideas, and the land claims and native homeland thinking discussed earlier in this essay.

In Quebec, stress was placed on specific concerns such as wild rivers, forests, caves, and human history more than on any overall idea of wilderness. Similar observations apply to the Maritimes. A strong interest in tourism was put forward in the papers from these eastern provinces, where wildland uses are often seen as necessarily contributing to employment and tourist development in one of the economically more depressed parts of Canada.

An underlying reason for this interest in tourism and other uses of wildlands, not only in the Atlantic provinces but also in Quebec and Ontario, is the notion or concept of "the bush." In other words, the hinterland or countryside is not seen as pristine or primeval but as land that has long been used for trapping, lumbering, sport and subsistence hunting and fishing and other activities undertaken to sustain the way of life of rural dwellers. Displacement of people from the land to provide for the classical wilderness model in proposed new national parks in the Atlantic provinces met with very vigorous opposition in the 1960s and 1970s. National park proposals have been withdrawn or considerably modified in the face of this resistance.

In sum, different views of the land beyond the cities—the resource hinterland, the wilderness, the native homeland, the bush—are currently in strong contention on the rural scene in Canada. Indeed, their interplay includes current attempts to protect especially valued parts of the rivers, lakes, and oceans of Canada. As a result it has not been possible to create a wild and scenic rivers program as found in the United States. There is however, a Canadian Heritage Rivers program with goals and means decided upon in the local watershed, with ultimate approval by a joint federal/provincial board. Designated rivers so far have largely been in national parks or other public land, as no special legislative or management powers are found within the Heritage Rivers policy itself. No wilderness designations or related protection measures apply specifically to lakes, a situation which was strongly underlined at the recent *Arctic Heritage* conference.<sup>22</sup> A marine park policy has been approved by the federal government, but it contains little reference to wild seas, and the management regime involves considerable control by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

#### THE CASE OF THE QUEEN CHARLOTTES, SOUTH MORESBY AND LYELL ISLAND

If any situation could be selected which would summarize the uncertain and evolving state of the wilderness concept in Canada today, it is the struggle for a national park in the Queen Charlotte Islands, off the British Columbia west coast. The struggle involves a number of groups and is focused on the South Moresby and Lyell Island areas.<sup>23</sup>

One group is the logging interests, in both the public and the private sectors. They argue that much of the area should be cut to provide jobs and revenue for industry and the province, important things in a time of economic slump in British Columbia.

Another group are the conservation, recreation and tourist people who, while not agreeing entirely on the future nature of any wilderness, generally support a large national park as the best way of conserving and using the resources of the area.

A third group are the native people, the Haida, who have occupied the area since "time immemorial." These folk wish to attain ownership and control of the area, something that has generally not been granted by the government of British Columbia throughout its history of dealing with native people. These people in general see the area as a homeland, to

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22. ARCTIC HERITAGE: PROCEEDINGS OF A SYMPOSIUM, *supra* note 11.

23. B.C. WILDERNESS ADVISORY COMM., THE WILDERNESS MOSAIC (1986); A. Grzybowski, South Moresby in Transition (1986) (on demand publication, Heritage Resources Centre, Univ. of Waterloo, Ontario).



use more or less as their ancestors did, albeit with opportunity for new technology and methods, on a conservation basis. Many Haida do not seem to foresee any logging of the forests, but rather an economy based on fishing, tourism and related uses.

The uncertainties associated with the image and role of the wilderness idea in the South Moresby and Lyell Island areas can be highlighted by quotes reflecting two different points of view as set forth in the July 4, 1987 issue of the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper.

To quote a resident of Moresby Island, British Columbia:

It boggles the mind how [Member of Parliament] James Fulton and his cohort, Environment Minister Tom McMillan, were able to seduce the House of Commons into believing that South Moresby is something that it is not. The words "wilderness treasure," "Garden of Eden," and "ecological gem" were used throughout their speeches, along with a few comparisons to the Giza pyramids and the Taj Mahal. One wonders what these gentlemen had been smoking. . . . A look at any forestry map will indicate that the entire shoreline of Lyell Island was covered by A-frame logging during the 1920s, '30s and '40s, excepting only the exposed northeast corner where Windy Bay is located. . . . Canneries, salteries, and mining activities abounded as well, all serviced by CN steamers that made scheduled trips to the area. . . . The closest thing to Mr. McMillan's Taj Mahal that I have seen in South Moresby is the wreckage of the Rose Harbour whaling station. It operated from 1910 until 1946 and employed 150 men. . . . And the Giza pyramids of South Moresby could only be the remains of the open pit mine that operated at Jedway during the 1960s. To call South Moresby pristine and untouched is not only rubbish but misrepresentation (1987).<sup>24</sup>

To quote Michael Keating, a reporter who frequently comments on environmental and resource issues:

It loomed out of the forest ahead of us like a giant tower. . . . Like ants we swarmed around its base, trying to comprehend its staggering size and to see the top, lost somewhere in the branches above. This Sitka spruce which likely was an old tree by the time Columbus first sighted the Americas, is a symbol of at least three things on the Queen Charlotte Islands: mystical beauty, natural power and a sense of timelessness. . . . There was history among the trees as well. Here and there we found places where bark had been pulled from cedars and the scars long healed. These would have been at least a century ago when Haida were still cutting bark for clothing or to weave baskets. . . . We were at the edge of Windy Bay on Lyell

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24. Verchere, *Island Hardly Garden of Eden*, *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), July 4, 1987, at D7, col. 4.

Island, in the heart of the Queen Charlottes, or Haida Gwaii as it is known to the people who have lived there for millennia. It is one of those magical places in the world, the kind which are becoming fewer and farther apart every day as wilderness gives way to logging, mining, farming, and settlement.<sup>25</sup>

So, what are we to conclude on the basis of this limited analysis? The previous quotes reveal the contradictory perceptions in this conflict over wilderness. In particular they reveal the different ways in which previous human history can be related to current wilderness, national park, and other land use proposals. When agreement on a national park was reached in July, 1987, it involved the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of the province of British Columbia. However, in remarking on their accomplishment to the media, the two political leaders seemingly made little reference to the idea of wilderness. They placed most stress on the importance of the area as the ancient homeland of the Haida people.<sup>26</sup> How the role of the classic idea of wilderness will fare in the interplay with native use and other influences remains to be worked out in what will undoubtedly be a long planning process.

Is there a better way formally to plan for and manage controversial "wilderness areas"? How important is more and better scientific information in such a situation? How important also are more and better settings in which the images, interests, and issues can be more fully discussed and thought about by concerned persons? Is it better to continue to think about wilderness in the classical sense as a thing apart? How is it to be related to the native homeland idea? Can it be linked more effectively with other land uses and concepts through more comprehensive and co-operative approaches such as biosphere reserves, protected landscapes or institutional mosaics?

To answer such questions is certainly not easy. One thing should be recognized as very important, however. In spite of their conceptual or definitional difficulties, both the wilderness and the national park concepts have been of great significance in Canada. Indeed, they have developed over the decades to become the only really powerful tools available to control unwanted exploitive economic activities and effects in areas perceived as being of unusual geologic, biologic, or cultural importance.

Among other things, the wilderness and national parks concepts have protected genetic resources as potential sources of improved plants, drugs, or other technology. They have been conservers of water and moderators of slope erosion, floods, and excess downstream sedimentation. They have helped maintain places where higher level predators and other ele-

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25. Keating, *The Last Frontier*; *id.* at E1, col. 1.

26. B.C., *Ottawa Sign Historic Park Deal*; *id.* at A5, col. 1.

ments in relatively complete ecosystems can be monitored and studied as a means of guiding, planning, and managing areas within and outside of their circumference in the future. They also have helped provide places where people can observe and enjoy what we sometimes call "wild nature" as a framework for thought and judgment about an increasingly urbanized world, a world where much natural and cultural diversity and experience is being lost rapidly, to what end?

It does seem clear, however, that for the thinking citizen, the wilderness concept can no longer be used and promulgated in the gross and universal way that it has been in the past. Of course such usage was understandable in many ways. After all, the wilderness idea developed in exploitive economic times in the nineteenth century, when a nation wanted renown, when natural resources were being seriously abused, when the lands in question belonged to people viewed as primitive and uncivilized, obstacles to progress. At that time also, scientific knowledge of so-called natural systems was much lower than it is now.

Today, however, after more than a century of application of the classical wilderness ideal, the problems are very apparent, even in the hearth of the concept, the United States. Recent articles in the *New York Times* point to many of the difficulties and paradoxes of the untouched wilderness model and present the case for more scientific and informed interpretation, planning, and management of wilderness.<sup>27</sup> Consider the following points with respect to Rocky Mountain Park, Colorado, as paraphrased from the foregoing issue of the *Times*. With regard to elk, these animals were almost extinct by 1912. After new elk were brought in and hunting was ended, the migratory herds increased rapidly to over four thousand today. Some concerned wildlife groups contend that overgrazing by elk poses a threat to other animal range and has damaged aspen forests. With respect to wolves, they have been extinct in the Rocky Mountain National Park area since about 1900. Park managers have suggested that they be re-introduced as a way of checking the elk population. Beaver were once almost extinct in the region because of trapping. They are plentiful again, "almost a nuisance." On the other hand the beaver population reportedly has declined where elk herds occur, mainly because they reportedly tend to feed on similar vegetation. The native greenback cutthroat trout, an endangered species, has suffered from interbreeding and conflict with exotic fish introduced in lakes and streams for fishermen.

One U.S. critic of concepts, policies and effects like the foregoing has definite views on planning and management needs. To quote:

What the service [U.S. National Park Service] has been doing wrong is principally not studying conditions in the parks thoroughly enough,

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27. *National Parks: Preserves or Playgrounds?*, N.Y. Times, July 5, 1987, at E7, col 1; Chase, *Saving Nature from Itself*; *id.* at col. 3; Mott, *Searching for the Right Balance*, *id.* at col. 3.

largely because they have an inadequate scientific arm. But in addition they have been following a policy of letting nature take its course. This policy is based on a false assumption. The parks are much too small in most cases to have ever been self-regulating. And they've been in all cases enormously affected by civilization, changed by the removal of Indians and often simply misguided policies within the parks.<sup>28</sup>

One part of the answer in both the U.S. and Canada is that we can no longer really think of, and so plan and manage wilderness as areas to be left alone, to change in what have been called evolutionary or natural terms, without any interference by human beings. For as we have seen, humans have long influenced wilderness through various concepts, policies, programs, and projects within and without national parks and other management areas. It is therefore necessary to monitor and study changes in wilderness and to think about these changes in relation to current policies and practices, for these will largely determine the qualities which wilderness will have. Certain changes in policies and practices may produce results that are not what some people want or expect, including park managers or citizens who see wilderness as the fulfillment of their desire for the primeval or the pristine.

Without observation, monitoring, thought, and dialogue about changes in policies, practices and effects, highly valued elements of the system could be threatened or disappear. In advocating more watching, study, and thought by all concerned, the intent is not necessarily to support more interference on many fronts but rather to take the pulse of seemingly healthy and desirable ecosystems in a regular way. Thus, we may be able to foresee and possibly to prevent changes that are unwanted by many of us. Discussion of changes—and the policies and practices relating to them—may of course become highly political. Science and technique cannot decide which is more valuable to various people or groups, whether it be an elk or a beaver, a wolf or a sheep, a spruce or a pine forest, or a grassland or savannah. In saying these things one is also conscious of “deep ecology” ideas and of the belief that systems should be allowed to change independently of human ideas and values. To watch and think about changes in the system is not antithetical to such a view. The decision can still be taken to allow certain changes to proceed for reasons that supersede the human. Indeed we may end up being able to do little about some of the changes in any event because they involve processes that we do not understand or are unable to manipulate for economic or other reasons.

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28. Chase, *supra* note 27.

- (b) The Wet Tropical Rainforests of North Queensland were inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 1988.
- (c) Forestry issues remain particularly contentious in several states. Following a federal inquiry, a "forestry accord" of sorts has been negotiated between the Tasmanian and Commonwealth governments, but wilderness issues remain high on the political agenda.