

The College of Wooster

## Open Works

---

Senior Independent Study Theses

---

2021

# Conserving America: A History of America's Conservation Movement and the Establishment of the National Park Service

Jack Jones

*The College of Wooster*, [jjones21@wooster.edu](mailto:jjones21@wooster.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://openworks.wooster.edu/independentstudy>

---

### Recommended Citation

Jones, Jack, "Conserving America: A History of America's Conservation Movement and the Establishment of the National Park Service" (2021). *Senior Independent Study Theses*. Paper 9535.

This Senior Independent Study Thesis Exemplar is brought to you by Open Works, a service of The College of Wooster Libraries. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Independent Study Theses by an authorized administrator of Open Works. For more information, please contact [openworks@wooster.edu](mailto:openworks@wooster.edu).

© Copyright 2021 Jack Jones

The College of Wooster

Conserving America: A History of America's Conservation Movement and the Establishment of  
the National Park Service

By

Jack Jones

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements of Senior Independent Study

Supervised by  
Jordan Biro-Walters  
Department of History

Spring 2021

## Abstract

The National Park Service (NPS) is the conservation agency recognized around the world for its efforts to preserve areas of beauty within America. This I.S seeks to answer the question of how and why the NPS developed? There are several factors to consider. To begin at the end of the nineteenth century the first National Park efforts at both Yellowstone and Yosemite mark the beginning of a larger conservation movement within America. Both of these parks serve as models for how conservationists and the government will move forward in creating more parks and conservation agencies. They also came out of white Americans moving West and notions of the “frontier” closing in 1890. Additionally, the creation of the first two parks removed Native Americans from their homes and established a trend of marginalizing Native Nations during and after NPS creation. By the start of the start the twentieth century, Theodore Roosevelt entered into the office of President and prioritized conservation as a national goal. His administration laid much of the groundwork for the NPS through three conservation entities—the first wildlife refuges, the United States Forest Service, and the 1906 Antiquities Act—all served as precursors to NPA. The NPS creation in 1916 arose out of a need for more organization in the Department of the Interior. This entire project fills in the significance of Native Americans in the conservation movement and identifies specific actors and precursors to the NPS instead of generalizing the NPS as an outcome of the conservation movement.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction and Historiography .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
Introduction .....	vi
Historiography.....	ix
<b>Chapter 1: The Big Two: Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Native Americans and the Original National Parks .....	1
American Settlers and the Homestead Act.....	5
The First Protected Wilderness .....	8
Yellowstone National Park.....	11
Conclusion.....	18
<b>Chapter 2: The Most Important Figure: The Bull Moose .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Roosevelt's Western Literature and the Frontier Thesis .....	21
Presidential Tour of the West .....	26
Roosevelt and the National Conservation Commission .....	33
Roosevelt's Shortcomings as a True Conservationist.....	36
Conclusion.....	40
<b>Chapter 3: The Big Three: Models for the NPS.....</b>	<b>41</b>
Wildlife Sanctuaries: National Wildlife Refuge System (1903) .....	44
The U.S. Forest Service (1905).....	50
Antiquities Act (1906) .....	58
Conclusion.....	66
<b>Chapter 4: The American Conservation Ideal: The NPS.....</b>	<b>68</b>
Organic Act of 1916 .....	72
Conclusion.....	78
<b>Annotated Bibliography .....</b>	<b>81</b>
Primary Sources: .....	81
Secondary Sources:.....	85
<b>Works Cited.....</b>	<b>90</b>

## Acknowledgements

This project was created with a ton of support and help from many people. First and foremost, I want to thank my advisor for helping me shape a topic that interested me. Dr. J was always there to point me in the right direction when I had questions and provided support when I was struggling the most. Without her help, this project would never have turned out the way that it did and likely would have not been completed on time. I also want to take time in thanking the History Department in providing excellent resources and support throughout this entire year. Many teachers in this department have contributed to my growth as a writer and historian.

Secondly, I want to thank my family for helping me stay focused and providing me the opportunity to come to Wooster. Without the help of my parents, David and Paige, who are both Wooster alumni and understand what it takes to get this project done, I would have never been able to finish this project. My twin brother and older sister, Clay and Helen, were always there to talk when I had a bad day and were always inquiring about my project. Their moral support and constant questions made me want to make this project stronger. My Aunt Helen has also served as a source of guidance and understanding as a Wooster graduate. She provided more moral support than I possible needed.

Lastly, I have to give a shoutout to my teammates over the past four years on the baseball team. All of my teammates and coaches have been like a family away from home on this campus and were key in helping me find motivation to finish this project. I want to especially thank my

roommates of the last four years, Gabe Sherman, Steve Spidell, Zach Schuch, and Jay Dibacco, for always being there when I was struggling or lacking in motivation and discussing ideas. Everyone else who was involved in this project, thank you.

## Introduction and Historiography

### Introduction

Natural beauty does not describe the wonders housed in America's National Parks well enough. From the sheer awe one feels while gazing up at Half Dome in Yosemite to the iconic American wilderness scene of buffalo and geysers at Yellowstone, Americans recognized early on that some places deserved federal protection. These places help set the high standards of preservation and conservation in America. How and why did Americans begin to protect its natural wonders? The national park ideal gained popularity from a conservation movement that began as civilized and industrial societies emerged. People living in cities suddenly missed the natural world and its wonders. As city centers began to boom in the mid nineteenth century, many people living within these industrial powerhouses yearned for the outdoors and freedom that nature provided.<sup>1</sup> While the national park label is uniquely American, While the idea of a national park has been around for centuries, development of the National Park Service (NPS) (add your date range) is one uniquely American idea that countries all over the world have adopted.<sup>2</sup> Today, The National Park Service (NPS) is one uniquely American idea that countries all over the world have adopted becoming a global system of conservation.<sup>3</sup> This IS charts the factors and people involved with the conservation movement that leads to the NPS creation. A rise in conservation as a standard practice which is evident with the creation of more conservation agencies and park areas at the end of the nineteenth and into the earlier twentieth

---

<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Gissibl, Höhler Sabine, and Patrick Kupper, "Introduction Towards a Global History of National Parks," in *Civilizing Nature: National Parks in Global Historical Perspective* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 1-28.

<sup>2</sup> *The National Parks - America's Best Idea*, directed by Ken Burns (PBS, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

century combined with a conservation minded president directly led to the creation of the NPS in 1916.

This project also explores opposition to the creation of National Parks. Native Americans rejected the idea because they had their homelands forcibly taken from them. Tribal Nations such as the Ahwahneechees, Crows, Blackfeet, Bannocks, Eastern Shoshones and Sheepeaters would all be victims of the first two protected areas at Yosemite<sup>4</sup> and Yellowstone<sup>5</sup>. Homesteaders and industrialists also opposed park creation because they saw America expanding at an astronomical pace and realized that the products of capitalism were fueled by resources taken from places centered in western America. The resources out West had already fueled a booming industrial revolution, so why not get in and get the most out of the land while it was there? These figures not only wanted the resources for economic gain, but they also felt as though the physical land that could become a national park should be utilized for something better. Land was to be used for economic gain and should be used to either farm, ranch, or mine.<sup>6</sup>

To fuel this idea there was also extensive amounts of land in the American west and nobody realized just how scarce those resources could become without proper conservation. Americans saw the West as a vast area of land full of almost unlimited resources. Attitudes began to change when Frederick Jackson Turner declared the western frontier closed in 1890. This closing would allow many conservationists to gain an upper hand in the argument for conservation because the frontier became a limited space.

---

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1990), 12-14.

<sup>5</sup> Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park, Historical and Descriptive*, (Saint Paul, MN: J. E. Haynes, 1927), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982).



The push and pull between conservationists and preservationists slowed the creation of several national parks.<sup>7</sup> Preservationists like John Muir and the Sierra Club demanded that the land for areas of protection be surveyed to make certain that the land could not be used for any other purpose. Conservationists like Theodore Roosevelt and George Grinnell, while similar in wanting certain areas protected, believed that resources extracted could be monitored to ensure usage while upholding the features of a park area. This trend would continue from the formation of the first park in Yellowstone to the formation of practically every other national park. The complex relationship between the government protecting areas of land and allowing good economic opportunity for private citizens will be at the center of the conservation debate. Smaller groups and individual conservationists voiced the opinion that some land contained features or historic value greater than the economic gain. Even with these claims, the NPS creation required an economic pitch from its founders that the park sites would draw in money from tourism. In the eyes of some, America represented a place of economic opportunity and this went as far as utilizing all the land for the purpose of making money.

This IS will trace the creation of the first national park in 1872 and analyze the decisions that led to the creation of NPS in 1916 using Congressional records, presidential speeches and letters, and policies passed. The first chapter examines Yellowstone and Yosemite, and the motivating factors of the conservation movement, thus illustrating the roots of the NPS. A deeper analysis of Theodore Roosevelt will be made in chapter two because he is, perhaps, the most important figure in the support of conservation. In chapter three, the groundwork for the NPS becomes more directly linked with the creation of the first wildlife refuges, first national forests, and the creation of the Antiquities Act (1906). Finally, all of the conservation efforts come

---

<sup>7</sup> Duane H. Hampton, "Opposition to National Parks," *Journal of Forest History* 25, no. 1, (1981): 37-45.

together in chapter four, which details the creation of the NPS in 1916. Very broadly, the NPS creation supported by politicians and activist addressed the fear of a disappearing wilderness which could lead to inability to profit off of the land via resources or tourism without proper conservation.

### Historiography

The history of National Parks focuses on the positive outcome of creating areas that specifically preserved America's premier places of natural beauty. Scholarship surrounding this history identifies Yellowstone as the starting point of a National Parks movement in the U.S. and recognizes a growing acceptance of conservation around the country. With recognition of a conservation movement, these histories jump to the creation of the NPS as a direct product of a desire to protect natural beauty that comes out of the conservation movement. Much of the scholarship also recognizes a need for a federal body to run the nation's National Parks because there was no agency that could handle the management before 1916. The NPS elibrary provided significant resources that elaborate on this version of the NPS history.

Historian Roderick Nash champions the concerns of the conservationists and preservationists at the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. His work on the Conservation movement in *Wilderness and the American Mind*<sup>8</sup> shows that park creation, as well as other similar reserves, show an American desire to slow the impact of capitalism dictating how land should be used. Smaller, wilderness-oriented groups with support from politicians controlled the narrative that National Parks needed to be created to save the disappearing wilderness. These smaller groups are cited throughout larger histories of the NPS

---

<sup>8</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982).

and to specific NPS units. Secondary sources in this project reflect the overall goal of the NPS to create places where American beauty was saved.

By first looking at the original creation of Yosemite and Yellowstone with histories found on the NPS history database, a history emerges that paints this picture. Historian Hiram Chittenden provides insight into the creation of the nation's first official National Park at Yellowstone in his work, *The Yellowstone National Park, Historical and Descriptive*<sup>9</sup> where he lays out the debates involved with creating and maintaining Yellowstone. Alfred Runte does the same with regard to history for Yosemite in *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness*<sup>10</sup>. *The American People and the National Forests*<sup>11</sup> written by Historian Samuel Hays and *The National Parks: Shaping the System* by Historians Barry Mackintosh, Janet McDonnell, and John Sprinkle are written in a similar style to the works of Chittenden and Runte.<sup>12</sup> Each one has a specific part of the conservation movement in their writing and created only one piece of why there is an NPS. I pair their writings with primary sources from Congressional documents to paint a fuller story about the emergence of NPS.

Edmund Morris is the historian on Theodore Roosevelt and has written extensively about all parts of the former president's life. His writing in *Theodore Rex*<sup>13</sup> helps solidify Roosevelt as the most central figure in creating the NPS by framing him as a president who pushed conservation as a national goal. Historians Nathaniel Reed and Dennis Orabelle wrote one of the

---

<sup>9</sup> Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park, Historical and Descriptive*, (Saint Paul, MN: J. E. Haynes, 1927).

<sup>10</sup> Alfred Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> Samuel P. Hays, *The American People & the National Forests: The First Century of the U.S. Forest Service* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Barry Mackintosh, Janet A. McDonnell, and John H. Sprinkle, "The National Parks: Shaping the System," *The George Wright Forum* 35, no. 2 (2018): pp.12, <http://npshistory.com/publications/shaping-the-system-2018.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (New York: Random House, 2010).

only histories of the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) titled *The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*.<sup>14</sup> This work helps lay out one of the crucial early precursors to the NPS with wildlife refuges. The Antiquities Act is also identified as an important precursor to the NPS, and scholars David Harmon, Francis McManamon, and Dwight Pitcaithley created an extensive work called *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation*<sup>15</sup> about what factors and groups led to the creation of the Act. Taken together, while all these scholars write in a very similar way, each one has created only one piece of why there is an NPS. I pair their writings with primary sources from Congressional documents, to paint a fuller story about the emergence of NPS.

Additionally, with all of this scholarship surround conservation and the NPS, there is a lack of Native American perspective. While most of the Native American side of conservation history is included in much of the scholarship, there are some that do not do enough. Some will even frame Native Americans as an obstacle in the way of American progress. To avoid this narrative the inclusion of conservation history by Native American historians was necessary. Historian Mark Spence provides an in-depth analysis of the relationship of Native Americans and the NPS during its original creation of 1916 in *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*.<sup>16</sup> His work explains the Native American perspective missing from a lot of conservation histories and shows that the NPS has never really had a good relationship with Native Americans. The conservation relationship to Native

---

<sup>14</sup> Nathaniel P. Reed and Dennis Orabelle, “The Background of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,” in *The United States Fish and Wildlife Service* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> David Harmon, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley. *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> *Dispossessing the Wilderness*

Americans was also never very good which is backed by scholarship from Barbara Hall<sup>17</sup> on the Antiquities Act and Theodore Catton<sup>18</sup> on the USFS. Both works show the disregard for Native American desires by not allowing their participation in the conservation practices. All of the Native American scholars illustrate the problem of not allowing the group to have a voice in the conservation movement.

---

<sup>17</sup> Barbara A. Hall and Shepard Krech, "Introduction," in *Collecting Native America: 1870-1960* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> Theodore Catton and Joel D. Holtrop, "Indians, Non-Indians, and the American Forests to 1900," in *American Indians and National Forests* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2016).

## **Chapter 1: The Big Two: Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks**

For the NPS to exist, several factors needed to fall into place. Native Americans cannot be forgotten in this discussion because the goal of conserving is aimed at the lands they lived on for generations. Many Native Americans were displaced with the goals and actions of conservation. The movement west is the ultimate factor for why national parks are created because as Americans moved West, they got to see the beauty for themselves. This migration is heavily influenced by the Homestead Act of 1862 which gives any head of the house American citizen over twenty-one years of age a right to one hundred sixty acres of land with the stipulation that they improve the land for five years. National conservation groups and wildlife clubs will also carry significant opinions that will shape the beginning of the conservation movement. Lastly, the formation of Yosemite State Park and Yellowstone National Park will be examined. The first factor is that both places held significant sources of American beauty that were rivaled by no other place on Earth. Second, both places were identified by conservationists as places that needed to be saved. Finally, both Yellowstone and Yosemite contained economic opportunity through tourism or resources that needed to be addressed. Conservationists, who were primarily ordinary Americans, immediately recognized this and pled with the federal government for conserving these lands. With all these factors occurring at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century America will begin to see national park formation become normal.

### *Native Americans and the Original National Parks*

Americans see national parks as areas of untamed wilderness. This view has been shaped by histories that describe the West as a place that was barren and uninhabited.<sup>1</sup> By making this

---

<sup>1</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982).

assumption, the Native American tribes that called the national park areas home for centuries were erased from the landscape. Before the U.S. government owned any of the land where the great wonders of the country lie, Native Americans called these lands home. The complexity of different ideas about how to utilize the land also becomes important. The main intention of the America government creating national parks was to conserve and put restrictions on the land, but many Native people wanted the opposite. They wanted the ability to hunt big game on these lands or to set big fires in order to replenish the soil and chase game. National Parks were founded on the idea that there was a need to conserve nature and there should be a habitat for wild animals. Fundamentally, this became more than just taking their home.<sup>2</sup>

For example, the Miwok speaking people inhabited the land that would make up Yosemite National Park when the federal government approved the area for state protection in 1864. The federal government, to accommodate a national park, then removed Miwok speaking people. For nearly two thousand years this group of Native Americans lived in Yosemite Valley. They called Yosemite awahnee which translates to the “place of gaping mouth.”<sup>3</sup> The Miwok eventually mixed with other Native tribes in the area and formed the Ahwahneechees. Until around 1800, the Ahwahneechees lived peacefully, surviving on acorns as their primary source of food. When white settlers arrived, they likely brought smallpox with them and decimated the population. The Ahwahneechees had to flee their villages and merge with other local tribes. In 1848 the prospect of gold in the area brought even more settlers to the area and inevitably the Native Ahwahneechees clashed with them. To deal with the Ahwahneechees, white settlers formed the Mariposa Battalion with the express aim of removing of Ahwahneechees from the

---

<sup>2</sup> Philip Burnham, *Indian Country, God's Country: Native Americans and the National Parks* (New York, NY: Island Press, 2000), 9.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1990), 12-14.

area. By March of 1851, battalion commander James Savage threatened to kill every last Ahwahneechee if they did not vacate the area. Most Ahwahneechees left the parklands and joined neighboring tribes, but their legacy in the Yosemite Valley would not be forgotten. It is believed that Yosemite comes from the Ahwahneechee word, “yochemate,” which translates to “some among them are killers.” This could be a reference to the 1851 battalion attacks on the tribe as many feared for their lives.<sup>4</sup> The Ahwahneechees would not be the only Native people pushed out of one of the original national parks.

Yellowstone also holds a long history of Native Americans. In fact, Native Americans helped create the first maps of Yellowstone. During the first known expedition of Yellowstone by Lewis and Clark in 1805 the map they created was largely based on Native knowledge of the area.<sup>5</sup> Within Yellowstone, three tribes inhabited the park grounds. The Siouan, the Algonquian, and the Shoshonean families all prospered in the area for generations. From these families, the Crows, Blackfeet, Bannocks, Eastern Shoshones and Sheepeater tribes all lived within Yellowstone. The groups never occupied Yellowstone full time because the region became covered with too much snow in the winter.<sup>6</sup> When the U.S. became interested in the land, they began a long process of creating treaties with these Native groups in order to gain control of the land. The first came in September of 1851 and was just made with the Crows and Blackfeet. The two tribes were actually given land in the Yellowstone park region as a common hunting ground for all tribes in the region. In October of 1855 this idea became fully solidified as another treaty with the Blackfeet stated this clearly. In May of 1868 the U.S. government negotiated a treaty to

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park, Historical and Descriptive*, (Saint Paul, MN: J. E. Haynes, 1927), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



have this land ceded to America. By the formation of the park in 1872, the Crows were the only group left with any land in the park area. By 1880 this land was given to the American government through another treaty.<sup>7</sup>

Native Americans were the original inhabitants of all National park lands. As the goals of conservation are discussed, it becomes ever more important to see that while saving nature was the priority, no attention to Native Americans ancestral lands was considered. The only exception will be the Antiquities Act of 1906 which includes Native American artifacts and history as a reason to create a national monument.<sup>8</sup> Americans will always treat national parks as places of exemplary natural wonders when in reality they were the homes of native groups who were slowly removed over decades. The examples of both Yellowstone and Yosemite show incidents of both violence and of diplomacy. However, one could argue that the treaties created by the American government were unfair towards groups that held less power and faced extermination if they did not comply. National Parks today continue to show the story of native removal as many still live on the ground their ancestors lived on for centuries.<sup>9</sup> As the discussion of conservation importance and significance continues, the Native Americans who dwelled on these lands cannot be forgotten. They were the original protectors of the great natural wonders.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 8-19.

<sup>8</sup> David Harmon, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley. *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Philip Burnham, *Indian Country, God's Country: Native Americans and the National Parks* (New York, NY: Island Press, 2000), 10.

### American Settlers and the Homestead Act

Another fundamental element for the creation of an NPS is the Homestead Act of 1862.

This act gave American settlers a title to no more than one hundred sixty acres of land with the stipulation that these settlers spend five years cultivating the land. The act states,

“That any person who is the head of a family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and is a citizen of the United States... be entitled to enter one quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated public lands ... to be located in a body, in conformity to the legal subdivisions of the public lands, and after the same shall have been surveyed: Provided, That any person owning and residing on land may...which shall not, with the land so already owned and occupied, exceed in the aggregate one hundred and sixty acres.”<sup>10</sup>

Suddenly, land out west became affordable for many and the Homestead Act drove Americans out West. The Homestead Act set clear boundaries for how settlers should go about their land claims in the West, but many Americans saw land out West as a point of contention. The history of settling in unsettled lands is full of battles over how it should be done and dates all the way back to the colonial days of America in the eighteenth century. The battle of the Homestead Act would take place over the span of ten years because the bill could not make it out of Congress. Southern politicians simply feared that if land in the West was made cheaply available, all sources of cheap labor would leave. In 1852, 1854, and 1859 a Homestead Act made it through the House, but southern senators blocked the bill from leaving Congress. In 1860 President Buchanan vetoed another Homestead Act claiming that it was unfair to soldiers who received land for their service and to those who had already paid a great deal for their land claims.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Committee on Public Lands, *An Act to secure Homesteads to actual Settlers on the Public Domain*, H.R. no. 37.

<sup>11</sup> Lee Ann Potter and Wynell Schamel, "The Homestead Act of 1862." *Social Education* 61, 6 (October 1997) 359-364.

Finally, on May 10, 1862 the Homestead Act passed with little opposition. With southern states succeeding from the Union the cries of opposition disappeared. Instantly the effects of the act became known as claims came pouring into the General Land Office. Just nine months after passing the Secretary of the Interior reported that claims had been made on over 1.45 million acres of land.<sup>12</sup> Clearly Americans wanted to move west. This frenzy of claims would not let up over the coming years and more claims came pouring in. By 1900 eighty million acres of land had been distributed to Americans willing to move West and cultivate the land for five years.<sup>13</sup> The Act remained important to the conservation of western land this was exemplified by the first Homestead Act area being made a national monument. On January 1, 1863 homesteader Daniel Freeman filed a claim for land in Nebraska and today this area of land is known as Homestead National Monument of America.<sup>14</sup> It serves as a remembrance to how Americans moved west and created opportunities for themselves by working the land.

The Homestead act allowed Americans to move west and see the natural wonders that the country held. Without it, Americans likely would not have moved west at the pace they did and there would not have been the government oversight on western lands that came along with the act. This act solidified the fact that land claims had to be made on surveyed lands and this would become important for some areas that would later receive federal protection. Mainly, the Homestead Act allowed Americans the choice to move West at an affordable price.<sup>15</sup> The actual language contained within the act was tricky and caused some to be against conservation entirely. Homesteaders were required to improve the land which they made claims on and

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> National Park Service, "History and Culture," National Parks Service (U.S. Department of the Interior, October 12, 2020), <https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/index.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

usually this meant building a home and farming the land. Language within the bill never specified how big the home had to be simply leaving it at the dimensions of twelve by fourteen. Of course, the act meant feet, but some took advantage of the language and made small house that were twelve by fourteen inches.<sup>16</sup> People who took advantage of this loophole did so for economic gain. Another problem with the act came from the one hundred-sixty-acre provision that did not account for grazing space and access to water.<sup>17</sup> This meant that a neighbor could own all the water for miles and could dictate its use.

The goals of the Homestead Act and conservation clashed. Even after the NPS creation in 1916, the NPS did not receive the go ahead to purchase land from citizens until the 1960s.<sup>18</sup> This meant that any park created had to be created on public lands already owned by the government. With this in mind, homesteaders were potential opponents to those pushing for national parks. With claims on public lands, American citizens attempting to make economic opportunities for themselves off of the land would not want more restrictions to put on the land. With the NPS not being able to purchase land from settlers without approval it is likely that if a homesteader made a claim and the government wanted a national park or area of conservation on the same land, the settler would likely be forced out without compensation. Another possibility that could arise from this situation would be government restrictions that slowly force settlers off the land or a request for federal funds to purchase the land. This is exactly what will happen in America's first protected wilderness in Yosemite.

---

<sup>16</sup> Committee on Public Lands, *An Act to secure Homesteads to actual Settlers on the Public Domain*, H.R. no. 37.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Mennell, Stephen. "Liminality and the Frontier Myth in the Building of the American Empire." In *Breaking Boundaries: Varieties of Liminality*, (NEW YORK; OXFORD: Berghahn Books, 2018), 112-129.

### The First Protected Wilderness

Before the National Parks became an idea, there were significant areas of wilderness that were protected by law. These few places served as models for National Parks to follow. The first place that comes to the congressional table was Yosemite State Park which is located in northern California. The area in the Sierra Mountains was well known by Spanish explorers, but the actual beauty of the park was not public knowledge until 1849 after the gold rush.<sup>19</sup> Frustrated miners came to the area and one man named James Mason Hutchings quickly realized that Yosemite was home to some of the most beautiful sights of nature. He quickly publicized the area in his magazine *Hutchings' California Magazine* as an effort to draw tourists to the area.

Hutchings would describe Yosemite on the first page of the first issue,

“There are but few lands that possess more of the beautiful and picturesque than California. Its towering and pine covered mountains; its wide-spread valleys, carpeted with flowers; its leaping waterfalls; its foaming cataracts; its rushing rivers; its placid lakes; its evergreen forests; its gently rolling hills, with shrubs and trees and flowers, make this a garden of loveliness, and a pride to her enterprising sons.”<sup>20</sup>

Descriptions like this would begin a trend of visitors coming to see all that was promised in the area and soon Yosemite was the subject of many feature articles in national outlets. As the area began to rise to national prominence, a place that used to only have a few visitors a year was quickly bringing in many more visitors from all over the country. There was now recognition that the area needed to be developed to show America's beauty, but there was no frame of reference on how that could be done or if any preservation would even occur.<sup>21</sup>

Without any guidance or ideas about preservation, Hutchings and a man by the name of James C. Lamon made illegal homestead claims on the land with the hope that they could develop tourism in the area. The claims were illegal because the homestead claims could only be

---

<sup>19</sup> Alfred Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1990), 15.

<sup>20</sup> James Hutchings, “The Yohamite Valley, and Its Water-Falls,” *Hutchings Magazine* 1, no. 1, July 1856.

<sup>21</sup> Alfred Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1990), 15-17.

made on land already surveyed. Both men already knew that the areas of the Merced, the Tuolumne, and the Mariposa grove with sequoia trees had the ability to draw the most tourism out of all the sites in Yosemite. The need for tourism developments at Yosemite allowed these two men to have some kind of working structure in the area in 1857.<sup>22</sup> Americans mostly supported the idea of developing the area and it drew comparisons to the wonder in the East of the time in Niagara Falls. Yosemite now appeared to be destined for development as a tourist destination for Americans to come and enjoy. The national attention that Yosemite received made Americans closer to finding a missing identity. America did not have the long, historical record that Europe had, even though the country had been inhabited for centuries. With Yosemite, Americans felt that they had something that lasted for hundreds of years that they could point out as unique and significant.<sup>23</sup>

Yosemite became the first park to go to a congressional hearing for the expressed purpose of protection and come out approved by Congress. In February of 1864 a man by the name of Israel Ward Raymond, who worked as the California state representative of the Central American Steamship Transit Company of New York, sent a letter to John Conness, a Junior Senator for California. In this letter Raymond would urge for the conservation of Yosemite, especially the Mariposa Grove. Contained within the envelope was also a picture of Inspiration Point which allowed congress to see the beauty of the park. Specific details of the site in the letter included a description of the Sierra Nevada Mountains as bare granite which could never be of much value. This part of the letter allowed Congress to see that the land at Yosemite did not have any real economic opportunity. Yosemite contained some of the most unique and outstanding scenes of nature on Earth and Raymond made this clear to Congress. Raymond drew

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 17-18.

support by showing that the land contained some of the most beautiful sites in America. By the end of 1864 the government began to survey the land.<sup>24</sup>

On May 17, 1864, the Senate Committee on Public Lands reviewed a bill produced by John Conness. The Yosemite Park Act of 1864 looked like it was going to provide the first area that obtained federal protection. Instead of making the federal government oversee the area, the state of California is granted the area. In 1864 America is in the middle of a Civil War and the federal government would not be able to afford the protection Yosemite needed.<sup>25</sup> The final approval of the bill came in June of 1864 with the guidelines “that the said State shall accept this grant upon the express conditions that the premises shall be held for public use, resort, and recreation; shall be inalienable for all time.”<sup>26</sup> With these conditions the state retained control of the land for the expressed purpose of recreation and tourism. The claims that both men made came when the land was not yet surveyed, and this created a legal problem for their claims. To go on top of this, the new bill protected Yosemite from private ownership for all time.

It can be argued that Yosemite is the first national park ever created. It went through congressional approval to become an area protected by law and the natural beauty of the area originally made Yosemite a place that needed protection. The fear of losing the natural wonders to prospectors and pioneers coming into the area sparked congressional support for regional preservation. The language contained within Raymond’s letter became an essential motivator for gaining support from many. He utilized the beauty with a picture and drew on the idea that areas of such beauty needed protection from a higher authority. Congress then passed an act which

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 19-21.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Senate, “S. 203, A Bill Authorizing a Grant To...California of the ‘Yosemite Valley,’ And...the ‘Mariposa Big Tree Grove,” June 30, 1864,” U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, June 30, 1864, <https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/artifact/s-203-bill-authorizing-grant-tocalifornia-yosemite-valley-andthe-mariposa-big>.

created an area protected with the expressed purpose of allowing the area to be used for tourism and as an area that people could enjoy for all of time. The government set the tone early by declaring this area one of significance to American identity because it had to be preserved for all of time. Yellowstone will follow a similar path, but it would not go to Congress in the middle of a civil war.

### Yellowstone National Park

Yellowstone is identified by most, including Hiram Chittenden, as the first area to receive direct federal protection.<sup>27</sup> Yosemite indirectly received federal protection because Congress would give control of protection to the state of California. Lewis and Clark would be the first to explore the grounds of Yellowstone in 1805, but the two did not spend much time there and the area continued to be a mystery.<sup>28</sup> The first available report of Yellowstone for the public to see would not come until 1827 when a description appeared in the Philadelphia Gazette. Very similar to Yosemite, the area is described as a place of incredible natural beauty.<sup>29</sup> Unlike Yosemite, the popularity of the park did not skyrocket right after the release of the area in a newspaper or magazine. Yellowstone would have to wait its turn before receiving national attention. The land remained completely unexplored by any kind of agency with authority and the need to explore and explain why the area deserved protection would have to happen before the protection.

Expeditions allowed Yellowstone to get the protection it needed. These expeditions all achieved the goal of obtaining more knowledge about the area as well as showing politicians, scientists, and explorers the beauty that the Wyoming and Montana territory possessed.

---

<sup>27</sup> Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park, Historical and Descriptive*, (Saint Paul, MN: J. E. Haynes, 1927).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-5.

<sup>29</sup> B Hazel Hunt. Voth and Carl Parcher Russell, *Yellowstone National Park: A Bibliography* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1940), 33-38.



Yellowstone had a history of expeditions that began with a brief Lewis and Clark stop in 1805 along their longer expedition route following the Louisiana purchase. This expedition allowed the U.S. government to obtain a small amount of information about Yellowstone.<sup>30</sup> In 1859 Captain W.F. Raynolds of the Corps of Topographical Engineers began to survey the area of Yellowstone. Raynolds created two parties that surveyed the park and created early maps of the region from 1859-1860. Unfortunately, the report of the area came out late because of the Civil War and an ill Captain Raynolds.<sup>31</sup> By 1868 Raynold's report made it to congress and contained immense detail. He and his exploration team described all they saw, and the fortieth congress of the U.S. got to hear it all. The report includes Captain Raynold's personal journal from the trip and within this journal lie some of the most important descriptions and maps of the area. Most notably within the report Raynolds recognizes the disappearing buffalo and calls for their protection saying, "I would remark, that the wholesale destruction of the buffalo is a matter that should receive the attention of the proper authorities."<sup>32</sup> This call for the conservation of buffalo by Raynolds came after he noticed that male buffalo outnumbered female buffalo in every heard observed. The 1868 expedition did not call for conservation of the area, but rather for conservation of wildlife. This would become important in the battle to save Yellowstone and its wonders.

Following the Civil War and reopening of federal explorations of the West, three expeditions catapulted Yellowstone to National Park status. In 1869 a private expedition without any government oversight took place to respond to rumors of volcanic activity. Three men, David E. Folsom, C. W. Cook, and William Peterson detailed their six-week expedition in an

---

<sup>30</sup> Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park, Historical and Descriptive*, (Saint Paul, MN: J. E. Haynes, 1927), 1-5.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-64.

<sup>32</sup> Committee on Public Lands, *The Act of Dedication*, S. no. 40.

article which was published in the Chicago *Western Monthly* in 1871.<sup>33</sup> It was this expedition that inspired the next two which become important because the next two are federal expeditions. In 1870 an expedition had Surveyor-General Henry D. Washburn, Montana politician and businessman Nathaniel P. Langford, and attorney Cornelius Hedges as the primary explorers. All of these men made contributions to the knowledge gathered from Yellowstone. Langford publishes a series of articles about the journey in *Scribner's Magazine*, General Washburn would publish notes he took on the trip describing all that he saw, and Hedges creates the first proposal for Yellowstone as a national park.<sup>34</sup> These publications and oral descriptions of the area from the men on the expedition created national interest in the area. The men described nothing but beauty and wonders all throughout Yellowstone.

Finally, in 1871 there is an expedition unlike any before where the head of the US Geological and Geographical Survey, Ferdinand Hayden, looked into the beauty described by the 1870 expedition. The Army also sent someone on the expedition to explore the new area and the two groups would go on separate expeditions, but they remained close to each other throughout the journey. Data collection and mapping would again take a front seat with this Yellowstone exploration and what the 1871 expedition parties collected would convince Congress that Yellowstone needed federal protection.<sup>35</sup> The expeditions yielded valuable descriptions of more features in the area as well as an extensive collection of photographs. It is important to note that the photographs taken became immensely valuable for convincing Congress that Yellowstone deserved federal protection. Descriptions could contain exaggerations and wild explanations that

---

<sup>33</sup> Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park, Historical and Descriptive*, (Saint Paul, MN: J. E. Haynes, 1927), 72-75.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-76.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-86.

nobody would ever believe, but the photos allowed the descriptions to be accurate.<sup>36</sup> With the park thoroughly explored, cries for protection became more pronounced and real reasons for conservation finally emerged.

Congress began to read and hear about the exploration of Yellowstone. The Senate would see the original bill to make Yellowstone a park on December 8, 1871. Any park created in the Yellowstone area falls under watch of the Secretary of the Interior to manage and take proper care of the area.<sup>37</sup> On January 30, 1872 Kansas senator Samuel Pomeroy moved to “take up the bill reported by the Committee on Public Lands, setting aside the region around the headwaters of Yellowstone as a public park.”<sup>38</sup> In congressional record the bill passes with little objection in the senate. On February 27, 1872 the Yellowstone park bill enters the House of Representatives. The bill passes with ease and the original understanding for Yellowstone “dedicates and sets it apart as a great national park or pleasure-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”<sup>39</sup> The idea of a national park for the American people has emerged and Congress accepts the idea on the behalf of the American people. Yellowstone passed through Congress with little pushback, but this did not mean Yellowstone passed without disputes. The conflict of Yellowstone would lie in its shared borders in two states.

Why was Yellowstone not left to the state of Montana like Yosemite was left to the state of California? Yellowstone was mostly located in Montana, but parts of the outlined park spill over into the state of Wyoming. This makes Yellowstone a source of a border dispute which was recognized by Congress as a potential problem with following the same framework from Yosemite. Congress initially tried to get some kind of framework laid down for Yellowstone like

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Committee on Public Lands, *The Act of Dedication*, S. no. 40.

<sup>38</sup> Committee on Public Lands, *The Act of Dedication*, S. no. 40.

<sup>39</sup> Committee on Public Lands, *The Act of Dedication*, H.R. no. 42.

what happened at Yosemite, but because of its geographic borders state control did not make any sense. Instead of dividing duties of conservation and preservation up between the two states, Congress decided to let the federal government manage the land. This would allow the potential park to remain where the actual beauty resided and allowed clear guidelines of conservation and preservation to be set by a higher authority.<sup>40</sup>

### Nature Clubs

The conservation movement officially began with the creation of federally protected areas, but most of the work to gain these places protection is done by American citizens. Clubs centered around nature began to pop up in the late nineteenth century. These clubs had goals of protecting American wilderness in different ways. Two major clubs had conservation in mind, and they are the Boone and Crockett Club and the Sierra Club. Both clubs had men of great status and power in the conservation world at the top of their hierarchies. Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir headed each club respectively and following the turn of the century both men would play significant roles in creating an NPS. By looking at the creation of these clubs there is better insight into the overall goals of each club and whether or not these clubs had a lasting impact on conservation in America.

National Parks create the images that most envision when thinking about American beauty and it seems so simple to say that they are useful and needed. Clearly, conservationists had to fight against people who saw land as an expendable resource. Within the conservationist advocacy, two distinct camps of conservation and preservation emerged that is represented by different clubs. The distinction between the two is clearly outlined by the NPS it says that,

---

<sup>40</sup> Aubrey L. Haines, *Yellowstone National Park: Its Exploration and Establishment*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1974), 138-142.

“Conservation is generally associated with the protection of natural resources, while preservation is associated with the protection of buildings, objects, and landscapes. Put simply conservation seeks the proper use of nature, while preservation seeks protection of nature from use.”<sup>41</sup>

This distinction would be centered around a few key figures with President Roosevelt leading the conservation camp and John Muir leading the camp of preservation. While the conservation practice would eventually be the driver of an NPS it is important to recognize that conservationists were not the only advocates of such a system. Central advocate, John Muir, became a strong voice in getting National Parks created and met with the President a few times on the subject of preserving American wilderness. The two men would actually spend a night together camping in the California wilderness discussing nature’s beauty and how to save it.<sup>42</sup>

In January of 1888 Theodore Roosevelt got together with other New York outdoorsmen and riflemen to form the Boone and Crockett Club. The original club had only around fifteen members, but it included George Grinnell and Theodore Roosevelt as well as others who were at the center of government debates on conservation. Grinnell stated that the original conservation goals of the club were,

“To work for the preservation of the large game of this country, and so far as possible to further legislation for that purpose, and to assist in enforcing the existing laws. To promote inquiry into and to record observations on the habits and natural history of the various wild animals. To bring about among the members interchange of opinion and ideas on hunting, travel, and exploration; on the various kinds of hunting rifles; on the haunts of game animals, etc.”<sup>43</sup>

This long list of goals allowed the club to have a very specific focus, mostly on hunting.

Conservationists wanted to see the resources on American lands be used at a rate that was safe.

---

<sup>41</sup> National Park Service, “Conservation, Preservation, and the National Park Service”, (Department of the Interior, 2019)

<sup>42</sup> *The National Parks - America's Best Idea*, directed by Ken Burns (PBS, 2009).

<sup>43</sup> George Bird Grinnell, “Brief History of the Boone and Crockett Club,” in *Hunting at High Altitudes: The Book of the Boone and Crockett Club* (New York & London, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1913), 436-437.

The Boone and Crockett Club was able to accomplish many of its goals through various projects which included the continued good keeping of Yellowstone National Park, introducing Glacier National Park to Congress, the idea of creating game refuges or sanctuaries, and many more.<sup>44</sup> This club clearly had a lasting legacy on the NPS as it helped create many of the original parks. The Boone and Crockett club goals would become national goals in 1901 when Theodore Roosevelt is sworn in as president.

In 1892 the Sierra Club was founded by a preservationist on the west coast named John Muir. In the late 1850s the young Muir read about the fabulous Yosemite Valley in a magazine and when he made his way to the valley he was stunned by the beauty.<sup>45</sup> This would be the inspiration Muir needed to start his nature club. While residing in California in the summer of 1889 and exploring Yosemite Valley Muir and his friend, who was the editor of *Century Magazine* where Muir's work was mostly published, began to notice that the state was doing a poor job of taking care of the land. The two men decided that Johnson would use his publishing power to get the park made into a nationally protected park. A year later, the park is given national protection.<sup>46</sup> Just as Yellowstone was the pride and joy of the Boone and Crockett Club, the protection of Yosemite yielded the Sierra Club. Most national nature and conservation clubs focused on one area where people with a lot of knowledge about the area would fight to protect it. Muir along with several professors from University of California at Berkeley would form the Sierra Club with the goal of protecting and learning about the Sierra Nevada Mountains.<sup>47</sup> The

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 438-442.

<sup>45</sup> Tom Turner, "Making the Mountains Glad," in *Sierra Club: 100 Years of Protecting Nature*, (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991), pp. 38.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 46-48.

Sierra club did just this and successfully protected Yosemite while also gathering more information on the area that ever before.

### Conclusion

The roots of the National Park movement in the U.S. began with land in the West that was originally inhabited by Native Americans. This was important to consider because what good do national parks do for the original people of the land? The short answer is that the government removed Native Americans in both Yellowstone and Yosemite Parks creating a norm of allowing Native removal on land that would become a national park.

The uniquely American idea did some good that remains intact today with the NPS. The ideas of how to conserve nature, by placing it under federal protection, is codified during this period, a practice that continues today. Additionally, prominent conservationists, such as John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt, created nature and conservation clubs. By wanting to preserve or conserve certain areas of the country, these clubs solidified a movement beyond the government to protect nature. Although the two clubs differed in their approach to preservation. One camp in these clubs wants access to the resources and the other wants no access, just complete preservation. This battle will play out in the 1890s and into the twentieth century, especially when Theodore Roosevelt becomes president in 1901. A look into the two-term president shows what exactly happens when conservation is a national goal.

## Chapter 2: The Most Important Figure: The Bull Moose

In 1900 Theodore Roosevelt was added to the Republican ticket as the Vice President to William McKinley with the ultimate goal of grabbing the presidency in 1904.<sup>1</sup> After an election victory, Roosevelt was soon asked to do the largest task a Vice President can do. While hiking in the Adirondacks in September of 1901 the Vice President learned that President McKinley was fatally shot.<sup>2</sup> The plan that was supposed to wait until 1904 was suddenly put into play and the hopeful presidential nominee became the president. Theodore Roosevelt became the youngest President to hold office in history. One of his many areas of focus was conservation which he described as “not only the preservation of natural resources, but the prevention of the monopoly of natural resources, so they should inhere in the people as a whole.”<sup>3</sup> By 1902 he saw the first national park created, under his watch, in Oregon at Crater Lake. Continuing his goals of conservation and combining his love for birds, the first federal bird sanctuary created under Roosevelt’s watch in Florida at Pelican Island.<sup>4</sup> In 1903 the President embarked on an eight-week tour of the Western United States which included a stop at Yellowstone. On this tour Roosevelt got to articulate his position on conservation while seeing a few places of American natural excellence. The tour got national attention and his speeches became the center of his tour.<sup>5</sup>

After his reelection win in 1904 and in his second term, President Roosevelt unleashed his full conservation agenda. In his first move he established the United States Forest Service to help protect the beauty and nature of America. This organization regulated logging on federally

---

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (New York: Random House, 2010), 747.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 519.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 219-222.



owned lands. In 1905 Roosevelt switched the organization to the Department of Agriculture instead of the Department of the Interior. Roosevelt and his trusted ally on forest preservation, Gifford Pinchot, believed that the use of the forest should be viewed as a form of crop management.<sup>6</sup> President Roosevelt's love for hunting was also quite obvious in this term as he established the Wichita Forest in Oklahoma as the nation's first national game preserve.<sup>7</sup>

In 1906 he continued to follow his opinion that places of beauty and wildlife needed to be set aside to be saved for future generations. This stance was solidified into words with the Antiquities Act which specifically allowed the president to set aside any tract of land that held historical or scientific value as a national monument.<sup>8</sup> He wasted no time in using the act and created his first national monument at Devil's Tower in Wyoming. This was the first of eighteen uses of the act where President Roosevelt and of those eighteen uses, five of the national monuments became national parks.<sup>9</sup> A final move in his last year in office to gather all the governors from all over the country to meet and talk about conservation. Most agreed that Roosevelt should keep up his efforts of conservation, especially in forests and water policies. They even encouraged an extension of the conservation into more organizations. This caused him to create the National Conservation Commission which was in charge of taking inventory of the natural resources within the country.<sup>10</sup> His legacy had been sealed as one of the greatest conservationists in the history of the country.

Theodore Roosevelt is, arguably, the most important figure in the creation of National Parks. He believed that the necessary system allowed all Americans to see the beauty contained

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 486.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 519.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 447-448.

<sup>9</sup> David Harmon, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley. *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), 288-289.

<sup>10</sup> Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (New York: Random House, 2010), 518-519.

within the country. His tenure as president embodied conservation as a national goal and the goals contained within his Boone and Crockett club which he helped to make national goals. In this chapter a look into Roosevelt's life will expose his love for nature and how he developed his stance on conservation. Primary source analysis of Roosevelt's history of the west, *The Winning of the West*, allows for a greater look into how Roosevelt saw the resources in the West. More primary source analysis of a speech given at Yellowstone during his tour of the park and the west in 1903 shows his exact stance on conservation. Finally, there will be a look into the shortcomings of what the greatest figure in conservation did. This includes a view that Native Americans were movable obstacles in the way of national parks. Roosevelt's feelings towards Native Americans are negative and by looking into this his racism will be a negative in the creation of the NPS. Theodore Roosevelt is likely the most important figure in conservation and during his two terms the foundation of the NPS is laid, but he was also a president who embodied racist ideas that ultimately led to the displacement of Native Americans living on national park grounds.

#### Roosevelt's Western Literature and the Frontier Thesis

The westward expansion of America is one of the more incredible things to happen and it is also what shaped the ideas of conservation and resource management in this country. Americans moved west because of the resources. Whether that was land, lumber, or any other resource, they took themselves west to obtain them. The original frontiersman or pioneer is depicted as a rugged, tough individual who got everything he needed from the land. They are seen as uncivilized individuals and their view of the wilderness during the push towards the west was that it was a "chaotic wasteland."<sup>11</sup> Their life purpose was to try to subdue the wild because

---

<sup>11</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982), 24.

of the creatures and hardships that it created for civilization. It is from the stories of these Americans that the first opinion of nature is created upon. Many of these men and women were proud of the fact that they were the ones who were attempting to conquer the wild that was said to be untamable.<sup>12</sup> Sentiments about treating nature as just an untamable force that was full of resources soon faded as settlers began to tame the wild.

During the 1890s the western frontier is deemed closed, and the continent is pronounced subdued. Due to census data that was collected in 1890 Fredrick Jackson Turner would release his frontier thesis that made this a common thought in the minds of Americans. Turner would argue that, “And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.”<sup>13</sup> This closing of the frontier was a sentiment that reached the ears of Washington politicians who now were concerned with the conservation of resources. The push and pull of maintaining the wilderness and its beauty while still being able to extract resources to advance civilization was extremely important.<sup>14</sup> The significance of the Frontier Thesis, written by Jackson, generated the idea that American had finally conquered the West and its expansion on the continent was complete. It also completely ignored the Native American nations already inhabiting the west. This sentiment created a feeling of urgency for many conservationists who now could see land as a finite resource. This change in attitude would act as a catalyst in pushing for an NPS at the turn of the century.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>13</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1894).

<sup>14</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982), 133-135.

In 1889, Roosevelt became the Civil Service Commissioner in Washington D.C and would hold the position until 1895. While serving on the commission he published his final book in 1893 describing western experiences on his ranch and it also marked a time where Roosevelt began to write a lot of literature influenced by historian Frederick Turner on Americanism.<sup>15</sup> It was around this time where his political career began to take off. It is important to note that even though this is all going on in his professional life, Roosevelt always made time to go out to his ranch at Elkhorn and hunt. This just goes to show how much he was obsessed with being outside hunting and ranching like a typical Westerner. Roosevelt's work that was published during this time period is extensive and contains immense details of the origin of the country. *The Winning of the West* is a four-volume series that was written by Roosevelt from 1889 to 1896. The material that Roosevelt used to write the book comes from the archives of the U.S. government which began in 1774. Roosevelt lays out very clearly what sources he compiled for his work and where they all came from at the very beginning of the first volume. He admits that the wide variety of his sources is obvious, but he also says that these sources allow him to gain a full picture of how Americans expanded beyond the original colonies.<sup>16</sup>

There are four total volumes of *The Winning of the West* and they mention specifics with regard to conservation and preservation very few times. It is important to lay out the beginning part of volume one<sup>17</sup> because it contextualizes Roosevelt's feeling about the Americans moving west. Within volume two<sup>18</sup> and volume three<sup>19</sup> nothing is mentioned about conservation or preservation. These two continue to tell the tale of how Americans moved west and faced the

---

<sup>15</sup> Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (New York: Random House, 2010), 480.

<sup>16</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 1 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), xv.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 2 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 3 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

challenges of those already inhabiting the lands. The next mention of any kind of preservation or conservation would not come until volume four<sup>20</sup> of the book. The mention of any kind of conservation in volume four is not direct and is closely related to the fur trade. Roosevelt never directly says anything about how the animals associated with the fur trade needed to be conserved but says the vital interest of the British in their remaining territory was the fur trade.<sup>21</sup> This would suggest that it would be important for the British to maintain the supply of animals necessary for furs, but Roosevelt makes no direct mention of this.

Within this volume one Roosevelt seeks to explain the beginnings of the English-speaking people moving west. He describes English-speaking people filling all areas of the world as, “the most striking feature in the world’s history.”<sup>22</sup> Roosevelt then talks about how the English-speaking race has dominated the last three centuries of history and makes no mention of the evils of their colonization or expansion. This has little to do with conservation, but it shows that his racism followed popular lines of thinking during the time period. It can also serve as a way to foreshadow his opinions towards Native Americans as he describes how colonial powers faced one war with other competing colonial powers and one war with the inhabitants of the land.<sup>23</sup>

With regard to conservation and preservation in volume one, it is mentioned a few times. One mention comes with the Creek or Muskogee confederacy. The Creeks killed got their meat for winter from elk and buffalo, but Roosevelt points out that the Creeks had been overhunting the animals. This combined with other large predators in the area hunting their livestock as well as elk and buffalo created a situation where the Creeks recognized that there was a need to

---

<sup>20</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 4 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 1 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

conserve their meat supply or risk losing it. Roosevelt compares this immediately to how in Europe, they conserved the amount of deer and pheasants hunted in one season.<sup>24</sup> Rather than point out how the Creeks figured this system out on their own and were likely practicing it for generations he seems to undermine the intelligence of the Creeks by saying Europeans had used this system for hundreds of years. In fact, in Claudio Saunt's work on the Creeks it is a well-accepted fact that the hunting ground were contested with white settlers since the mid eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> This points to the fact that the Creeks were now competing with other hunters in the region and there was a tremendous amount of stress on their food supply.

These early books that Roosevelt created follow the same themes of Frederick Turner's frontier thesis and a comparison of the two illuminates a history of the west that is full of Americans moving into Native American land and removing them. While most of this does not directly deal with conservation or preservation it shows the attitude of Roosevelt toward Native Americans. This is extremely important in the history of the National Parks because without the removal of Natives, there is no NPS created. Turner's removal of Native Americans from his thesis and Roosevelt's inclusion of them as an obstacle show that Natives Americans were completely left out of any decisions regarding the conservation of the land in western America. This would become increasingly important because when Roosevelt became president in 1901 and set his conservation agenda into action, Native Americans were completely left out of the equation. To this day the NPS has made no recognition of taking Native lands and it should not

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 57-59.

<sup>25</sup> Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 259.

be this way. After all, it was on their homelands which Roosevelt made the case for conservation.

### *Presidential Tour of the West*

One of the most important events in shaping the national goals of conservation came in 1903 when President Roosevelt headed out on a tour of America on a train. This tour was primarily one for his reelection bid in 1904 and the president made many stops along the way, but with regard to conservation no stop was more important than the one made on April eighth.<sup>26</sup> Roosevelt found himself at the entrance of Yellowstone and he was looking forward to spending two whole weeks in the wilderness here. It was not his first visit to the park as he had been there before with the Boone and Crockett Club in 1886 and this was when the club decided to help push the eventual National Park Protective Act of 1894.<sup>27</sup> The tour of original American conservation would continue after the president made several campaign stops throughout California in May. During a speech at Stanford to students Roosevelt would say, “There is nothing more practical in the end than the preservation of beauty.”<sup>28</sup> Nearly four days later the President found himself in Yosemite with Sierra Club founder John Muir. These two events in California continued to show the President’s priority of saving the wilderness. By looking at these two speeches and night in Yosemite with a fellow nature club founder, Roosevelt’s ideology of conservation is completely illuminated. His stance remains constant overtime and his articulation of his stance on conservation is laid out perfectly in these examples.

During the laying of the cornerstone at the entrance of Yellowstone National Park, President Roosevelt laid out exactly why he loved Yellowstone and what the purpose of the park

---

<sup>26</sup> Edmund Morris *Theodore Rex* (New York: Random House, 2010), 217-218.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>28</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, “Address of President Roosevelt at Leland Stanford University” (Palo Alto, California, May 12, 1903), <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record.aspx?libID=o289820>

was. This speech is incredibly important to the NPS and to this day many of the ideas discussed within this speech are held in high regards by the NPS. This vacation in the park allowed Roosevelt to see exactly how the park was preserved. He points out that no other system in the world allows for the perfect preservation of both wildlife and nature while allowing visitors to come and see both. This is part of the democratic experience and it is essential for democracy that natural playgrounds like this exist according to Roosevelt. Perhaps the most outstanding quote that was contained within the opening section of the speech can still be seen in today's NPS ideology. Roosevelt said, "This park was created, and is now administered, for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."<sup>29</sup> The idea contained here was that national conservation grounds allowed all Americans to get an insight into the unique beauty contained within the country. Without a National Park there to expressly conserve the nature and wildlife, no American got the enjoyment of seeing the true American Beauty.

To Roosevelt the parks of America belong to everyone and they can never be taken away from any citizen of the country.<sup>30</sup> He goes on to mention that all men from the East should make the journey West to see the beauty contained not only in Yellowstone, but also in Yosemite, the Grand Canyon, and Alaska.<sup>31</sup> This helps explain the desire by the president to make sure that these areas specifically were protected by the Federal Government. The argument of early national parks that the land and resources on the land belonged to all of America was extremely important and was at the foundation of the NPS. Roosevelt mentions the efforts of Congress to pass irrigation laws, forest reserve laws, and hunting laws to ensure the protection of all parts in

---

<sup>29</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "Speech of President Roosevelt at laying of the cornerstones of gateway to Yellowstone National Park" (Gardiner, Montana, April 24, 1903), <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o289720>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



the parks shows exactly how he thought a park should be preserved.<sup>32</sup> The speech at Yellowstone laid out the exact ideas of what Roosevelt believed should be contained within national parks. First of all, he believed that they were for every person in America, but in this belief, he leaves out Native Americans. Second, it showed that the President believed there were areas in the country that were so magnificent that they should be protected by the highest authority in the federal government. Finally, in the speech Roosevelt shows that he understands that all land preserved in the national parks was not just for the current population but also for future generations. Roosevelt would articulate this point more clearly in his next stop at Stanford University.

During the address to the crowd of students at Stanford, Roosevelt talks about the natural beauty that surrounds the young people in the crowd and how they must take advantage of living in it.<sup>33</sup> Roosevelt urges students to see that in California they are surrounded by some of the world's greatest wonders and that these wonders need to be preserved. He said, "Here in California you have some of the greatest wonders of the world. You have singularly beautiful and singularly majestic scenery, and it should certainly be your aim to preserve for those who are to come after you that beauty; to try to keep unmarred that majesty."<sup>34</sup> This statement encapsulates the main mission of the NPS to preserve areas of beauty for future generations to enjoy. His stance on conservation and a need for future generations to understand their significance was clear in this speech. He continues this line of conservation by saying, "Closely entwined with keeping unmarred the beauty of your scenery, of your great natural attractions, is the question of making use of, not for the moment merely, but for future time, of

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, "Address of President Roosevelt at Leland Stanford University" (Palo Alto, California, May 12, 1903), <https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record.aspx?libID=o289820>

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

your great natural products.”<sup>35</sup> This line allows for a clear view that at heart Roosevelt is a conservationist who saw the value of resources but understood the importance of saving some for future generations. Roosevelt then describes his experience in Yosemite at the Mariposa Grove as a main motivator for this thought process.

Roosevelt does not stop with his inclusion of his trip to Yosemite. He continues to articulate that the welfare of California directly depended on the careful balance of resource management. He warns those in the crowd to not be satisfied with using the resources up as they were available to them because without them, future generations could not thrive.<sup>36</sup> Again this shows just how passionate Roosevelt was about conservation and why he thought it was of the utmost importance especially with regard to forests and water supplies. This line of thought continues as he points out that the goal of the nation should be to improve the land which it inhabits and not to destroy it. He applauds the model that California has put into place to preserve its forests and, in particular, gives credit to John Muir’s Sierra Club.<sup>37</sup> The continuation of Roosevelt pointing out that the forests needed to be protected directly showed his willingness to see timber both as a source of beauty and as a source of economic importance. He hammers this point home by saying, “Every phase of land policy of the United States is, as it by right ought to be, directed to the upbuilding of the homemaker.”<sup>38</sup> This statement alone shows the attitude of the president when making his land policy that would support his conservation agenda.

The President continues his opinions on public land policy. Roosevelt says that any kind of policy that does not help a prosperous home was a bad one. He also says that any kind of

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

legislation that gives large amounts of public land to one individual who will then sell parts of this land to others is bad for Americans. His opinion was that all Americans should be given the opportunity to own land and for all Americans to have access to public lands.<sup>39</sup> The NPS is fundamentally public lands that all Americans have access to and by saying that policy that does not allow all to have access to it was bad it supports the NPS and its ideals. Roosevelt finishes his speech by pointing out that, “the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains states will take the lead in preservation and right use of the forests, in securing the right use of the waters, and seeing to it that our land policy is not twisted from its original purpose, but is perpetuated by amendment, by change when such is necessary...”<sup>40</sup> This quote encapsulates the main ideas made in the entire speech regarding the use of and conservation of public land in the U.S. Roosevelt warns that this will not come without the hard work of the college students in the audience. His stance on conservation is clear and some of framework for the future NPS is held high in this speech.

The camping trip with John Muir just a few days after this speech would be incredibly important in not only shaping the President’s conservation ideas, but also important to saving key features in Yosemite National Park. John Muir was a preservationist who really believed that the wilderness was an object that needed to be protected and that nature itself was greater than society and civilization.<sup>41</sup> In the 1890s Muir would go head-to-head with conservationist Gifford Pinchot about the proper care of forests in the U.S. with Pinchot winning that battle that forests should be treated like crops and with proper management resources could be extracted. Muir opposed this stance saying that areas needed protection and should be untouched.<sup>42</sup> Going into this camping trip, Roosevelt already knew this as Muir had advocated directly to him about

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982), 131.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 133-137.

saving forests on the west coast.<sup>43</sup> The two men had different views about how nature should be used and conserved, but Muir was able to get through to Roosevelt about key areas in Yosemite.

With the stage set for three days of conversation about conservation, the two men spent their time camping in some of the most scenic and beautiful places in America. At this time Yosemite was a national park but major areas of the Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley were under state park protection.<sup>44</sup> It was John Muir in 1890 and his Sierra Club that originally got Yosemite the designation of a national park and just like Roosevelt's Boone and Crockett Club did for Yellowstone.<sup>45</sup> Roosevelt had to sneak away from his large presidential party and was finally able to settle into a camp site at the base of a large sequoia tree with just John Muir. The two men would talk for hours before falling asleep and moving to another camp site in the morning. During the first night the two men just got to know each other, but on the second night the two men talked about the preservation of forests and setting aside not just Yosemite for federal protection, but other areas of the country for park purposes as well. They had the great backdrop of Glacier Point where the entire Yosemite Valley can be seen while Muir made his case for federal protection of the area.<sup>46</sup> Muir had gotten through to the president and that was obvious during the next speech he gave on his tour at the California capitol building. Roosevelt said,

“As regards some of the trees, I want them preserved because they are the only things of their kind in the world. Lying out at night under those giant Sequoias was lying in a temple built by no hand of man, a temple grander than any human architect could by any possibility build, and I hope for the preservation of the groves of giant trees simply because it would be a shame to our civilization to let them disappear. They are monuments in themselves, I ask for the preservation of the other forests on grounds of wise and far-sighted economic policy.”

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>44</sup> *The National Parks - America's Best Idea*, directed by Ken Burns (PBS, 2009).

<sup>45</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982), 131.

<sup>46</sup> *The National Parks - America's Best Idea*, directed by Ken Burns (PBS, 2009).

Within three years the areas of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove were given to the national park and received federal protection.<sup>47</sup> This would not have been possible without the words of John Muir.

The camping trip of Muir and Roosevelt is something that is stamped into the timeline of conservation history in America. The two men shared an immense love of nature and extensive knowledge of how to preserve it and for nearly four days that is all the men cared to discuss. It was so important to the president that he skipped several campaign events just to camp with an old preservationist that had a passion for saving a little strip of land in California. This represents the essence of the movement that the two men agreed was necessary to save the wonders of the country. Most important to the entire journey for the two men was their discussion of creating a NPS by setting aside tracts of American beauty for future generations.<sup>48</sup> Both men saw the obstacles nature faced just from mankind and neither wanted to sit down and watch the wilderness disappear by the aspirations of society. This is extremely important towards the creation of the NPS and shows that even before its creation in 1916 the most powerful men in the field of conservation and preservation found common ground in the necessity to create such a system. Without this camping trip, Roosevelt likely would have continued on the path of conservation he was headed, but with the full support of Muir the movement was able to grow. Muir was already recognized as an authority in land preservation and by talking to him man to man Roosevelt showed his willingness to work with others on the topic. This camping trip will forever be one of the most fascinating events in the conservation movement because it is so

---

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Char Miller and Clay S. Jenkinson, *Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist in the Arena* (Lincoln, NE: UNP - Nebraska, 2020), 130.

simple, yet it gets at the very roots of the movement. Two people just going out into nature and getting to enjoy the awesome power of its beauty.

From this tour of the west Roosevelt's conservation stance and feelings about national parks are made extremely clear. At Yellowstone there was this feeling that the national parks were an essential part of democracy because everyone could have the same experience no matter their social standing. There was also this feeling that the national parks were for all people, but he leaves out the Native Americans who had occupied the land for centuries. At the speech at Stanford there is a clear understanding of what Roosevelt saw as effective public land policy and resource management policy. At his core, Roosevelt was a true conservationist who wanted the resources utilized, but also protected for future generations. Finally, in the camping trip with Muir there is a continued sense that wilderness protection is the duty of the federal government and the greatest wonders in the country should receive that kind of protection. The president did not stop his efforts of conservation with this trip and would continue to follow his beliefs which are exemplified on the 1903 campaign tour into his second term.

#### *Roosevelt and the National Conservation Commission*

In 1908 Roosevelt realized that he had made many strides in making conservation a national goal, but there was still more he could do. On June 8, 1908 he created the National Conservation Commission after the conference of governors took place. There was a realization that resources were still wasted as people began to take them off the lands that contained them and there was a real threat of exhausting all the resources in the country.<sup>49</sup> The goal of this commission would be to take inventory of all resources available in the country and make sure that there was no overuse or underuse to ensure there was a little waste as possible. The

---

<sup>49</sup> "The National Conservation Commission." *Science* 27, no. 704 (1908): 994-96. Accessed December 3, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1632492>.

commission itself would be comprised of governors, senators, and house of representative members for the protection of land, water, forests, and minerals. The commission would require an executive board to coordinate the necessary cooperation between states and the federal government.<sup>50</sup> The commission would highlight the idea of conservation as a national goal.

President Roosevelt oversaw the creation of this commission and it stamped conservation as a goal that would last well beyond his presidency. It further cemented that the president would have a legacy that would always include conservation and represents the ideology of conservation over preservation. Resources were meant to be used, but if nobody regulated how much was used at one time, the country would run out and its economy would stall. In the original proposal of the commission Roosevelt would make this abundantly clear by saying, “The work of the Commission should be conditioned upon keeping ever in mind the great fact that the life of the Nation depends absolutely on the material resources, which have already made the Nation great. Our object is to conserve the foundations of our prosperity. We intend to use these resources; but to so use them as to conserve them.”<sup>51</sup> The commission would go forward with this goal in mind even though a new president came to office shortly after its creation.

In 1909 Theodore Roosevelt would draft a letter to Congress about the success of the commission and its importance to the American way of life. He points out very clearly that the constant gain of understanding the nation will only serve the commission well by making it stronger and that the strength of the nation will continue to be its natural resources.<sup>52</sup> The commission achieved its goal of taking inventory of the national resources because it described

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *Theodore Roosevelt to Congress*. Letter. From the Library of Congress. *Special Message of the President Transmitting the Report of the National Conservation Commission*. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/consrv:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(amrvvgv38div5\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/consrv:@field(DOCID+@lit(amrvvgv38div5)))

the general situation of resources in the country. This has massive consequences for future generations and Roosevelt knows it. He says, “The function of our Government is to insure to all its citizens, now and hereafter, their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If we of this generation destroy the resources from which our children would otherwise derive their livelihood, we reduce the capacity of our land to support a population, and so either degrade the standard of living or deprive the coming generations of their right to life on this continent.”<sup>53</sup> This statement is extraordinarily important because it highlights the national goal of conservation in terms that relate to the overall goal of the country. Without proper management of resources future generations will have negative consequences. The other fascinating part of this claim is that it is in line with the goal of the future NPS for saving the land for future generations to enjoy.

It is clear that to the former president, the commission is successful and needs to continue to complete its job for the good of the nation. Roosevelt will end this letter with regard to conservation with simple logic that he draws upon in the whole letter. He that, “The underlying principle of conservation has been described as the application of common sense to common problems for the common good.”<sup>54</sup> The idea of conservation to Roosevelt is common sense because it makes no sense to him to take as much from the land as possible for economic gain now just for future generations to suffer the consequences. This is in line with why conservation was so accepted as a national goal and why little opposition existed against the goals of conserving. Without using common sense, one might think that there was no need for conservation, and this is the death of the nation. The National Conservation Commission fully embedded the idea of conservation as a national goal which Roosevelt laid the groundwork for.

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.



Without this commission and its success held high by the president the goals of conservation would have failed to become national priorities which leads to the death of the nation.

*Roosevelt's Shortcomings as a True Conservationist*

Clearly the idea of the national parks as an essential part of a democracy was well represented in Roosevelt's speeches and writing. This idea that the national parks were for all Americans may have been said explicitly by Roosevelt, but in reality, this was not the case. Also found in his writing on American western expansion are attitudes towards Native Americans that do not fit this model of national parks being for every person in America. Native Americans are fundamentally disregarded in Roosevelt's model of an NPS because in his eyes they were an obstacle that would be taken care of by the expansion of English-speaking people across the continent. He makes no mention of them in his ideas on conservation and they really only received any kind of conservation attention with the passing of the Antiquities Act in 1906. Roosevelt's obvious shortcoming with regard to his vision of an NPS and conservation is that Native Americans are left out of this equation. All National Parks at one point had Native Americans on them and by looking into why Roosevelt left them out of his vision it is clear that this is a massive problem with the NPS model that is created with Roosevelt's help.

Roosevelt saw Native Americans as fierce, savage opponents who got in the way of white civilization. The ideas he had can be categorized according to Thomas Dyer who did an entire analysis on Roosevelt's specific feelings towards Native Americans. As mentioned earlier in the chapter he writes about them as a historian as fierce, formidable "savages" throughout his *Winning of the West* books based on his experiences with the Algonquins. As a politician he saw them as a problem and would try to find solutions to this "problem" through legislation. Finally through non-political and non-scholarly activities such as anthropology and as an army man he

talks about them as the lowest form of civilization.<sup>55</sup> All of these categorizations of Native Americans are seen throughout his writings on his direct experience with Native Americans. Roosevelt never accepted any kind of Native Americans as being civilized and this could be a reason why they did not fit his vision of a national park. Roosevelt believed that the NPS was an essential part of a democratic civilization, and by refusing to put Native Americans into this category he missed including them in the NPS.

Although Roosevelt saw most Native groups as uncivilized, he saw some Native groups as closer to having the values of white society. In *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* Roosevelt says that, “An upper-class Cherokee is nowadays as good as white.”<sup>56</sup> This quotation represents a how Roosevelt constructed his opinions on many Native American groups. He compared them to white society and the ones that had similar values or were closer to being civilized in his eyes were seen as more advanced.<sup>57</sup> This crude comparison cannot be used to construct much of anything, and it represents his inability to look outside of his view of white history and superiority. He continues comparisons of Native groups to white society with the Algonquins of the northwest United States which he writes about in *The Winning of the West*. He calls this group, “ruder in life and manner than their southern kinsmen” and “less advanced toward civilization.”<sup>58</sup> He automatically assumed that the one group that was more similar to white society was more advanced and more civilized. This analysis is crude at best and contains racist opinions towards a Native group that civilized land for generations. Comically Roosevelt also celebrates the frontiersman of also containing the savage quality of Native Americans on the

---

<sup>55</sup> Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 69-70.

<sup>56</sup> *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*, Theodore Roosevelt, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Charles River Editors, 2018), 486.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 71-72.

<sup>58</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*, vol. 1 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 64-65.

plains. He is very careful to point out that the only difference between the frontiersman and Native Americans is civilization.<sup>59</sup>

As President of the country, Theodore Roosevelt adopted policies that echoed the racist ideology that he endorsed. During his time as president he would adopt assimilation policies on the basis that Native Americans were savage and needed to become civilized.<sup>60</sup> This policy strategy echoed the feelings of many white Americans of the time who refused to recognize Native Americans as citizens. The odd part with Roosevelt's strategy in dealing with the "Indian problem" was that he sought to promote Native Americans as part of the national identity while at the same time dismissing them as uncivilized and savage.<sup>61</sup> So while still extremely racist, his idea towards Native Americans became one of mythical nature. This is important to realize because while Roosevelt still held the attitude of white Americans, he also tried to balance the other perspective of Native Americans as fierce individuals that he sometimes admired like in *The Winning of the West*. The mythical sentiment that Roosevelt held onto was largely embedded in his ideas about the formation of the nation and Native Americans being opposed to the formation of the nation.<sup>62</sup> This mythical treatment would help shape Roosevelt's policy.

While in office Roosevelt attacked the idea that Native Americans were like helpless children who could not help themselves. This explains his policy of hardening Native Americans by cutting off government backed assistance. To many Native Americans this made no sense because it was basically letting them starve on small reservations that were created for them.<sup>63</sup> The idea here was that Native Americans would become self-reliant and tough like the pioneer

---

<sup>59</sup> Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 70.

<sup>60</sup> Leroy G. Dorsey, *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple: Theodore Roosevelt and the Myth of Americanism* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2013), 70.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

and rely only on themselves for survival. He also believed that Native Americans needed proper education and through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) this was provided to many Native Americans on reservations. The education provided was elementary with limited need for higher education and industrial.<sup>64</sup> Roosevelt also had the idea of mixed blood with Native Americans and whites to be a way to get Native Americans assimilated into American society. The slow biological process, he argued, integrated Native Americans into society without the need for extermination.<sup>65</sup> This idea was highly racist, but it challenged ideas of the time that suggested interracial marriage as a horror to many white Americans.

In Roosevelt's eyes the genocide of Native Americans was inevitable because of the mighty crusade into the west by the white man.<sup>66</sup> This makes sense that Native Americans were left of his vision of the NPS because he thought they would all be gone with the American conquering of the western frontier. Turner's thesis had declared the frontier closed and with-it Roosevelt held onto the belief that the Native American groups in the west were not far behind. The mythical treatment of Native Americans by the president helped formed policies that would assimilate them into society with limited education and his encouragement of interracial marriages to dilute Native American blood. His racism towards Native Americans obviously created a presidency that left Native Americans out of any kind of models of conservation. If the president had recognized that they were a part of the land he was trying to save, they could have been included in resource management. This would have allowed Native Americans to be included in conservation and in National Parks models of the time by including them as part of a nation that had the fundamental right to national parks in his eyes.

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 73-74.

### Conclusion

By the end of his term in 1909, the President had set aside nearly 230 million acres of Public land.<sup>67</sup> On these lands there was a strong sense to protect while still allowing use by private citizens. He had created numerous organizations for protecting the resources of the country and many are still important today. His love for nature never stopped, even after he no longer had the national stage to protect it. He continued to be an advocate for preserving the nation's greatest places and conserving the nation's resources. Because he loved hunting, he spent much of his later life traveling all over the world, feeding his desire to find and kill exotic animals. His mark that he left on how Americans view nature and conservation will always be felt by all those still fighting to exemplify the ideals that he carried.

Roosevelt's impact on the conservation movement cannot be overstated. He is often credited with creating the national movement that would eventually lead to a normalization of conservation and eventually the NPS. His ideas remain some of the most important in conservation. The fundamental idea of resource management by the federal government was created under his watch and without his help there is likely less resources and some of the natural beauty that defines this country does not exist. Unfortunately, he was not a perfect conservationist. His racism towards Native Americans and his exclusion of them in any kind of conservation will always be his biggest downfall. He adopted "Indian problem" policies that were popular during his time, but this does not excuse Roosevelt from wrongdoings. His adoption of these practices fueled the racism many white Americans held against Native Americans. Roosevelt will always be known as the conservationist president, but he will always fall short in histories because of his treatment of Native Americans.

---

<sup>67</sup> David Harmon, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley. *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), 288-289.

### **Chapter 3: The Big Three: Models for the NPS**

The frontier came to a close at the end of the nineteenth century and with the closure, a small voice of saving the wilderness in the west grew louder. Capitalism would dictate that every resource available on these new lands should be extracted for economic gain. Forests were chopped down to stumps, minerals mined out of existence, and natural relics put at risk for destruction with little regulation. Most people believed this was the right way and the only way to go about getting the most value out of the land. There was also a small minority that began to say that places of beauty, history, and uniquely American wildlife needed to be preserved. Men like Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Lacey, Edgar Lee Hewitt, and George Grinnell would be the leading voices. All these men believed in the national parks current mission statement that declares places should be set aside, “for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.”<sup>1</sup> Conservationist Theodore Roosevelt was luckily president from 1901-1908 and by putting conservation at the head of the national goals, legislation he created to save the wilderness.

The idea of conserving wilderness was engrained in the minds of many Americans because of Theodore Roosevelt. While he was in office more was done to set the foundation for the NPS than any other politician. Three monumental pieces of legislation were passed in his two terms that had the sole purpose of giving American politicians avenues for protecting the great wilderness contained at some of America’s most beautiful places. The first of these acts was the creation of the first federally protected wilderness at Pelican Island in Florida. Pelican’s Island becomes important to highlight because while wildlife preserves do not qualify as NPS units, the

---

<sup>1</sup> “What We Do (U.S. National Park Service).” National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, January 31, 2020. <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/index.htm>.

preservation practices used to protect animals in wildlife refuges becomes instituted in NPS units. The second important action came in 1905 when the Bureau of Forestry in the department of agriculture becomes the United States Forest Service (USFS) with Gifford Pinchot as its first chief. The move by congressional action transferred control of the forests from the DOI to the Department of Forestry. While thinking about the creation of the NPS, forests cannot be left out because they make up massive amounts of public land even though they do not fall under the jurisdiction of the NPS. The USFS is one of the biggest protectors of U.S public lands and the NPS model will look similar to the USFS because both manage a specific kind of conservation land. The final act essential to the creation of the NPS passed in Congress in 1916 is the Antiquities Act. Passed in 1906 this act allows the president to designate national monuments where there is natural, scientific, or historic reasons why the land should be preserved. These National Monuments are important because they become a part of the NPS units, but their distinction from National Parks lies in creation through executive action and not congressional action.

All three of these acts connect to the creation of the NPS. Each one of these acts is specifically created with the intention to save American land or resources such as animals or timber for future generations. The goal of the NPS is to preserve areas of land for future generations, so it is essential that all three are discussed. The other thing that the NPS and these policies share is their reactionary nature. Something became threatened, either wildlife, forests, or Native American artifacts, and each policy directly created a federal response to the threat. This chapter will explore the creation of the first wildlife refuges, the USFS, and National Monuments and the conditions that allowed the creation. They were able to serve as building blocks for the NPS because they created a standard practice of conservation and left areas of land

managed by many different departments. With the standard practice in place and a need for an agency to manage some of these areas of conservation, the need for an NPS became glaringly obvious. The practice of conservation is ultimately what connects all three of these acts, but there is also a connection in the way that they were created. Driving factors for the creation of these conservation agencies include outside groups or experts, conservation minded people involved in government, reactionary policy, and an increase in scholarship surrounding conservation. This same process will continue with the creation of the NPS.

Native Americans viewpoints will also be looked at with regard to these three acts. They inhabited these lands. Native Americans will also be shown as a motivator for the creation of some of the Antiquities Act due to direct ties to American sentiments about expanding into the West. They were viewed as “wild” and closely associated with nature, so their disappearance and the looting from places in the west motivated the passing of legislation to save the west. The stereotype of Native Americans as people extremely close to nature also fueled literature on Native ways of life that did not accurately show the relationship with nature.<sup>2</sup> Stereotyping Native Americans was actually born out of Americans moving west and creating cities in places where Native Americans used to inhabit.<sup>3</sup> This pattern is obvious when looking at specific cases throughout the chapter and it becomes clear that Americans formed notions of Native Americans that allowed their displacement, even if it supported the goals of conservation.

Nobody in the Federal Government asked Native Americans about how they wanted to preserve their culture and their voices are largely not included in conservation histories. The closing of the frontier in 1890 continued the American assault on Native culture and way of life.

---

<sup>2</sup> Paul Jentz, “A Life in Balance: The Myth of the Ecological Indian,” in *Seven Myths of Native American History* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2018), 136-137.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 138-139.



The NPS “saves” Native artifacts for the benefit of the general public and not with Native Americans in mind. The Antiquities Act began the practice of “saving” artifacts. Collectors and anthropologists began excavating and displaying their artifacts without Native American permission using the Antiquities Act. The USFS excluded Oneida Indians from collecting and selling timber on their own land while allowing white settlers to be exempt from these rules. In the first wildlife preserves created, Native American perspectives were left out like with the case of the National Bison Range and the confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Ultimately, the Native American exclusion from conservation practice was detrimental to Native culture, a process that continues far beyond the creation of these acts.

*Wildlife Sanctuaries: National Wildlife Refuge System (1903)*

The National Wildlife Refuge System is managed by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), which has its roots in the early stages of the conservation movement at the end of the nineteenth century. The FWS and the NPS have a distinct connection because both are considered the principal conservation agencies in the DOI. It is important to talk about the FWS as a precursor to the NPS because the DOI recognized that the FWS could not accomplish the conservation goals of the department. The FWS was created in 1903 with the conception of the nation’s first wildlife refuge at Pelican’s Island in Florida as a reaction to disappearing populations of migratory birds. While looking at policies that led to the formation of the FWS a pattern of reacting to American destruction of wildlife arises. National Parks, National Monuments, and National Wildlife Refuges were created with the expressed purpose of conserving things of cultural significance to the U.S.<sup>4</sup> The creation of these three were also very reactionary in nature after specific things became threatened.

---

<sup>4</sup> Richard N. L. Andrews, “Public Lands and Wildlife Conservation,” in *Managing the Environment, Managing Ourselves: A History of American Environmental Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020), 277.

The story of the FWS begins just as the other conservation goals did, with the disappearance of resources as the American population began to move west. Although much of the reform to the FWS expanded following the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, looking at its original creation becomes more important to the story of the NPS. Buffalo served as one of the nation's first concerns and a desire to save them with preservation geared ideas appeared. Hunting dramatically increased with railroads that were beginning to show up encouraged Americans to hunt by rail during the 1870s and 1880s. A hunter could jump on a train in the East and head West to hunt a buffalo and be able to bring in back incredibly easily. The buffalo was desirable because its fur was used for clothing and meat was sold for consumption.<sup>5</sup> The Boone and Crockett Club would appeal to Congress for the protection of Buffalo.<sup>6</sup> In the 1870s and 1880s, the government began to take actions to protect the wildlife held within its borders as a reactionary measure to some disappearing wildlife.

In 1872, an act of Congress created Yellowstone, and its management the Secretary of the Interior received its management. Native Americans living on this land such as the Crows, Blackfeet, Bannocks, Eastern Shoshones and Sheepeater tribes used the land designated as a preservation sanctuary for hunting of big game such as buffalo. Over the next few decades, the Secretary of the Interior became tasked with managing the complex relationship of what Native Americans could and could not do within the boundaries of the park.<sup>7</sup> The relationship between Native Americans and the National Wildlife refuges would continue to come up in just about every wildlife refuge created in the beginning of the system. The FWS timeline denoting the

---

<sup>5</sup> Richard N. L. Andrews, "The Progressive Era," in *Managing the Environment, Managing Ourselves: A History of American Environmental Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020), 134.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Historical Timeline," Historical Timeline | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Department of the Interior, January 21, 2021), <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/history/historical-timeline.html>.

history of the organization on its website continually makes references to how Native Americans were affected by wildlife preserves. For example, the timeline uses the creation of Pelican's Island to mention the Miccosukee. The entry for 1903 says, "President Theodore Roosevelt establishes what would become Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida (on ancestral lands of the Miccosukee Tribe)."<sup>8</sup> The FWS acknowledges the tribe present or importance of some areas to different tribes but makes no mention of any disputes. Just like with National Parks, Native Americans were left out of many conversations regard wildlife they had hunted for centuries.

Birds would also have advocacy from its own national group. The story of the Audubon society begins in the early nineteenth century with John James Audubon serving as the central advocate for birds on the verge of overhunting. Audubon advocated through his works on American birds such as *The Birds of America*, *Ornithological Biology*<sup>9</sup>, and *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America*<sup>10</sup>. All of these works contained information about the appearance of birds, their migration patterns, and techniques on how to observe birds in general.<sup>11</sup> These works created from 1827-1839 set the groundwork for a society strictly concentrated on the wellbeing of birds in America. However, the birds did not spring the Audubon into action about saving wildlife. After viewing a buffalo hunt in 1843, he decided that the way in which Americans treated wildlife could not continue. Audubon would warn that, "This cannot last. Even now there is a perceptible difference in the size of the herds. Before many years the buffalo, like the great auk, will have disappeared."<sup>12</sup> The first Audubon society was founded in

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> John James Audubon. *The Birds of America, Ornithological Biology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1827)

<sup>10</sup> John James Audubon. *Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1851)

<sup>11</sup> Nathaniel P. Reed and Dennis Orabelle, "The Background of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," in *The United States Fish and Wildlife Service* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 3.

1886 in memory of John James Audubon and his concerns about wildlife, especially birds, falling to Americans overhunting. The Audubon Society began setting up its own refuges and staffing them with employees paid for by philanthropists.<sup>13</sup> Another national group concerned with bird was the American Ornithologist Union which put the overhunting into specific numbers. In 1886, Ornithologist Frank Chapman, helped estimate that birds were killed for the purpose of fashion on hats.<sup>14</sup> One day in New York Chapman gathered that out of seven hundred hats, five hundred and forty-two contained feathers. This set up a reaction-oriented response to the problem. The sheer number scared the Ornithologist enough to do something and advocate directly to the President for help.

The first official agency concerned with wildlife conservation created by Congress in 1871 as the U.S Commission on Fish and Fisheries had the task to, “study the decrease of the food fishes of the seacoast and lakes of the United States, and to suggest remedial measures.”<sup>15</sup> The U.S Commission on Fish and Fisheries served as a precursor to the FWS and provides some suggestion of what the FWS would be in charge of in the future. To go along with the creation of the U.S Commission on Fish and Fisheries President Benjamin Harrison created the first wildlife refuge for salmon in Alaska on Afognak Island in 1892.<sup>16</sup> This step combined with the creation of three national parks reflected a national concern for the protection of wildlife in areas where Americans moved.

With support from Iowa Congressman John Lacey, the first step towards national wildlife protection came in 1900 when Congress passed the Lacey Act. The Lacey Act directly addressed

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>15</sup> Historical Timeline,” Historical Timeline | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Department of the Interior, January 21, 2021), <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/history/historical-timeline.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Nathaniel P. Reed and Dennis Orabelle, “The Background of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,” in *The United States Fish and Wildlife Service* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 5.

the overhunting concerns that advocates from conservation organizations like the Audubon Society promoted to Congress. The act sought to slow the illegal hunting going on all over the country and reduce the rate at of killing wildlife by citizens.<sup>17</sup> It reacted to the hunt by rail method by effectively banning the transport of dead animals killed illegally. The Lacey Act connects to the creation of the NPS because of its conservation orientation and its reactionary nature. Policy like this would allow for avenues where conservation policy became able to get into Congress and have significant support.

In 1901 there arose a pitch to President Roosevelt from close friend and Ornithologist Frank Chapman. He wanted a five-acre plot of land at Pelican's Island sold to the Audubon Society for the purpose of a national refuge of the Audubon Society. Chapman had been on his honeymoon at the island and recognized that it was already federal property. His proposition of selling the federally owned island came as a great proposition, but Roosevelt recognized that it violated a law of selling federal property to private citizens or organizations.<sup>18</sup> Roosevelt instead decided to proclaim the area as a federal refuge in a declaration that stated its, "use of the Department of Agriculture as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds."<sup>19</sup> The actions of Roosevelt during the creation of Pelican's Island allowed for more extensive executive action during his term as president. By the end of his two terms, he had set aside fifty-three wildlife refuges with the expressed purpose of preserving wildlife populations.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>Committee on Public Lands, *An Act To enlarge the power of the Department of Agriculture, prohibit the transportation by interstate commerce of game killed in violation of local laws, and for other purposes*, Cong no. 56.

<sup>18</sup> Nathaniel P. Reed and Dennis Orabelle, "The Background of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," in *The United States Fish and Wildlife Service* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 6-7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

The Miccosukee Tribe inhabited the land of Pelican Island and they were directly affected by the creation of a wildlife preserve on their lands.<sup>21</sup> In the eyes of the government, the land was already federally owned and the wants of the Miccosukee tribe were ignored. In order to understand the relationship more in depth requires recognition that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) handled all issues relating to the federal government and Native Americans. A lot of overlap in the management of the land occurred between the BIA and DOI because the BIA belonged in the DOI. With the case of the Miccosukee, they descended from the Creek Indians. During the Indian Wars of the 1800s the Miccosukee were removed from Florida with the Creek, but some refused to leave their homeland.<sup>22</sup> The band of Miccosukee who refused to leave would have to deal with the NPS with the creation of Everglades National Park and invading white settlers later in the twentieth century, but the original creation of Pelican's Island displaced the Miccosukee even more. The federal government also did not recognize the tribe until 1959 and this allowed the government to easily take more of their land for the creation of a refuge.

The wildlife refuge movement started by Roosevelt continued into the next presidential term of William Howard Taft. He expanded the protection of the American Buffalo after lobbying from the American Bison Society. The organization had similar ideas about Buffalo that the Audubon Society had with birds and sought to see the creation of a wildlife preserve for buffalo. They directly purchased the first heard of buffalo on that would roam on the range through gathering donations.<sup>23</sup> In 1909, Congress authorized the purchase of federal land for the purpose of protecting wildlife. The federal government created the National Bison Range on

---

<sup>21</sup> Historical Timeline,” Historical Timeline | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Department of the Interior, January 21, 2021), <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/history/historical-timeline.html>.

<sup>22</sup> “History,” Miccosukee Tribe (Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, January 28, 2021), <https://tribe.miccosukee.com/>.

<sup>23</sup> Nathaniel P. Reed and Dennis Orabelle, “Refuges-Backbone of the Service,” in *The United States Fish and Wildlife Service* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 21.

12,800 acres of land on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana.<sup>24</sup> While it did shrink the Native American land, it avoided the extinction that John Audubon saw as inevitable.

The confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indians occupied the land of the National Bison Range. Just like with the Miccosukee and Pelican's Island, the Salish and Kootenai had to deal with the BIA about the creation of a wildlife preserve on their reservation. Buffalo were incredibly important to the confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and they began conserving them long before the U.S government did. In 1870, a member named Peregrine Falcon Robe, took some of the last buffalo calves into the Flathead reservation and his son, Little Falcon Robe, helped him create a small heard within the reservation. The Allotment Act would ruin the plan of conservation by giving much of the Flathead land to white farmers who then took and sold many of the buffalo. After the government finally recognized a need to help the buffalo in 1908, they came and took much of the land without consulting tribal leaders. The confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes were then not included in management of the buffalo even though they had been successfully doing it for decades on their land.<sup>25</sup> In this case, another opportunity for the federal government to include Native Americans in its conservation plans arose and instead they completely left out the confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the government took their land and resources away.

#### *The U.S. Forest Service (1905)*

The story of the forest service in the U.S is not unsimilar to the story of conservation in the country. As white Americans moved west and the country grew, there was a growing demand for resources that could no longer be easily extracted in the East. In this case, Congress

---

<sup>24</sup> Nathaniel P. Reed and Dennis Orabelle, "The Background of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," in *The United States Fish and Wildlife Service* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 7-8.

<sup>25</sup> Robert McDonald, "A Brief History of the National Bison Range," Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation (Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, June 26, 2019), <https://csktribes.org/more/videos/short-a-brief-history-of-the-national-bison-range>.

recognized the need to slow the pace of harvesting lumber in the West in 1876.<sup>26</sup> As with the National Parks created during this time, Congress understood the need to conserve resources before capitalism allowed their removal from the country. In the early days of forestry in the U.S Dr. Franklin B. Hough and Dr. Bernhard Eduard Fernow became central advocates of a conservation system for forests. Hough was a trained physician, but his interest in forestry propelled him into a role as a lead advocate in American forestry. He would give a speech to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1873 on the declining amount of timber availability to New Yorkers based on census data. This speech got him a job in the Department of Agriculture as forest agent after the association sent a concerned letter to Congress about the speech.<sup>27</sup> Fernow was trained in forestry and had seven years of experience managing forests in Prussia. After going to the U.S to marry, Fernow attended a meeting of the American Forestry Association and quickly joined the conservation movement as the only trained American in forestry.<sup>28</sup> These men and this organization brought conservation efforts to the national level and helped create effective legislation to protect forests as well as helping train employees who would protect the forests.<sup>29</sup> The national level of protection took time to really settle in, but these three actors involved in the process provided much of the foundations of the USFS.

Congressional authorization allowed the creation of first federal office devoted to forestry and Dr. Franklin B. Hough was appointed as the forest agent for the U.S. by the commissioner of

---

<sup>26</sup> United States Forest Service, "Before There Was A Forest Service, 1876-1904," 100 Years of Federal Forestry (Department of Agriculture, May 12, 2008), <http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/aib-402/sec1.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> "Franklin B. Hough," Forest History Society (Forest History Society, August 10, 2020), <https://foresthstory.org/research-explore/us-forest-service-history/people/chiefs/franklin-b-hough/>.

<sup>28</sup> "Bernhard E. Fernow (1851-1923)," Forest History Society (Forest History Society, February 5, 2020), <https://foresthstory.org/research-explore/us-forest-service-history/people/chiefs/bernhard-e-fernow-1851-1923/>.

<sup>29</sup> United States Forest Service, "Before There Was A Forest Service, 1876-1904," 100 Years of Federal Forestry (Department of Agriculture, May 12, 2008), <http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/aib-402/sec1.htm>.



agriculture.<sup>30</sup> Tasked with the job of reviewing forests, Dr. Hough to examined what the U.S could do to properly conserve its forests while still utilizing them for timber. His research would help continue the growing conservation movement during the late nineteenth century and lay the base of the USFS. In 1886, another important actor was appointed as the Chief of the Division of forestry. Dr. Bernhard Eduard Fernow led extensive scientific research and cooperative forest projects in the U.S.<sup>31</sup> These two men were the first advocates of a national system, but recognition by states already existed. New York saw that forests needed protection to prevent total annihilation. Perhaps the most important example came just one year before the appointment of Dr. Fernow in 1885.

The first federal office devoted to forestry had to handle timber reserves on Native American reservations. The standard practice of harvesting timber originated out of an 1874 court case when a group of Oneida Indians sold timber to George Cook illegally in Wisconsin on the Stockbridge and Munsee Reservation. In the supreme court case of *United States v. Cook* Native American commercial logging on reservations became illegal.<sup>32</sup> The office of Indian Affairs created a loophole in this decision during the 1887 General Allotment Act. Essentially, the BIA used this as a tactic to turn Native Americans into farmers and it allowed them to clear trees and sell the timber only to clear land for farming.<sup>33</sup> The *Cook* decision had another loophole created in 1889 with the passing of the Dead Down Act which allowed for the harvesting of all dead trees and the preservation of green trees on reservations.<sup>34</sup> These restrictions specific to reservations showed a continuance by the government to marginalize struggling native tribes on

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Theodore Catton and Joel D. Holtrop, "Indians, Non-Indians, and the American Forests to 1900," in *American Indians and National Forests* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2016), 24.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 28.

reservations. Native Americans began to see their focus entirely on reservations and their problems only heard by the BIA.

The great Adirondack Forest in New York was the first forest preserve set up in the U.S and a commission created in the state legislature became tasked with its management. The commission was created after an alarming report of the forest becoming unproductive in producing timber in the 1880s which led to strict preservation agenda.<sup>35</sup> New York's creation of this commission set an example and Ohio, California, and Colorado would set up similar agencies in their states during 1885 to ensure the protection of the forests in those states.<sup>36</sup> With the Adirondacks, recognition by even non-conservationists showed that some areas needed to have protection to avoid complete destruction and here many focused on the disappearance of wilderness qualities in this region.<sup>37</sup> The area was originally surveyed for the purpose of a public park in 1872,<sup>38</sup> but the protection needed to go beyond that. What really sparked the need for immediate action came from the watershed in the Adirondacks. In 1883, during a drought people began to see a significant decline in water levels in the Erie Canal and Hudson River. The local media to added to the story of the need to preserve the forests as they dissappeared from the region too.<sup>39</sup> The 1880s left the Adirondacks protected and in the 1890s a push by the public and some in the state legislature for the region for the Adirondacks to become utilized the same logic that got Yellowstone preserved. The region was a popular vacation spot and New Yorkers could not stand to see it destroyed.<sup>40</sup> In 1892, the New York legislature saved the watershed and much

---

<sup>35</sup> Samuel P. Hays, *The American People & the National Forests: The First Century of the U.S. Forest Service* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 26.

<sup>36</sup> United States Forest Service, "Before There Was A Forest Service, 1876-1904," 100 Years of Federal Forestry (Department of Agriculture, May 12, 2008), <http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/aib-402/sec1.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982), 117.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-119.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-121.

of the forest by proclaiming twenty percent of the region, where the headwaters were, as Adirondack Park.<sup>41</sup>

The example of the Adirondacks served not only as a model for states on how to conserve forests, but also as a signal that a national system needed to be put into place because the forests were vulnerable across the country. In 1891, forest reserves were withdrawn from the public domain and the authority given to the DOI.<sup>42</sup> The shift showed that the regional system of managing was accepted as a good idea that needed federal acceptance. Congressional action on March 3, 1891 which created the Forest Reserve Act backed the need of a national forest system.<sup>43</sup> The Forest Reserve Act gives power to the president and stipulates that, "...public land bearing forests, in any part of the public lands wholly or in part covered with timber or undergrowth, whether of commercial value or not, as public reservations, and the President shall, by public proclamation, declare the establishment of such reservations and the limits thereof."<sup>44</sup> The act seemed to solve the problem of preserving some of the forests in the U.S, but the act did not lay out an direction on its management or operation.

A plan of operation would come in 1897 with the passing of the Forest Management Act. The Forest Management Act followed the Adirondack model and narrowed the objectives of U.S forestry to wood protection and watershed protection.<sup>45</sup> On June 4 of 1897 Congress authorized this act in order to outline how national reserves should be managed reacting to not having standard forest practices. The DOI's General Land Office was in charge with close consultation

---

<sup>41</sup> Samuel P. Hays, *The American People & the National Forests: The First Century of the U.S. Forest Service* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 26-27.

<sup>42</sup> United States Forest Service, "Before There Was A Forest Service, 1876-1904," 100 Years of Federal Forestry (Department of Agriculture, May 12, 2008), <http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/aib-402/sec1.htm>.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Committee on Public Lands, *An act to repeal timber-culture laws, and for other purposes*. Cong. no. 51.

<sup>45</sup> Samuel P. Hays, *The American People & the National Forests: The First Century of the U.S. Forest Service* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 27.

from the Division of Forestry and the Geological Survey received the job of mapping out the national reserves.<sup>46</sup> Both the 1891 act and the 1897 act laid the foundation for the 1905 creation of the USFS and continued the base of the NPS. The DOI was now equipped to lay out policy to create plans to manage land under its jurisdiction. The NPS creation built on legislation like the Forest Management Act.

The next shift in the forest service came in 1898 when the first American born man was appointed to the Chief of the Division of Forestry. Gifford Pinchot became one of the most well-known names in conservation because of his work in forestry and he was an obvious hire for the position of Chief. Pinchot learned forestry in Europe, but had experience managing a large private forest in North Carolina and through this job became familiar with many of the new forest preserves created in the 1890s.<sup>47</sup> The push and pull of maintaining the wilderness and its beauty while still being able to extract resources to advance civilization became extremely important and helped pave the way for a conservation oriented NPS. John Muir and Gifford Pinchot was on the forefront of this discussion. Their discussions on the management of forests were essential precursors to the eventual NPS. Both men had different visions for how to save resources because Muir was a pure preservationist while Pinchot was an advocate of conservation.

Muir wanted the wilderness to remain untouched and set aside as a cultural resource that future generations could enjoy. He was the main voice in proposing law that would completely protect areas of natural beauty that he believed were unique and fundamental parts of the

---

<sup>46</sup> U.S. Forest Service, *Highlights in the History of Forest Conservation* (San Francisco, CA: Department of Agriculture, 1951), 5.

<sup>47</sup> United States Forest Service, "Before There Was A Forest Service, 1876-1904," 100 Years of Federal Forestry (Department of Agriculture, May 12, 2008), <http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/aib-402/sec1.htm>.

American continent.<sup>48</sup> Pinchot held conservation views that treated forests like an agricultural resource because he saw the importance of timber to the U.S economy. Private companies needed to extract timber for a growing population that demanded railroads and housing materials. He did not trust private industry to limit the amount of timber taken out of forests and began thinking of a system run by the government that would slow the pace of deforestation in the U.S.<sup>49</sup> Both men would voice their opinions directly to men in power and were at the base of creating proper ways of saving resources. The importance in this debate to the NPS was that Muir recognized and advocated for the preservation of unique and important areas and the fact that neither wanted a private entity to be in charge of conservation and preservation. The combination of these two ideas became extremely important when creating guidelines for the NPS. During the creation of the NPS Americans accepted that it was the duty of the federal government to oversee these areas, not the job of private citizens, and areas unique and important should be the ones designated as National Parks.

It is important to see that the conservation principles become rooted in a commercial desire to harvest vast amounts of timber on lands that were the home of many Native Americans. The commercial desire leads to the forcing of Native groups onto reservations and the restrictions of lumber harvesting on these reservations.<sup>50</sup> Theodore Catton points out that the Native American view of nature was closer to the new views provided by the conservation movement, but their voices were largely left out of this movement by disregarding their nature

---

<sup>48</sup> Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (New haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982), 133-135.

<sup>49</sup> Samuel P. Hays, *The American People & the National Forests: The First Century of the U.S. Forest Service* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 8.

<sup>50</sup> Theodore Catton and Joel D. Holtrop, "Indians, Non-Indians, and the American Forests to 1900," in *American Indians and National Forests* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2016), 33.

practices.<sup>51</sup> Instead of including their practices of burning the woods to increase deer population and berry yield these practices were restricted and replaced with the white idea of clearing forests for farming.<sup>52</sup> A slight clash between Native Americans and the federal government in the 1880s arose over the beginnings of the forest system, but after that Native Americans had to focus their energy on avoiding assimilating policies and surviving the poor conditions on reservations. While the national forests and conservation ideas continued to grow, the lands on which Native Americans practiced some of these same ideas embodied in conservation continued to shrink.

During this time of a peak in the conservation movement the forests were not left out of the equation. President Roosevelt said, “Forestry is the preservation of forests by wise use . . . forestry means making the forests useful not only to the Settler, the rancher, the miner, the men who live in the neighborhood.”<sup>53</sup> Roosevelt clearly understood the importance of forestry and with Pinchot at the helm it looked to be a match made in heaven. In 1905 the adoption of forest materials as an agricultural resource became solidified when the Bureau of Forestry became the U.S Forest Service and transferred from the DOI to the Department of Agriculture.<sup>54</sup> The Transfer Act of 1905 made this happen and it outlined that the sale of products or use of the land shall be used to pay for the protection of national forests.<sup>55</sup> The USFS was created as a reaction to conserve more forests and it would use the guidelines set by the 1905 act, the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, and the Forest Management Act of 1897 to run smoothly. In the case of National Forests, without a reaction to the problem of disappearing forests, capitalists would have seized

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> United States Forest Service, “The Early Years of The Forest Service, 1905-1916,” 100 Years of Federal Forestry (Department of Agriculture, May 12, 2008), <http://nps.history.com/publications/usfs/aib-402/sec2.htm>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> “Conservation Movement: Conservation Chronology 1901-1907,” Conservation Movement: Conservation Chronology 1901-1907 (Library of Congress), accessed February 25, 2021, <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/cnchron4.html>.

the opportunity to empty them of timber. Congress and conservationists alike always react in a way that saves resources such as land, timber or wildlife before it is too late. This practice continues with the creation of the NPS and without the reactionary component, potential for irreversible destruction became possible.

#### *Antiquities Act (1906)*

The Antiquities Act of 1906 was created to preserve American historic sites and other places that contained artifacts. Analysis of the act shows that it is broken into four sections. Section one lays out that citizens cannot, “appropriate, excavate, injure, or destroy any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity, situated on lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States, without the permission of the Secretary of the Department of the Government.”<sup>56</sup> This portion of the act says that any person in possession of a historic artifact on federal land without the consent of the government faces a penalty for possession. They can also face a penalty if they destroy the historic artifact. A person can avoid charges like these with permission from the government to possess or destroy an artifact. Section two of the act says that the President can create a national monument on any federally owned lands by public proclamation. The limit of National Monuments, “in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected.”<sup>57</sup> If this means that unclaimed or private land becomes needed to protect the historic object or land, the government can take that land in order to protect it. The secretary of the interior has the power to take private or unclaimed lands. Section three says conducting any activities such as excavation or gathering of objects of antiquity a person must receive the go ahead by the secretary of the interior, agriculture, or war depending on where the jurisdiction

---

<sup>56</sup> Committee on Public Lands, *An Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities*, Cong. No. 59.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

falls. Qualified individuals of the examinations or excavations must have done the examinations, “for the benefit of reputable museums, universities, colleges, or other recognized scientific or educational institutions.”<sup>58</sup> The secretary that makes the ruling here can set the guidelines for excavation. Section four is the shortest one and simply explains that the secretaries of war, agriculture, and interior may continue to make regulations to help with the enactment of this law.

Clearly this act has a lot going on in terms of what qualifies as an antiquity, how to declare a national monument, and which actors in government can create a national monument. Essentially, this allows the president to create a national park without the need of a congressional act. Other than that difference, the national monuments involve a lot of the same actors involved with the NPS and other conservation minded agencies like the forest service and wildlife refuges including the secretaries of the interior and agriculture. The story of the creation of this act begins well before President Roosevelt and can be traced all the way back to the late 1800s. The primary motivation reacted to destruction of Native American historical sites all over the American West, mainly the Pueblo Indians in the Southwest. Highlighting this aspect shows that Native Americans in the first two national parks from chapter one revealed no intention to make room for them in ideas of conservation. Now Native Americans served as the primary motivators for historical conservation.

Scientific motivation for the creation of this act mainly has to do with geology and wildlife concerns. There were areas that contained unique geological formations and specific kinds of wildlife found nowhere else. The creation of the act recognizes that the geodiversity and the biodiversity contained within some areas as the cultural heritage of the country.<sup>59</sup> Europe’s

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Harmon, David, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley. *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), 202-204.



cultural heritage had places that they could point to from older times because civilizations erected big structures. In America, the identifiers for its cultural heritage were beauty and ancient history contained within its landmarks as well as the incredibly unique forms of wildlife that allowed the nation to have resources found nowhere else in the world. While America began to see its cultural heritage in geodiversity and biodiversity the disappearance of these factors created a need for urgent action to save some of America's best features.

Several events would occur at the end of the 1870s that would push American politicians to think about conservation. This would include the formation of many organizations that would have the preservation of American history and science in their guidelines. To begin, in 1879 Congress approved a new Bureau of Ethnology to learn more about Native American culture and a book published by Fredric Putnam about the Pueblos ruins in the American southwest would illuminate the need for some kind of conservation for Native American artifacts. The American Association for the Advancement of Science would also elect an anthropologist as its president which would encourage a more conservationist agenda. The Anthropological Society of Washington and the Archaeological Institute of America were both created with goals that went hand in hand with conservation.<sup>60</sup> With the creation of all of these groups and more scholarship provided by Putnam, Congress would begin to consider the concerns conservationists.

While the creation of organizations with very similar practices of preserving a growing interest of many Americans to examine ruins and loot them for old artifacts to sell arises. These American homesteaders are often referred to as potters or looters because they had no intention of saving any historic site. Many of these ruins were located in the Southwest of the country.<sup>61</sup> The need for conservation or preservation policy became obvious to all involved with the

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

Antiquities Act. Potters and looters had the ability to steal directly from historic sites with absolutely no consequences. Organizations like the Bureau of Ethnology and the American Association for the Advancement of Science knew looters could no longer get away with no consequences and appealed to the federal government for help. Upon hearing their complaints, the need for policy to protect historic sites became obvious and Congress realized their only choice for a reaction. The potters and looters were known as direct problems and contributed significantly to the disappearance of artifacts, but there another group who habitually visited sites with the only goal of stealing became visible.

Another category of individuals who collected artifacts from Native American sites at this time for the purpose of personal collections or creating museums. Personal collectors often were wealthy and motivated to collect by fascination with Native American culture and history that could have begun at a young age with collecting arrowheads, exposure to natural history museums, or having collectors as parents.<sup>62</sup> The mixture of different kinds of collectors and creations of some museums saw limited contact with Native American tribes themselves. Many of the collectors were concerned with the past life of the American Indian and searched for material objects that represented past life which left present Native American voices out of the conversation about their own artifacts. Some of these collectors sympathized with the Native American situation in America during the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century. This group of collectors that extensively reached out to tribes left a lasting legacy of how American anthropology should deal with Native American artifacts and issues.<sup>63</sup> Ultimately, collectors had different reasons for their involvement of collecting Native American cultural objects, but the

---

<sup>62</sup> Barbara A. Hall and Shepard Krech, "Introduction," in *Collecting Native America: 1870-1960* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 2000), 7.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-19.

link of fascination with their past ties them together and this is connected to the closing of the frontier.

The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) recognized this problem and outlined an investigation take place of ruins. An investigation of Pecos ruins by geologist and ethnologist Adolph F. Bandelier showed significant vandalism and destruction. It was this event that would allow the AIA to petition Congress to protect ruins like these that were found all over the Southwest. The petition died quickly in the Committee on Public Lands and the issue of historic preservation for sites continued as an ongoing battle. Nonetheless, a spike in scholarly interest on American Indian ruins led to the expansion of organizations like the AIA.<sup>64</sup>

With the increase in scholarship in the early 1890s, public interest in ruins grew more than ever before, and this would create groups of homesteaders who wanted to loot places with historic value. The interest in Native American artifacts stemmed from the need to preserve a part the frontier and the great movement west. Some homesteaders saw available public lands in the west solely as places to collect ruins and would only place claim on lands that contained them. The first instance of threats towards Native American artifacts came with the Pecos and Pueblos Indians in New Mexico. It became evident to experts such as Adolph Bandelier and Marshall Wilder that the structures built by these tribes needed preservation after they saw some of them destroyed.<sup>65</sup> Both of these men would take surveys of the areas where these ruins were located and appealed to Senator George Frisbie Hoar of Massachusetts to pass legislation to protect the ruins.<sup>66</sup> Congressional action failed in the 1880s largely because there were so many of these ruins it was argued that they could not all receive protection.

---

<sup>64</sup> David Harmon, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley. *The Antiquities Act: a Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006) 17-18.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 18.

The General Land Office was the only government organization equipped to try to protect sites. The limited powers of the GLO often times only temporarily kept looters off of properties that contained artifacts. There was a significant rise in terms of the General Land Office attempting to protect these places in the beginning of the twentieth century. This would draw more attention to finding a permanent solution to protecting American historical sites.<sup>67</sup> Seeing that the General Land Office only had limited authority in these situations, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Archaeological Institute of America combined forces in 1899. They would draft a bill to Congress to find ways to permanently protect these Native sites.<sup>68</sup> This is significant because it not only encouraged Congress to adopt an act, but it also helped formed the base of the Antiquities Act which would permanently protect sites.

President Roosevelt had to deal with an interesting debate going on in Congress about conservation. The idea about conserving was still extremely split, except for now the debate shifted to include how sites of scientific and historic significance should be preserved. Much of Congress became reluctant to create more national parks because it went against the ideas of capitalism and resource extraction. Another camp against the Congressional members backing capitalists supported a “general bill” idea that everything on federal lands should be saved were archeologically significant and the “national parks” approach where only a few of the greatest wonders were preserved. Archaeologists would favor the “general bill” and the DOI favoring the “national parks” approach idea.<sup>69</sup> The two ideas would always go head-to-head when talking about any kind of conservation effort.

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

Edgar Lee Hewett and John Lacey were two of the driving forces behind finding a system that became a compromise of the two approaches. Hewett was a prominent conservationist who got to know Lacey when proposing the idea of the Pajarito Park in New Mexico. He was also employed by the Bureau of American Ethnology and worked with the American Anthropological Association Committee on the Preservation for American Antiquities.<sup>70</sup> Through his connection with Lacey and his membership in these organizations he was the primary drafter of the 1906 version of the Antiquities Act. Hewett held the idea that lands should be put aside just like other conservationists of the time and favored an idea that created something similar to national parks. In his mind and the minds of many conservationists, the only way to protect American history and beauty was through direct oversight by the federal government. With the reluctance of many Congressional members, Hewett would set about drafting legislation that avoided federal government control while still providing federal oversight.

By 1905 the first draft submitted to Congressman Lacey did not pass because Congress adjourned before it could be brought to the floor. It was a good thing because it allowed Hewett to think more about a new approach to getting sites protected. Hewett and Lacey recognized the need for a middle ground and saw the break in Congress as an opportunity. Rather than make it a necessity of the federal government to protect these lands, he decided to first ban the destruction of any kind of archeologically significant item. To please a Congress who did not want a national park system and a department of the interior who did, Hewett created a new distinction, national monument, that avoided the national park problem while satisfying the idea that only a few places deserved this kind of protection. The new draft was proposed to the House and the Senate on January 9, 1906 and it passed with heavy support from Lacey and his allies in Congress. The

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 37-38.

Senate would approve it on May 24 and the House would only wait a little while longer until June 5 to do the same.<sup>71</sup> Theodore Roosevelt signed the act into law on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1906. He would not wait long before using it for the first of 18 times, by declaring Devil's Tower a national monument in New Mexico by September of 1906.<sup>72</sup>

The Antiquities Act did a lot of good for conservation efforts through promoting the creation of onsite park museums and creating more sites where conservation became the main policy. Yellowstone and Yosemite adopted the museums idea in conjunction with the Smithsonian first beginning in 1904 and with the passage of the act in 1906 these museums obtained Antiquities Act permits to display artifacts found on excavation projects.<sup>73</sup> The museums kept artifacts out of the hands of collectors, but it also left out Native Americans and their views on their own artifacts out. Native American's issues with the act were not solved until 1990 with the passing of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The refusal to include Native American voices was partly due to the number of agencies involved with the monuments. The monuments created with the act were controlled by mostly the DOI as well as the General Land Office (GLO), the Indian Office, the Bureau of Mines, and the U.S Geological Survey.<sup>74</sup> Obviously, with such an array of offices involved the parks it became confusing for all involved. A need for one cohesive body that controlled monuments and parks arose. This complex system was not fixed until more debates about the use of resources from both conservationists and preservationists pushed the government to create an

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 45-46.

<sup>73</sup> Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 66-68.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 48-50.

entirely new entity to manage the parks created with both the Antiquities Act and National Parks declared by acts of Congress.

The most significant consequence came with the combination of Theodore Roosevelt as President. It allowed a conservation minded president to completely avoid Congress when an area of conservation needed to be created. Executive action allowed Roosevelt to begin declaring national monuments when Congress acted too slow to create a National Park or unwilling to create a National Park. With executive action now an option, Congress needed to address the fact that an NPS needed to exist. Without a creation of an NPS, a president who had an unwilling Congress could simply go around Congress to create a national park type area. Another thing that needed to be addressed with the creation of National Monuments was who would manage them? At first the federal government looked at the DOI to manage the parks, but the DOI was unequipped to manage National Parks and Monuments. A clear reason for the creation of the NPS now existed for two reasons.

### Conclusion

The creation of wildlife refuges, national forests, and national monuments were motivated by outside groups or experts, conservation minded people involved within the federal government, reactionary policy, and an increase in scholarship surrounding conservation. Native American perspectives on the creation of the wildlife refuges, USFS, and Antiquities Act show a lack of inclusion in conservation policies. The neglecting of Native American groups like the Miccosukee, the confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indians, and the Oneidas to name a few, shows a lack of including the interests of Native Americans for the saving of pristine spots of American wilderness. All of these factors are crucial in understanding the creation of an NPS. The fact that no government organization was equipped to deal with the management of nature was also an important highlight, but this largely fits with the reactionary

nature of conservation policy. These trends will continue beyond the Roosevelt Administration and will aid in reasons to create an NPS where preservation policies begin to mix with conservation policies. Without the creation of conservation policy before the NPS, there would likely be no push or acceptance by members in government to create any government body to manage the nation's greatest resources. The groundwork laid during this period in the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century led to the eventual creation of the NPS.



## **Chapter 4: The American Conservation Ideal: The NPS**

With the conservation movement having its largest impact on Americans during the Roosevelt administration, only a little more of a push created the NPS. Americans had accepted that conservation of its resources was essential to its survival and had turned on the ideas that resources needed to be extracted for capital gain as demonstrated by policies created from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The NPS was a culmination of these policies into a federal body that could run the places set aside as natural wonders of America. By 1916 the DOI oversaw fourteen national parks, twenty-one national monuments, and the Hot Springs and Casa Grande Ruin Reservations.<sup>1</sup> Within the DOI adequate organizations to run the national forests and national wildlife refuges existed, but the agency lacked a group to run national parks and monuments. With a dire need to create a body to prevent competing interests from ripping these places apart, the federal government created reactionary policy to address the problem. The Organic Act of 1916 would arise out of organizational necessity created during the conservation movement, and it will embody the ideas held high in the movement to lay the guidelines and goals of the NPS.

Before the creation of the Organic Act, there were calls from politicians and leaders in the DOI for more structure regarding National Parks and Monuments. Secretary of the Interior, Franklin Lane, called for a meeting of all park superintendents where they did nothing but talk about the need for more centralized organization of the parks.<sup>2</sup> Lane realized the distinct kind of conservation that the parks had in place and saw a need for the creation of a separate body to

---

<sup>1</sup> “National Park System Timeline (Annotated),” National Park System Timeline (Annotated), October 30, 2015, <http://npshistory.com/publications/timeline/index.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Hazel K. Wharton, “A Brief History and Description of the National Park Service,” (Washington D.C.: National Park Service) § (n.d.), 6.

deal with parks and park-type places such as National Monuments.<sup>3</sup> Until this point in time, the existing National Parks, especially Yellowstone and Yosemite, relied heavily on the U.S. Army to police its grounds and protect its wonders.<sup>4</sup> The Army, while great at protecting these sights, had other priorities than managing lands. While there was also a lack of help in controlling National Parks and Monuments, there was even more of a gap in standard practices and policies to manage the park grounds.

Conservation and preservation would clash like never before during this time without an NPS. Many conservationists were utilitarian in approach and wanted to see resources available for use at a regulated rate. With other conservation entities having a voice via organizations located in Washington like the Forest Service, wildlife refuges, and U.S. Geological survey, the parks were left without any kind of protection from a distinct federal agency.<sup>5</sup> Parks would adopt more of a preservation approach because they focused on saving the iconic landscapes and resources completely, but some special conditions allow for more conservation approaches. These special instances were laid out in the Organic Act of 1916 that Lane wrote with the help of another voice. Stephen T. Mather joined Lane in seeing a need for a government run organization to advocate the needs of National Parks. Mather, an avid outdoorsman and wealthy businessman, directly reached out to Lane about his complaints regarding the mismanagement of parks. Lane then appointed him as his assistant concerning park matters and challenged Mather to do something about it.<sup>6</sup> Both Lane and Mather supported the ideas of conservation but saw the necessity for parks to adopt preservation approaches in order to save land.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>4</sup> Barry Mackintosh, Janet A. McDonnell, and John H. Sprinkle, "The National Parks: Shaping the System," *The George Wright Forum* 35, no. 2 (2018): pp.12, <http://npshistory.com/publications/shaping-the-system-2018.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

Lane and Mather began to run an aggressive campaign to get National Parks some kind of federally run body to manage the parks.<sup>7</sup> When thinking about how they should go about creating the NPS, this would have to be taken into account and began to separate the goals of parks and national forests as separate. The two men achieved the separation by holding the National Parks as premium tourist attractions that could bring in lots of money and focused less on their good as places of preservation.<sup>8</sup> With this clever strategy of getting the public on their side through the media and advocating to politicians that National Parks are tourist attractions, they slowly got Americans to buy into the idea of an NPS. At this time where conservation was slowly seen as a normal practice, it should come as no surprise that by 1916 the two men drafted a bill to Congress that would make this goal a reality.

The campaign by Mather and Lane to gain public support included publishing some articles appealing to the creation of an NPS in *National Geographic* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. In *National Geographic*, an article titled, “The Land of the Best,” makes comparisons of National Park Land to the wonders of Europe and insinuates that the beauty held in America’s National parks is far better. The comparison reads,

“...before America was born into the family of nations Europe had castles and cathedrals and masterpieces of art and sculpture. But in that architecture which is voiced in the glorious temples of the sequoia grove and in the castles of the Grand Canyon, and in that art which is mirrored in American lakes, which is painted in geyser basins and frescoed upon the side walls of the mightiest canyons, there is a majesty and an appeal that the mere handiwork of man, splendid though it may be, can never rival.”<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Hazel K. Wharton, “A Brief History and Description of the National Park Service,” (Washington D.C.: National Park Service) § (n.d.), 7.

<sup>8</sup> Barry Mackintosh, Janet A. McDonnell, and John H. Sprinkle, “The National Parks: Shaping the System,” *The George Wright Forum* 35, no. 2 (2018): pp.13, <http://npshistory.com/publications/shaping-the-system-2018.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Gilbert H. Grosvenor, “Land of the Best,” *National Geographic*, April 1916, 327.

The flowery language and the draw on American exceptionalism show the hard battle that the media campaign fought to win the admiration of Americans. The National Parks needed to be seen directly as tourist attractions.

With the Organic Act written in 1916 there still remained the question about Native Americans inhabiting potential park sites and how to handle incorporation into the parks or removal from the parks. As seen in the early stages of creating parks or other lands for conservation, Native Americans vacated their lands due to approaching white settlers. The Miwok people of Yosemite represent a distinct case where white settlers threatened violence if they did not vacate the park grounds and those who did not leave received poor treatment as tourist attractions. Some settlers, backed by the government, forced Native Americans onto reservations like with the creation of the National Buffalo Reserve when the confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indians got removed by the government from their own land for the purpose of conservation. During the creation of the NPS in 1916, government consultation directly with Native Nations did not occur. The federal government was already in the process of removing Native groups all over the country onto reservations. Other federal conservation organizations and policies created during this time set the standard of continuing to marginalize the people who originally inhabited these places of unique American beauty.

The consequences of the campaign by Franklin Lane and Stephen Mather to promote parks as tourist destinations had a profound effect on the way Americans saw Native Americans in parks. Yosemite exemplifies consequences because the Miwok speaking people that held out in Yosemite were now part of a tourist attraction. The park director and park employees encouraged the showcasing of events seen as “cultural” and demanded that the Miwok speaking

people give an experience to visitors that they thought was “authentic.”<sup>10</sup> This included any preconceptions that Americans may have about Native Americans more broadly which was mainly developed by their understanding of Great Plains Indians.<sup>11</sup> Perceptions that Americans held included the way Native Americans were supposed to dress, act, how and where they lived, and the kinds of art produced by Native Americans. The Miwok people had to sell their artwork out of poorly constructed teepees as a result of these pressures from white people in control of Yosemite. Park president, Don Tressider, wanted a traditional Miwok umucha removed from the Miwok village in Yosemite because it was an eyesore that failed to satisfy expectations of Native culture and life.<sup>12</sup> Native Americans now had a specific image to embody for white Americans and if they did not satisfy this conception at National Parks, they were seen as non-authentic. The idea of Native Americans as a tourist attraction became reinforced by the passing of the Organic Act and subsequent creation of the NPS.

#### Organic Act of 1916

The Organic Act of 1916 manifested the NPS. It lays out the basic groundwork for how the NPS should operate, what the NPS controlled, and the original goal of the NPS. The act contains four sections and is not unsimilar to the Antiquities Act of 1906. Both pieces of legislation contain the plans of operation as well as a detailed description of what exactly the act intended to do. Language in the Organic Act also has some similarity to legislation passed on wildlife and forestry. Timber on National Park grounds is mentioned as well as wildlife preservation within park boundaries. Without the help of previous legislation, the creation of the Organic Act would have been much more difficult to write and to pass in Congress. With the

---

<sup>10</sup> Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 171.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

passing of previous conservation policies, Congress became accustomed to the goals of policy like this and understood the overall goals. The Organic Act passed on August 25, 1916, and with it came the establishment of the NPS.

Section one of the Organic Act lays the foundation of the NPS. Most importantly, section one puts the NPS in the DOI and gives the secretary of the interior power to control the entity. The bill makes the original NPS an extension of the DOI that specifically manages federal land with designations as National Parks, Monuments, and Reservations (note: not a reference to Indian Reservations which are controlled by the BIA). It allows the NPS to have several employees which are: a director appointed by the secretary of the interior, an assistant director, a chief clerk, one draftsman, and one messenger. The final stipulation for employees allows the secretary of the interior to appoint more employees as necessary which allowed for the NPS to expand with the creation of more national parks, monuments, and reservations. Most important in section one comes in the final line when the overall, “purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”<sup>13</sup> The NPS creation had conservation specifically in mind, but the legislation pushes the idea a step further by ensuring the protection of land for future generations. This stipulation will hold future politicians and Americans accountable to the ideal that national park lands will lie untouched for generations.

Section two of the act is relatively short and to the point. It maintains that the secretary of the interior and NPS director will have the final say in all NPS matters. By making this clear, the DOI continued to have control over the NPS, but the NPS has some freedom with its own

---

<sup>13</sup>Committee on Public Lands. *An Act to Establish a National Park Service, and for Other Purposes*, Cong. no. 64.

director having a lot of say in decisions. The other big part of section two gives control of the current national parks, monuments, and reservations to the NPS. Oddly enough, the Forest Service stood in the way of creating legislation for a NPS because they felt as though the National Parks would claim areas already under their designation.<sup>14</sup> Section two addresses the potential national forest issue and says, “that in the supervision, management, and control of national monuments contiguous to national forests the Secretary of Agriculture may cooperate with said National Park Service to such extent as may be requested by the Secretary of the Interior.”<sup>15</sup> When Lane and Mather proposed the bill to Congress, the Department of Agriculture became a voice against the creation of National Parks with the fear that the NPS would eventually overtake their authority. The two men drafted this stipulation knowing that the Department of Agriculture had this fear and by putting it this early in the bill, the largest voice against the NPS became quiet.

Section three of the Organic Act is the largest part and has references to other conservation minded bills. Similar to both sections one and two, the first part reaffirms the Secretary of the Interior and the DOI as the rule makers for the NPS. They become the rule makers for parks and punishments for not following the rules set by the Secretary of the Interior and DOI are found in the U.S. Penal Code. The Secretary of the Interior can also remove timber in order to help the overall benefit of the parks. Cases for removal of timber listed in the bill include insect control, disease control, and to ensure the preservation of historic or natural wonders. In the final part of this section, the Secretary of the Interior can, “grant privileges, leases, and permits for the use of land for the accommodation of visitors in the various parks,

---

<sup>14</sup> Barry Mackintosh, Janet A. McDonnell, and John H. Sprinkle, “The National Parks: Shaping the System,” *The George Wright Forum* 35, no. 2 (2018): pp.13, <http://npshistory.com/publications/shaping-the-system-2018.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Committee on Public Lands. *An Act to Establish a National Park Service, and for Other Purposes*, Cong. no. 64.

monuments, or other reservations herein provided for, but for periods not exceeding twenty years; and no natural curiosities, wonders, or objects of interest shall be leased, rented, or granted to anyone on such terms as to interfere with free access to them by the public.”<sup>16</sup> With the proclamation that parks are available to all of the public, the NPS embodies the democratic experience that Teddy Roosevelt championed. The influence to make parks a public experience available for all was clearly in the minds of those pushing for a NPS and due to the previous conservationists, it became a central piece in the legislation that created the NPS.

At the end of section three there is a stipulation that section three Organic Act of 1916 will not apply to Yellowstone. Yellowstone has existed for over forty years at this point, and it has its own rules that apply specifically to Yellowstone. This observation is important because moving forward, National Parks will follow the general rules created by the Organic Act of 1916, and they will have their own legislation enforced by park directors. Without this stipulation, all parks would have to follow the rules created in the Organic Act and the Secretary of the Interior would have the final say in all rules created at certain parks. Once again, Yellowstone served as the early example for how National Parks should operate. It does so by following the general guidelines laid out in the Organic Act, but Yellowstone also has its own park rules set by the director of the park. The end of the act comes in section four. Section four says that the provisions in the Organic Act of 1916 will not modify an act titled, “An Act relating to rights of way through certain parks, reservations, and other public lands,” which passed in 1901. The act in 1901 allows the Secretary of the Interior to approve certain structures to be built in National Parks if it is beneficial to the parks.<sup>17</sup> Basically, it limits unnatural construction on

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Committee on Public Lands, *An Act Relating to the Rights of way through Certain Parks, Reservations, and Other Public Lands*, Cong. no. 56.



National Park and reservation land while having wiggle room to make these lands more accessible with such things as electricity, roads, and water processing plants.

The Organic Act of 1916 generates the NPS, and it builds on much of the legislation created before it. It addresses the creation of the USFS by allowing the NPS to specifically leave lands under its jurisdiction alone. In this sense, the NPS followed the model created by the USFS because its formation was specifically catered to one entity. For the USFS it was forests and for the NPS it was park land. The other striking thing about this piece of legislation was the similarity in structure to the Antiquities Act of 1906. Both contain four sections that do accomplish very similar objectives. These objectives are naming an authority, creating a punishment for rule breakers, making sure that the benefit of the public was central, and both create stipulations that allow for adapted changes to the act in the future. Conservation policy at this time starts to all look very similar, and there was one quality that linked all conservation policy leading up to the creation of the Organic Act of 1916. Every conservation policy drafted by conservationists and lawmakers was reactionary. The first wildlife refuges reacted to disappearing wildlife, the first national forest laws reacted to Americans cutting down too much timber, the Antiquities Act reacted to looters destroying American Indian sites, and the Organic Act reacted to a need for a central body to control a growing number of National Parks, Monuments and Reservations. The reactionary nature allows for identification of a problem by activists which then go onto motivate Congress or politicians to create policy geared toward the goal of conservation. This way of creating conservation policy effectively saved countless amounts of nature throughout the country.

The other consistent theme linking conservation policy was the omitting of Native Americans. After all, National Park, Monument, and Reservation lands were all inhabited by

Native Americans. With regard to the Organic Act of 1916, Native Americans can no longer survive on National Park land without a permit from the DOI. Many of the practices essential to Native American livelihood such as hunting, collecting timber, and just residing on the land all require direct approval from the Secretary of the Interior. With the Organic Act passing in 1916, Native Americans were left with few choices. They could either adapt to the model of enhancing the experience of tourists, like with the Miwok speaking people at Yosemite, or they could move away from National Park, Monument, or Reservation grounds. With their options limited, the government showed that it remained committed to removing Native Americans from their homeland for the enhancement of white Americans.

The sad slighting of Native Americans from the conservation movement and the eventual creation of the NPS are reflected in the NPS even today. The fact of the matter remains that Native American land is National Park land, and it was not treated as such in 1916 and throughout the conservation movement. Native American mistreatment has continued as an ongoing problem and the feelings of some is best summed up by William Walksalong who is a Northern Cheyenne spiritual leader and member of the tribe's Sand Creek Massacre Descendants Committee. He says, "“The majority of Indian people today do not want to become plain Americans. Our desire is to retain our own way of life.”<sup>18</sup> The comment made by Walksalong shows a popular desire by some Native Americans to have their own lands given back to the rightful owners. Americans have yet to fully recognize the destruction and harm that they had on Native American culture. While the NPS furthered the goals of the conservation movement and

---

<sup>18</sup> Ari Kelman, "A Misplaced Mob," in *A Misplaced Massacre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 32-33.

set aside some of America's most beautiful places for future generations, it also destroyed many tribes' way of life and took lands that belonged to various tribes for centuries.

### Conclusion

The creation of the NPS put a cap on the standard set by all of the work done during the conservation movement. Most importantly, its creation allowed for the proper management of park sites for the enjoyment of future generations. Without the NPS, much of the lands that conservationists fought to save might have been mismanaged and exploited for raw materials. Instead, conservationists had successfully normalized the practice of resource management and made politicians and capitalists accept the fact that some landscapes were too beautiful and important to America's image. The NPS creation in 1916 marked the end of an aggressive conservation era, but it does not mark the end of conservation goals. More parks were created after 1916 and new legislation cleared the way for much more progress to be forged. The organization that emerged out of the NPS made conservation an efficient practice with specific people in charge of land management.

However, the NPS harmed Native Nations. The federal government allowed and assisted in the removal of thousands of groups all over the country from their original homelands. Native Americans should have been included in the conservation process, but they were instead left out completely and often times seen as obstacles to proper conservation. Representation of Native Nations in parks remains poor and this has been admitted by the NPS itself. A 1972 review of the NPS showed that under the category of, "the original inhabitants," there was poor representation under all sub themes. The review starts by acknowledging, "[Native history?] theme receives prime recognition at 24 parks within the System. Some 130 Landmarks have been recognized in which this is the predominant one. It is therefore obvious that this important portion of our

history is poorly represented.”<sup>19</sup> Native American inclusion in the NPS remained poor even over fifty years after its creation. The NPS has to be more inclusive of Native Americans and they have since made efforts to do so by working with the Native American Liaison Office.<sup>20</sup>

The research in this project draws on existing scholarship about the creation of the NPS, but it frames its creation in a different way. As mentioned earlier in the project, histories surrounding the creation of the NPS generalize it as a product of the conservation movement that really ramped up during the administration of Theodore Roosevelt. While this is essential to understanding the narrative of creation, it is not the whole story. In order to get the full picture, this project dives deeper into what Roosevelt’s conservation agenda looked like through what he said to the public. The project also highlights three key conservation entities created during his administration that served as precursors of an NPS. Narratives of the NPS are too general and fail to look into specific examples that show why there is an NPS and how conservationists and politicians arrived at the idea of an NPS. While building on the work of previous scholars and historians, this project recognizes the traditional history while filling the gaps of what conservation agencies paved the way for an NPS. The project emphasizes the Native American experience as an essential part of conservation during the conservation movement. Native Americans are often left out of histories or only briefly mentioned so their inclusion is just as important as answering why and how the NPS was created. Ultimately, the project is significant in showing how the NPS is a story of triumph and tragedy. The triumph comes on the side of conservationists who saw an agency created that specifically saved America’s greatest natural

---

<sup>19</sup> “Part One of the National Park System Plan History,” Part One of the National Park System Plan History § (1970), pp. 1-12.

<sup>20</sup> “National Park Service Working with American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians,” National Parks Service (U.S. Department of the Interior, June 28, 2016), <https://www.nps.gov/history/tribes/ailo.htm>.

wonders. Tragedy strikes on the side of Native Americans, who were left out of decisions and pushed off of their homelands.

All of the things analyzed in this project show that there were lots of factors that went into the formation of the NPS. With any of them missing, there is likely no NPS, and park management remains in the hands of the DOI. Both Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks created a model and pushed conservation onto a national level, Theodore Roosevelt seized this as a chance to bring conservation as a national goal, this led to the creation of three key conservation entities, and finally this all culminated to creating an NPS.

## Annotated Bibliography

### Primary Sources:

Grinnell, George Bird. "Brief History of the Boone and Crockett Club." Essay. In *Hunting at High Altitudes: The Book of the Boone and Crockett Club*, 433–91. New York & London, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1913.

This history of the Boone and Crockett Club is written by one of the founders and gives insight into the very specific goals the club wanted to achieve at its founding. This source will allow for a clear view of why the nature club was created and how it went about spreading ideas of conservation. It will also serve as a way to look at the eventual success of the club by its accomplishment of some of these goals.

Hutchings, James M. "The Yosemite Valley, and Its Water-Falls." *Hutchings Magazine* 1, no. 1, July 1856.

This magazine article is one of the first publicly available descriptions of the Yosemite Valley. James Hutchings created this magazine to capture the pure beauty that existed in the area. I will utilize this primary source to show just what someone thought of Yosemite before it becomes protected. The imagery described will serve as a justification for Yosemite's conservation.

McDonald, Robert. "A Brief History of the National Bison Range." Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, June 26, 2019. <https://csktribes.org/more/videos/short-a-brief-history-of-the-national-bison-range>.

This video gives a history of the National Bison Range through the perspective of the confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes through interviews with members of the tribe. The oral history provided is valuable to see how Native Americans on the land had a system of conservation for the bison before their land had been turned into a reservation. Seeing how the confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes reacted to the American government involvement in creating a wildlife reservation is important because the same thing will occur when the government creates National Parks on Native American land.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *Theodore Roosevelt to Congress*. Letter. From the Library of Congress. *Special Message of the President Transmitting the Report of the National Conservation Commission*. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/consrv:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(amrvvgvg38div5\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/consrv:@field(DOCID+@lit(amrvvgvg38div5)))

In this letter from the President to Congress we see Teddy Roosevelt talk about how successful the National Conservation Commission was in taking inventory of all the country's natural resources. This source is extremely important because it describes President Roosevelt's stance on conservation as one of national importance. It also shows what lead conservationists were fighting for at the time because Theodore Roosevelt was a lead conservationist of the time. I will utilize all of this information in my chapter on Teddy Roosevelt to show not only his

stance that America needed policy for conservation, but also to show that what other conservationists were pushing for at the time. Roosevelt's stance was influenced by other conservationists such as John Muir and George Grinnell.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *The Winning of the West*. 1. Vol. 1-4. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

These volumes of books written by Roosevelt contain his early conceptions and experiences of wilderness. They also reveal the racism that Roosevelt had against Native Americans. This source will show early conceptions of conservation and how the future president began to think about the idea as a young man and helps to reveal why Native Americans were left out of his conservation vision.

Roosevelt, Theodore., "Address of President Roosevelt at Leland Stanford University." Palo Alto, California, May 12, 1903,  
<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record.aspx?libID=o289820>

This speech given by the president to students on his campaign for reelection in 1904 articulates the exact conservation stance that he held. In this speech he describes his experience with California wilderness and urges the young crowd to take advantage of all that is offers. This helps explain his love of nature and his belief that it was the duty of the government to protect it for the enjoyment of the people both in the present and in the future.

Roosevelt, Theodore., "Speech of President Roosevelt at laying of the cornerstones of gateway to Yellowstone National Park." Gardiner, Montana, April 24, 1903,  
<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record?libID=o289720>

This speech given at the laying of the cornerstone at the archway of Yellowstone shows the vision of national parks. It also describes that Roosevelt thought these parks were essential to the democratic experience of the country and what part the federal government should play in protecting landscapes like Yellowstone. This source allows for a clear view of what the federal government was doing under Roosevelt to ensure the protection of unique wilderness areas in the U.S.

Turner, Frederick Jackson, 1861-1932. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1894.

The Frontier Thesis by Frederick Jackson Turner is essential to the understanding of the western frontier and its closure declared because of census data in 1890. The closing of the frontier is extremely important for setting the scene of the conservation movement because it made politicians and activists concerned about conservation of resources and the preservation of American wilderness beauty. This source will help set the scene for why there was such a push for conservation at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century.

U.S. Congress. Committee on Public Lands. *An Act To enlarge the power of the Department of Agriculture, prohibit the transportation by interstate commerce of game killed in*

*violation of local laws, and for other purposes.* 56<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., May 25, 1900.

This act that passed in both the House and Senate reacted to the popular method of hunting by rail that was leading to the devastation of many kinds of animals all over America. The act banned the transport of illegally killed animals across state lines which ended a hunter's ability to jump on a train after killing a protected animal. The act provided more ways for conservation policy to pass in Congress and shows how a lot of conservation policy is reactionary in nature.

U.S. Congress. Committee on Public Lands. *An Act to Establish a National Park Service, and for Other Purposes.* 64<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., August 25, 1916.

Congress passed this act in 1916 to create the National Park Service. Without this act, there was no agency that could handle the management of park land all over the country. Congress laid out the guidelines for how to manage the park system as well as the original goals of the park system. The NPS was finally created with this act and recognition of preservation and conservation practices at America's most scenic places was accepted by all.

U.S. Congress. Committee on Public Lands. *An act to repeal timber-culture laws, and for other purposes.* 51<sup>st</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., March 3, 1891.

This act that passed in the House and Senate is more commonly known as the Forest Reserve Act. The Forest Reserve Act gave executive power to the president to declare areas of forests as National Refuges where timber was protected. The act left room for more conservation policy with forests because it did not stipulate who controlled protection or how protection was supposed to happen.

U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Committee on Public Lands. *An Act to secure Homesteads to actual Settlers on the Public Domain.* 37<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. May 20, 1862.

This congressional act allowed Americans to settle out west in claims of land up to one hundred sixty acres by just paying a small filing fee. This act will help me frame why some Americans saw land out west "disappearing" because as more settlers made more claims there was less land available. It also will help me frame the Yosemite section where the government has a dispute with settlers claiming land on the unsurvey grounds of Yosemite.

U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Public Lands. *Preservation of American Antiquities.* 59<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., May 24, 1906. S. Rep. 3797.

This Senate report recommends the passage of the Antiquities Act and its recommendation to pass the act. Also, the document illuminates important bodies such as the American Archaeological Institute and the Smithsonian as significant backers of the act. Lastly, I can use the report to show why historical preservation was a key element in getting the Antiquities Act passed in the Senate. Congressional ally of conservation, John Lacey, will back the passage of the act and this report is largely supported by him as well as President Roosevelt. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Public Lands, *The Act of Dedication*,



42<sup>nd</sup> Cong., 1 sess., February 27, 1872.

This act passed in the House and the senate allowed Yellowstone to become the first federally protected area of land in the country. This source will be utilized to show how the federal government originally planned to take care of land under its authority as Yellowstone is the first national park created. The act dedicated federal protection in the name of the American people and this would be an idea that has been carried on throughout all of national parks and is essential in the formation of the NPS.

U.S. Congress. Senate. "S. 203, A Bill Authorizing a Grant To...California of the 'Yosemite Valley,' And...the 'Mariposa Big Tree Grove,'" June 30, 1864," U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, June 30, 1864, <https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/artifact/s-203-bill-authorizing-grant-tocalifornia-yosemite-valley-andthe-mariposa-big>.

This is the act that gave Yosemite protection by the state government of California. This was done in the senate and the authority for protection was given to the state. Without this act the origins of government protection would be left out of this project.

### Secondary Sources:

Bernhard Gissibl, Höhler Sabine, and Patrick Kupper, "Introduction: Towards a Global History of National Parks," in *Civilizing Nature: National Parks in Global Historical Perspective* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), pp. 1-28.

This book puts the idea of a national park into a global perspective. It argues that while the US invented the label of a national park, the idea of a national park has been around for centuries. The main theme to keep in mind when thinking about the creation of a national park is that when political actors set aside land as a national park, they are trying to civilize it. I plan to use this argument to help frame my introduction and fill in national parks in a global perspective.

Burnham, Philip, *Indian Country, God's Country: Native Americans and the National Parks*. New York, NY: Island Press, 2000.

This source talks specifically about Native American removal from national parks. It will help contextualize how they were removed and left out of the original vision of national parks. This piece will also help form a conclusion through reflection as to why Native Americans were treated so unfairly.

Catton, Theodore, and Joel D. Holtrop. "Indians, Non-Indians, and the American Forests to 1900." Essay. In *American Indians and National Forests*, 11–35. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2016.

Theodore Catton and Joel Holtrop's book serve as a major contribution on the perspective of Native Americans and the National Forests. It shows that the USFS could have included Native American practices in their original vision of how to properly conserve forests. The book also gives a detailed account of the case *United States v. Cook* where it was determined that Native Americans could only cut down trees for the purpose of clearing farmland on reservations. This illustrates the continued theme of marginalization of Native Nations when thinking about conservation.

Chittenden, Hiram M., and Eleanor Chittenden. Cress. *The Yellowstone National Park: Historical Descriptive*. Cincinnati, OH: The Robert Clarke Co., 1895.  
<https://archive.org/details/yellowstonenati01chitgoog/mode/2up>.

This source is a history of Yellowstone that was published in 1895, only twenty years after the initial federal explorations of the park. The history starts with Lewis and Clark and ends with the creation of the National Park in Congress. This source will serve as a guide to my section about Yellowstone and how it became a National Park. I will use this to explain the expeditions that lead to the creation of the park. Also contained within this source are quotes and descriptions from those on the expeditions and these would be the first people that explain why Yellowstone needs federal protection.

Dorsey, Leroy G. *We Are All Americans, Pure and Simple: Theodore Roosevelt and the Myth of*

*Americanism*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2013.

This source continues the discussion of Roosevelt's racism towards Native Americans by identifying policies that the president created that targeted Native Americans. It explains that Roosevelt held conflicting views about Native Americans because he called them savage but held them in high regards as fierce and resourceful. This source will help give a clearer picture of how Roosevelt felt about Native Americans.

Dyer, Thomas G. *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980.

This book takes a deep dive into the racism that Roosevelt had towards many groups, but most important to this project are these feelings towards Native Americans. This book gives specific examples of racism toward Native Americans by Roosevelt and this serves as a possible explanation as to why they are left out of the conservation vision that Roosevelt had.

*Ken Burns: The National Parks - America's Best Idea*. PBS, 2009.

This documentary film frames the National Park System as an American idea. Also contained within this source is an in depth look at how Theodore Roosevelt, George Grinnell, John Lacey, and John Muir created the foundation of a national parks system. Largely, this source will be used to frame a central part of my argument, that national parks were an American idea that came out of a country that realized one of its greatest assets was its natural wonders. It also contains a discussion of obstacles faced by these men in their quest to preserve American wilderness. It will also allow me to put some context in for the creation and usage of the Antiquities Act.

Harmon, David, Francis P. McManamon, and Dwight T. Pitcaithley. *The Antiquities Act: a Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006.

In this book the complete history of the Antiquities Act in the twentieth century is laid out. It puts a strong emphasis on its foundations from many different subjects including anthropology, archeology, and geology. This source will be useful as a guide in the history of the Antiquities Act as well as a guide for its shortcomings. I plan to use this as a reference to any questions I have about the Antiquities Act and it can serve as a review of how successful the act was, and I could put this into a conclusion on the Antiquities Act section. The book also be used to give overviews of important actors and figures within the conservation movement and what these figures had to do with the Antiquities Act. Finally, the book contains a ton of relevant statistics about the overall usage of the act, and these can be used to back up claims made about the Act.

Hays, Samuel P. *The American People & the National Forests: the First Century of the U.S. Forest Service*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009.

The book written by Hays gives strong insight into the creation of the USFS and national forests in general. The book gives a great history of the Adirondack forest which is important as the first forest given government protection. Hays also gives a more general history of the Forest Service and provides some history behind major legislation passed to create National Forests.

Historical Timeline.” Historical Timeline | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Department of the Interior, January 21, 2021. <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/history/historical-timeline.html>.

The timeline is located on the FWS website and showcases major events that have to deal with the formation of the FWS. This timeline is used to provide historical overviews of major events pertinent to the FWS and wildlife sanctuaries. It also provides insight into what Native American Nations were inhabiting the lands of where a refuge was placed.

Mackintosh, Barry, Janet A. McDonnell, and John H. Sprinkle. “The National Parks: Shaping the System.” *The George Wright Forum* 35, no. 2 (2018): 1–132.  
<http://npshistory.com/publications/shaping-the-system-2018.pdf>.

This journal entry lays out a history of the creation of the NPS. It identifies major actors in its creation and what motivated these actors to fight for an NPS. The motivations allow for an in depth look at what was seen as important reasons for the creation of the NPS. This source will be used to provide a look into the original creation of the NPS as well as what people in the DOI originally pushed for its creation.

Meringolo, Denise D. *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: toward a New Genealogy of Public History*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012.

Meringolo’s book follows the history of the creation of the NPS and discusses factors that lead up to its creation in 1916. The book gives insight on Native American views and key conservation legislation such as the Antiquities Act. Utilizing this sources as another history of the Antiquities Act allows for a fuller picture of why it was created and how it was a precursor to the NPS.

Miller, Char, and Clay S. Jenkinson. *Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist in the Arena*. Lincoln, NE: UNP - Nebraska, 2020.

This source explains the wilderness writing of Roosevelt which is important to create a larger understanding of how Roosevelt began his love of wilderness. He always wrote while in nature whether he was camping, hunting, or ranching which are all vital aspects of his view of conservation. The book makes this clear and allows for this project to have an overview of why writing about nature was so important to Roosevelt.

Morris, Edmund. *Theodore Rex*. New York: Random House, 2010.

This biography of Theodore Roosevelt gives a detailed account of the life of Roosevelt before, during, and after his presidency. With regard to his views on conservation it gives insight to the views of Roosevelt as a conservationist and why Roosevelt believed it was so important for the future of America. In this project this source helps explain these views as well as define important events in the president's life with regard to conservation and wilderness.

Nash, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. New haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1982.

This book allows for a glance at public opinion on the idea of public lands and contains historical accounts of key actors involved in the national parks such as preservationist John Muir and conservationist Gifford Pinchot. I will use this book mainly to put together the view of wilderness for Americans during the nineteenth century as Nash describes a constant pull between nature and civilization during this critical beginning of a conservation movement.

National Park Service. (2019, October 29). Conservation, Preservation, and the National Park Service. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from <https://www.nps.gov/teachers/classrooms/conservation-preservation-and-the-national-park-service.htm>

This source is directly from the NPS on the difference between conservation and preservation. In this project this source will define both camps because the debate over saving public land would largely take place between these two ideologies. It is also important that even today's NPS recognizes the thoughts of both opinions in order to find a balance in how public lands are protected.

Potter, Lee Ann and Wynell Schamel. "*The Homestead Act of 1862*." *Social Education* 61, 6 (October 1997): 359-364.

This secondary source contains analysis of the Homestead Act of 1862 and will help me understand and describe the act more clearly. This act is essential in the involvement of the federal government in conserving areas that become national parks because without westward movement, national park wonders would not have been discovered.

Reed, Nathaniel P., and Dennis Orabelle. "The Background of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service." Chapter. In *The United States Fish and Wildlife Service*, 1–16. New York, NY: Routledge, 2019.

The chapter in this book gives a comprehensive history of what factors contributed to the FWS creation and the wildlife refuges created before there was an FWS. It is important to recognize that this is one of the few full histories of the conservation agency. This chapter is used to explain how the first wildlife refuges were precursors to the NPS by describing how they were created and what their goals were in terms of conservation.

Runte, Alfred. *Yosemite: the Embattled Wilderness*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1990.  
<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/471077>

This source tells the story of the Native American Tribe that inhabited the grounds of Yosemite National Park. The Ahwahneechees were forced off the land by the U.S. government and it is an essential part of telling the story about the conservation of Yosemite. This source will set the scene for what originally drove white settlers into the area and why the land was so valuable in the eyes of Americans and how Native Americans were unfairly forced off their homeland by military force.

Turner, Tom. "Making the Mountains Glad." Essay. In *Sierra Club: 100 Years of Protecting Nature*, 28–80. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1991.

This source will serve as a history of the Sierra club which is the other nature club explored in chapter one. The narrative of how John Muir would create the organization to originally protect Yosemite is important and it also shows the goals that a preservationist would have during this time. This source is utilized to give a broad overview of the Sierra Club and its goals regarding the protection of wilderness.

United States Forest Service. "Before There Was A Forest Service, 1876-1904." 100 Years of Federal Forestry. Department of Agriculture, May 12, 2008.  
<http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/aib-402/sec1.htm>.

This source provided by the USFS gives a history of how forests were managed in the U.S. before the creation of the USFS. It illuminates major actors and what these actors did to advocate for the USFS creation. This is important because the NPS will go through a similar process of major actors contributing to its founding and these actors will have similar motivations to the one who wanted a USFS.

## Works Cited

- Andrews, Richard N. L. "Public Lands and Wildlife Conservation." Chapter. In *Managing the Environment, Managing Ourselves: A History of American Environmental Policy*, 276–304. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020.
- Andrews, Richard N. L. "The Progressive Era." Essay. In *Managing the Environment, Managing Ourselves: a History of American Environmental Policy*, 123–42. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020.
- "Aubrey L. Haines, *Yellowstone National Park: Its Exploration and Establishment*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1974. 138-142.
- Bernhard E. Fernow (1851-1923)." Forest History Society. Forest History Society, February 5, 2020. <https://foresthistory.org/research-explore/us-forest-service-history/people/chiefs/bernhard-e-fernow-1851-1923/>.
- B Hazel Hunt. Voth and Carl Parcher Russell, *Yellowstone National Park: A Bibliography*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1940. 33-38.
- Burns, Ken. *The National Parks - America's Best Idea*. PBS, 2009.
- Conservation Movement: Conservation Chronology 1901-1907. Library of Congress. Accessed February 25, 2021. <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/cnchron4.html>.
- "Franklin B. Hough." Forest History Society. Forest History Society, August 10, 2020. <https://foresthistory.org/research-explore/us-forest-service-history/people/chiefs/franklin-b-hough/>.
- Grosvenor, Gilbert H. "Land of the Best." *National Geographic* 29, no. 4, April 1916.
- Hall, Barbara A., and Shepard Krech. "Introduction." Chapter. In *Collecting Native America: 1870-1960*, 1–24. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 2000.
- Hampton, H. Duane, "Opposition to National Parks." *Journal of Forest History* 25, no. 1, (1981): 37-45.
- "History." Miccosukee Tribe. Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, January 28, 2021. <https://tribe.miccosukee.com/>.
- Hutchings, James M, "The Yohamite Valley, and Its Water-Falls," *Hutchings Magazine* 1, no. 1, July 1856.
- Jentz, Paul. "A Life in Balance: The Myth of the Ecological Indian." Essay. In *Seven Myths of Native American History*, 136–58. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2018.

- Kelman, Ari. "A Misplaced Mob." Essay. In *A Misplaced Massacre*, 1–43. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- McDonald, Robert. "A Brief History of the National Bison Range." Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, June 26, 2019. <https://csktribes.org/more/videos/short-a-brief-history-of-the-national-bison-range>.
- Mennell, Stephen. "Liminality and the Frontier Myth in the Building of the American Empire." In *Breaking Boundaries: Varieties of Liminality*. NEW YORK; OXFORD: Berghahn Books, 2018. 112-129.
- National Park Service, and Hazel K. Wharton, A Brief History and Description of the National Park Service § (n.d.).
- National Park Service. "History and Culture." National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, October 12, 2020. <https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/index.htm>.
- National Park Service, Part One of the National Park System Plan History § (1970).
- "National Park Service Working with American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians." National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, June 28, 2016. <https://www.nps.gov/history/tribes/aiilo.htm>.
- National Park System Timeline (Annotated), October 30, 2015. <http://npshistory.com/publications/timeline/index.htm>.
- Philip Burnham, *Indian Country, God's Country: Native Americans and the National Parks* New York, NY: Island Press, 2000.
- Spence, Mark David. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- United States Forest Service. "The Early Years of The Forest Service, 1905-1916." 100 Years of Federal Forestry. Department of Agriculture, May 12, 2008. <http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/aib-402/sec2.htm>.
- "What We Do (U.S. National Park Service)." National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, September 10, 2020. <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/index.htm>.