From Woodcraft to 'Leave No Trace'

Wilderness, Consumerism, and Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America

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In 1983, *Outside* magazine noted a growing number of "cognoscenti known as no-trace or low-impact campers" backpacking into the wilderness. "As their nicknames indicate, [these people] keep the woods cleaner than they keep their [own] homes." The most devoted backpackers fluffed the grass on which they slept, gave up toilet paper rather than burying it, and preferred drinking their dishwater to pouring it on the ground. No measure seemed too extreme in their efforts to protect the wilderness. Carrying packs loaded with modern gear, backpackers prided themselves on traveling through wilderness as mere visitors. In 1991, Leave No Trace became the official ethic for environmentally-conscious outdoor recreation on the nation's public lands.[1]

That announcement brought to a close a long transition in the place of recreation in the American wilderness. In the 1920s, Aldo Leopold first described wilderness areas as a "means for allowing the more virile and primitive forms of outdoor recreation to survive." His vision evoked an early-twentieth-century tradition of "woodcraft." Unlike today's backpacker, the skilled woodsman prided himself on living off of the land: building lean-tos, cooking over an open fire, and hunting for food. Woodcraft was steeped in self-reliance, masculine rhetoric, and discomfort with the modern consumer economy. Leopold envisioned wilderness as a refuge from modernity, where a working-knowledge of nature would reconnect people and the land.[2]

For environmental historians, this transition from woodcraft to Leave No Trace offers a tool to pry apart the modern wilderness ideal. Opening up the backpacks, leafing through the guidebooks, and revisiting the campsites reveals more than just changes in the ways people have returned to nature. Indeed, it reveals the historical pliability of the very ideals to which wilderness travelers have aspired.

Within the environmental historiography, the intellectual paths in and out of wilderness are well traveled. Since the mid 1980s, this traffic has been particularly heavy, as sharp debate over the cultural and scientific roots of wilderness engaged both the academic and scientific communities. The so-called "great new wilderness debate" emerged from conflicting approaches to wilderness. Conservation

biologists gave new emphasis to the role of wilderness reserves in protecting biodiversity; Deep Ecologists furthered the scientists' arguments, making wilderness the centerpiece in a biocentric agenda for restructuring modern society; and historians and literary scholars questioned the imperial, racial, and socioeconomic assumptions underlying the wilderness concept.[3]

Several participants in the recent wilderness debate have linked the growth in wilderness recreation with consumer culture's power to repackage nature—refashioning "wilderness" as an accessible and desirable tourist destination. While participants in the debate have examined wilderness from all sides, exposing the many cultural assumptions that layer the wilderness ideal, they have given little attention to the recreation ethics so important to the American wilderness tradition. Thus, this article follows a different set of paths into the wilderness: It follows the hiking trails.[4]

The transition from the heavy-handed practices of woodcraft to the light-handed techniques of Leave No Trace can be read as a logical response to the tremendous growth in wilderness recreation during the twentieth century. This transition, however, represents more than a straightforward reaction to the growing traffic of wilderness visitors. The exigencies of wilderness politics after the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, the growth of a consumer-oriented wilderness recreation industry, and the loosening strictures of gender in postwar America all helped shape a modern wilderness recreation ethic that harbored little of the anti-modern sentiments that charged the woodcraft ethic in the early twentieth century.

Following the hiking trails reveals how the modern wilderness ideal was reinvented in the twentieth century. In the years after the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964, as wilderness grew in popularity, it was most often described in two ways: as a recreational resource for backpackers and as a pristine ecological reserve for posterity. The modern wilderness recreation ethic served to negotiate this tension in the wilderness ideal. Practicing Leave No Trace allowed an ever-growing number of backpackers to visit wilderness, while leaving its ecological integrity intact. It was a pragmatic balance for the wilderness movement to strike. Yet, giving wilderness primacy as a popular recreational resource, emphasizing an aesthetic appreciation of nature, and embracing the consumer culture that enveloped post-1970s wilderness recreation all eroded the social ideals around which the wilderness movement first coalesced. This shift toward a modern, consumer-oriented wilderness ideal calls into question the effectiveness with which some of America's most ardent environmentalists—its wilderness recreationists—have engaged the environmental challenges posed by the consumer economy.

The Way of the Woods

Wilderness emerged as an important site of recreation in the early twentieth century. In those years, railroads and automobiles helped expand the nation's leisure-time geography, linking the cities with the rural hinterland. The same economy that cast a pall of smoke over growing cities, offered jobs to the surge of immigrants

that crowded city streets, and gave new scale to the commerce that dominated urbanites' daily lives also provided more and more of America's city dwellers with the means to quickly remove themselves to the countryside. For many Americans, nature beyond the city limits increasingly promised an antidote to the ills of urban life.[5]

Americans found many ways to get back to nature in the early twentieth century. Woodsmen, walkers, autocampers, and resort-going tourists all followed their own paths out of town and into the woods. But common sentiments animated their visions of the outdoors: They celebrated the simplicity of nature, the rejuvenating power of the mountains, and suspicion of the ill-health pervading the growing metropolises.[6] Walkers, for instance, cultivated an aesthetic appreciation of nature. In *Walking* (1928), George Trevelyan praised foot travel as a spiritual pursuit that encouraged "harmony of body, mind, and soul, when they stride along no longer conscious of their separate, jarring entities, made one together in mystic union with the earth."[7] More popular in the early twentieth century was autocamping. Starting in the 1910s, hundreds of thousands of middle-class families began motoring into the outdoors, camping by roads, streams, and high mountain meadows, and, on big trips, setting their sights on the nation's national forests and national parks.[8] Rolling across the country, these autocampers made the nation's public lands popular tourist destinations. The conflicting demands of autocampers, walkers, and woodsmen would play an important role in shaping the nation's federal land policy.

Of all these ways of getting back to nature, however, one has attracted little historical attention. Between the 1890s and the 1930s, woodcraft formed a coherent recreation ethic, and an important precursor to the modern wilderness movement. For aspiring woodsmen, a selection of manuals promised to reveal the secrets of woodcraft. George Washington Sears penned the first of these, titled *Woodcraft*, in 1891. In these guidebooks, several characteristics distinguish the woodsman from the walkers and autocampers: his practice of woodcraft celebrated a working knowledge of nature; he was preoccupied with an independent masculine ideal rooted in the frontier; and he exhibited strong misgivings for the abundance of consumer goods available to the outdoorsman. This dual concern—for leisure in the woods, and the consumer economy beyond—emerges as a central tension in woodcraft.[9]

For the woodsman, the woods promised a working vacation. Surveying the table of contents of woodcraft guides such as Horace Kephart's *Camping and Woodcraft* (1906), Edward Breck's *The Way of the Woods* (1908), or Elmer Krep's *Camp and Trail Methods* (1910) reveals common chapters on essential wilderness know-how. In the outdoors, a woodsman judged himself by his skills in hunting, tanning furs, preserving game, building campfires, setting up shelters, and traveling through the forest. Summing it up, Kephart called woodcraft "the art of getting along well in the wilderness by utilizing nature's storehouse." In contrast to the walking or autocamping literature, none of these handbooks sought to teach outdoorsmen how to pass through wilderness as a visitor. The real measure of the woodsman was in how skillfully he could recreate wilderness as his home.[10]

Proficiency in woodcraft required an intimate, hands-on knowledge of the woods. These expectations are best set forth in the early Boy Scout manuals. An ax was the

young scout's most important tool. With it, the first edition of *The Official Handbook for Boys* (1912) explained, the scout could furnish his entire wilderness camp. Ten straight tree branches could be assembled into a lean-to; and cut boughs served to thatch the roof. Two lean-tos facing one another made for an especially comfortable camp. In the kitchen, pot lifters, plates, and cups all could be fashioned from sticks and bark.[11] Ernest Seton, in *The Woodcraft Manual for Boys* (1917), challenged the young woodsman to practice "hatchet cookery" and furnish his entire meal with his hatchet alone.[12] Both the Boy Scout manuals and other woodcraft guides assumed that the skilled woodsman could identify trees (particularly those that burned most cleanly), knew the habits of animals (so he could kill them), and could identify a buffet of edible plants. The woodsman demonstrated his working knowledge of nature by using nature to his own ends.

Nothing troubled the woodsman more than being labeled a tenderfoot. Indeed, two types of tenderfeet stood out—those who took too much equipment into wilderness, and those who took too little equipment into wilderness. Much of the woodcraft literature emphasized striking a balance between these two extremes. This required not only the skills of a woodsman, but of a consumer. As Emerson Hough warned, "there is no purchaser on earth whose needs and notions are better studied or better supplied than are those of the American sportsman." Sears noted in *Woodcraft* that "The temptation to buy this or that bit of indispensable camp-it has been too strong, and we have gone to the blessed woods handicapped with a load fit for a pack-mule. This is not how to do it." In the woodcraft literature, the woodsman knew not only what tools and trinkets he could discard, he also could find the resolve to discard them. For those given to temptation, Stewart White suggested divvying up the gear into three separate piles: the essential, semi-essential, and unessential. Then, he implored the woodsman: "no matter how your heart may yearn over the Patent Dingbat in [pile] No. 3, shut your eyes and resolutely discard the latter two piles."[13]

Similar statements regarding careful packing can be found in 1970s backpacking guides too. But in the 1920s, this preoccupation with consumer goods emerged as a central strand of woodcraft's reaction to modernity. Relying on too many consumer goods not only weighed down the woodsman's pack, more important, it threatened to erode traditional skills, distance the woodsman from nature, and implicate him in a consumer economy preoccupied with profit. In *Woodcraft for Boys*, Seton held up the scouts' grandfathers as the "true Woodcrafters" and lamented that so many of the skills they mastered had become superfluous in the age of the factory. He urged the aspiring woodsman to "know the pleasure of workmanship, the joy that comes from things made well by your own hands." Otherwise, he warned, the camp, and the home, would become little more than an accumulation of artificial, manufactured goods.[14]

New Englander Joseph Knowles gathered up many of these sentiments in 1913, giving both the woodcraft ethic and its critique of modernity its fullest expression. Citing all of the concerns that spurred the back-to-nature movement, Knowles captured national attention when he walked buck naked into the Maine woods. He explained, "there was too much artificial life at the present day in the cities." For the

next two months, he made an experiment of himself, trying to live off of the land. When Knowles reemerged, he strutted out of the woods strong and healthy, clad in self-made clothes, and claimed to be no less than the model American man. Much pageantry surrounded Knowles' stunt, and although doubts as to its veracity were immediate, Knowles struck a chord with the American public. In subsequent articles, speeches, and a book, Knowles came the closest to making the woodcraft tradition a vessel of reform. Foreshadowing Benton MacKaye's proposal for the Appalachian Trail and the modern wilderness movement itself, Knowles proposed setting aside "wild lands" and establishing outdoor communities where Americans could retreat from the "commercialism and the mad desire to make money [that] have blotted out everything else [leaving us] not living, but merely existing."[15]

Central to Knowles' adventure, and the woodcraft tradition, was a preoccupation with masculinity common in turn-of-the-century America. Woodcraft promised to return the enervated city-dweller to the mythical frontier, allowing him to play out in leisure Theodore Roosevelt's "wilderness hunter," reaffirming both his masculinity and his Americanness. Of all the woodcraft guides, none were more preoccupied with masculinity than the Boy Scout manuals: "Make it yourself. A real red blooded, HE boy would make his crotched supports, tammel bar, tongs, pot hooks, forks and spoons when and where he needs them."[16]

Knowles expanded upon this concern for masculinity, suggesting its deeper implications for American democracy: "From wilderness life to the simple country life, and then up through the life of a great city liberty gradually decreases." Woodcraft offered a virile form of recreation that distanced the urbanite from a leisure class that hired guides for their wilderness trips or spent their vacations in effeminate mountain resorts. Although those who patronized the woodcraft literature likely hailed from America's upper class, the literature itself idealized woodcraft as a vacation for men of all means "who sorely need and well deserve a season of rest and relaxation at least once a year." In an increasingly urban society, rife with concerns over American civilization and waning masculinity, this opportunity to return to nature and demonstrate one's virility was a powerful salve.[17]

Among early-twentieth-century outdoor recreationists, the rhetoric of woodcraft most closely figures the place of recreation in the early wilderness movement. Other important traditions, such as John Muir's ascetic trips to the High Sierras and Bob Marshall's leg-stretching romps through the Adirondacks, evoke the tradition of walking which also informs the modern wilderness ideal. But the spiritual reverence for nature important to walking gave voice to few of the social concerns important to the woodcraft literature or to the nascent wilderness movement. Indeed, it is the woodcraft literature's preoccupation with the frontier, masculinity, and modernity that all suggest a key place for woodcraft in the heritage of American wilderness thought.

To varying degrees, Aldo Leopold, Bob Marshall, and Benton MacKaye—three founding figures in the modern wilderness movement—all marshaled familiar woodcraft language and themes in setting forth a broader wilderness idea. In the 1920s, Leopold emphasized wilderness not as a place, but as a means to allow Americans to test themselves "living in the open" and "killing game." When Benton

MacKaye outlined his 1921 vision of an Appalachian Trail, he described more than a simple trail linking Georgia to Maine. Rather, his Appalachian Trail was a reform project that promised to weave new connections between American society and the land through a working knowledge of nature. Marshall prized wilderness for its "fundamental influence in molding American character" and because only in wilderness could one be completely self-sufficient. For all three men, recreation was an important strand of the wilderness idea. For Leopold, in particular, wilderness recreation, in the tradition of woodcraft, promised to foster a self-sufficient, intimate knowledge of nature.[18]

Automobiles and new roads posed a real threat to the nation's public domain during the interwar years. In 1928, a government report warned that the nation's remaining wilderness was "disappearing rapidly, not so much by reason of economic need as by the extension of motor roads and the attendant development of tourist attractions." Paul Sutter's rich study of the formation of the Wilderness Society locates the origins of the wilderness movement not so much in a concern for protecting land from extractive industries, such as logging or mining, but in a deep aversion to automobile-based recreation. Leopold was leery, in Sutter's words, of the "dysfunctional leisure-based relationship with nature" facilitated by the automobile. Most troubling was that both the Forest Service and the National Park Service increasingly catered to autocampers, building roads and establishing campgrounds, all the while eroding the nation's reserve of roadless, uncommercialized land. The Wilderness Society (founded in 1935) aimed to protect at least a portion of the nation's public domain from the automobile. In Sutter's analysis, the early wilderness advocates' enthusiasm for this practical aim was fired by more significant, and much deeper, misgivings over the emerging consumer economy. In this way, the anti-modern currents running through woodcraft served as a precursor to the broad critique of modernity that inspired the interwar years wilderness movement.[19]

Although the woodcraft ethic helped give voice to the wilderness movement, by the 1930s wilderness advocates had already begun to broaden their arguments, offering the recreational, scientific, and moral justifications that historians now identify as the foundation of the modern wilderness movement. Drawing on this philosophy, wilderness advocates mounted a small-scale campaign before World War II to secure administrative protection for wilderness in the national forests, under the L-20 and later U regulations, and in a few national parks, such as Kings Canyon in California. These advances in Forest Service and National Park Service policy promised to protect at least a portion of the nation's remaining public domain from the hordes of autotourists motoring their way out of the cities.

After World War II, however, the threats to wilderness appeared on additional fronts. Increased pressure for resource development and tourist facilities on the nation's public domain tested the agencies' commitment to protecting forests and parks from development. At the same time, a growing number of wilderness recreationists formed a new constituency for wilderness preservation. By the 1950s, the growing threats to wilderness and this growing constituency of recreationists combined to transform the small-scale interwar years wilderness movement into a

national political campaign for wilderness preservation. Yet, with the new popularity of wilderness came an unexpected threat: how to protect wilderness from the backpackers themselves.

The Paradoxes of Popular Wilderness

After World War II, a new breed of outdoor recreationist—the backpacker—heralded a shift in both wilderness recreation ethics and the popular politics of wilderness. Between the late 1950s and the early 1970s, the ideas central to the wilderness movement began to migrate away from the social concerns that informed the interwar years wilderness movement. Two competing notions of wilderness—first, as a recreational resource, and second, as a scientific reserve—served as the dominant themes from which the postwar wilderness ideal was molded. In fact, sharp debate between the Forest Service and two factions of the wilderness advocacy community emerged over whether wilderness recreationists should have unfettered access to wilderness areas, or whether strict limitations should be established to protect wilderness as a biological reserve. This debate became heated after the passage of the Wilderness Act, and it tugged on the very stitching that held the wilderness idea together. These debates laid the groundwork for the rise of a minimal-impact camping ethic in the 1970s that would displace woodcraft as the dominant wilderness recreation ethic.

Historians have long noted the many forces that combined in the postwar era to make it ever easier for Americans to reach and enjoy the nation's backcountry. A new system of federal interstate highways linked urban America and its rural hinterland, a dense network of federally-subsidized logging roads opened up more and more of the national forests, and new technology and abundant information made it easier to plan a trip to the wilderness. As more people began visiting the nation's backcountry, the government began conducting surveys of wilderness visitors. A 1960 survey conducted at seven wilderness areas revealed that on average visitors were overwhelmingly male, married, and college-educated. Most lived in urban areas and fell between thirty and fifty years of age. Notably, less than half reported belonging to a conservation organization and income levels ranged evenly from the modest to the wealthy. Although the survey never asked the question, it is likely that a growing number of these wilderness visitors would have identified themselves as backpackers. In the 1950s, backpacking was becoming an increasingly popular way to enjoy the self-sufficient exploration of wilderness. In the Sierra Club's first wilderness manual, *Going Light* (1951), a young club staffer named David Brower promised to open up the "challenge of wilderness" to all those eager to escape the crowds and head into the backcountry. By the mid-1970s, as outdoor recreation grew in many directions, it was the backpackers who increasingly claimed wilderness as their privileged province.[20]

In the years after World War II, economic development began to encroach on the national parks and national forests. Timber companies looked to the national forests for wood and engineers sized up the nation's rivers for hydroelectric develop-

ment. Building on the momentum of the national debate over a dam at Echo Park, the wilderness advocacy organizations began to push for a federal law authorizing a congressionally-sanctioned system of wilderness areas on the nation's public lands. Central to their strategy was promoting wilderness as a recreational resource. In the 1960s, the Sierra Club and Appalachian Mountain Club encouraged hikers out into the mountains with tactics such as new trail guides, club-managed huts, and sponsored outings. The Wilderness Society soon followed their lead. These organizations hoped that as more backpackers visited wilderness, many of them would file out of wilderness ready to spearhead the push for a congressionally-sanctioned wilderness preservation system. The subsequent legislative campaign culminated in the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964. Yet, even as the Wilderness Act passed, the problem posed by wilderness recreation already formed an important sub-theme to the debate.[21]

A 1947 *Sierra Club Bulletin* article, "Saturation of Wilderness," and the club's newly begun Biennial Wilderness Conference in 1952, both asked if backcountry visitors might already be over-using wilderness. In the late 1950s, a growing number of Sierra Club members began writing letters to the club, worried that its tradition of one-hundred-person trips into the high country represented an "over-assault on the wilderness area." To study this possibility, the Sierra Club marshaled its own leaders as data collectors, seeking to document their impact on the wilderness. As the fight for the Wilderness Act heated up in 1960, the *Saturday Evening Post* reported on new threats to the proposed National Wilderness Preservation System. Instead of portraying a wilderness threatened by loggers or miners, the article described a New Mexico wilderness area beset by hikers, motorized recreationists, and Boy Scouts trying to live off the land. With such articles in hand, Brower worried that "chainsaw-toting" wilderness opponents could argue that the "greatest threat to wilderness is from the wilderness lovers themselves." Publicly, wilderness proponents dismissed such concerns. They had to: Wilderness recreationists formed a key segment of the growing wilderness movement.[22]

The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System and created new management imperatives for the nation's wild lands. Despite the growing concerns regarding the over-use of wilderness, the act was most significant for what it left unsaid. A paradox underlay the newly-established wilderness system: How could these areas be made available for public use with minimal restrictions, while also preserved as a resource for posterity?[23] Richard Costley, who oversaw the Forest Service's wilderness program, called this the "basic riddle inherent" in wilderness.[24] Solving this riddle saddled the Forest Service with difficult decisions. Restrictions on wilderness recreation threatened the freedom long associated with wilderness travel; unlimited recreation itself could permanently alter the ecology of wilderness areas; and simply putting wilderness behind legislative boundaries threatened to tame it, diminishing the wildness that the act originally aimed to preserve. Ultimately, Costley explained, wilderness could not be all things to all people. "We've got to make the point … forcefully that the 'recreational values' are not the only values in wilderness. After all, wilderness areas were set aside to protect them—even from recreationists."[25] Despite all the ambiguities of the Wilderness

Act, the Forest Service faced one constant. As Costley put it, "the multitude is at the gates."[26] Between 1960 and 1965, wilderness visitation increased fivefold to 3.5 million visitor days per year.[27]

Faced with rapidly increasing numbers of wilderness visitors and the demand for additional wilderness areas, the Forest Service's wilderness policies began to coalesce in the late 1960s, and the agency began actively promoting a wilderness system that was small, pristine, and managed to limit wilderness recreation. To Costley, William Worf, and others in the Forest Service's recreational division, such a "purity" policy heightened the value of wilderness, making it the exceptional system that Congress had intended. As Worf explained, "We are concerned with laying a solid foundation for a high quality Wilderness System which will withstand the pressures [of time]." Among the greatest threats to that vision was the booming number of backpackers. Following the purity policies, the Forest Service took steps to limit the recreational use of wilderness in the late 1960s. Interpreting the Wilderness Act as strictly as possible, the Forest Service resisted installing bridges, maintaining trails, or providing primitive sanitary facilities in designated wilderness areas. In 1972, the Forest Service further tightened its regulations, arguing that each wilderness area had a fixed "carrying capacity," and could accommodate only so many visitors. Soon, backpackers visiting popular wilderness areas from New Hampshire to California started their trips at the ranger station, seeking a mandatory permit for their wilderness trip.[28]

The Forest Service's purity policies came packaged with another agency proposal: "backcountry."[29] In lieu of additional congressionally-designated wilderness, the Forest Service promoted backcountry as an alternative form of land protection. According to Worf, backcountry areas would accommodate much higher levels of use, and meet the needs of a public "who did not need or desire the kind of wilderness atmosphere or natural conditions described in the Wilderness Act."[30] Unlike wilderness areas, backcountry areas would permit proactive management of non-motorized recreation, including designated campsites, picnic tables, outhouses, better developed trails, and limited logging. The proposed backcountry areas, however, enjoyed none of the congressionally-sanctioned permanence of the wilderness system. The Forest Service couched its argument for backcountry in terms of its purity policies, arguing that new backcountry areas would help protect the wilderness system. Shifting hiking into backcountry areas, explained W. E. Ragland, would reduce recreational pressure on wilderness, thus preserving the "wilderness areas for limited use and maximum protection of the natural ecology."[31]

The Forest Service's argument, however, sounded hollow to many wilderness advocates. During the 1950s and 1960s, the timber industry increasingly looked to the national forests as an important source of timber. In these years, industry lobbying led to tighter connections between the industry and the agency, greater reliance on clear-cutting for timber harvests, and increased estimates of the allowable cut permissible on the national forests. In the late 1960s, it became apparent that more than 50 million acres of Forest Service land (known as roadless areas or "de facto" wilderness) remained up for potential wilderness review. With so much at stake,

even Worf acknowledged that many people thought the Forest Service was "promoting the 'backcountry' concept to kill the wilderness movement." Some Forest Service employees, such as Worf, did believe wholeheartedly in the importance of a high-quality wilderness system. Nevertheless, the combination of strict limits on wilderness access, an unbending position on wilderness facilities, and the alternative backcountry designation (which enjoyed none of the statutory protection of the wilderness system) suggested that other Forest Service officials envisioned not only a pristine wilderness system, but a very limited wilderness system that left most of those 50 million acres available for future logging.[32]

Within the wilderness advocacy community, the Forest Service's purity policies and the threat of growing recreational use of wilderness became contentious issues in the late 1960s. At first, the staffs of the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society openly acknowledged the importance of limiting wilderness access to keep the nation's wilderness system from becoming pockmarked by over-used campsites, riddled with trails, and congested with visitors. But as the Forest Service began to implement its strict wilderness management policies, limiting recreational access to wilderness, a whole range of reactions began to emerge from the wilderness community. The biologist Garrett Hardin suggested that wilderness access should be limited to "physically vigorous people." Paul Petzoldt, the founder of the National Outdoor Leadership School, proposed a meritocracy, giving priority to those best educated in wilderness skills. David Brower offered a reminder "that wilderness will be preserved only in proportion to the number of people who know its values first hand." And a young math professor from California, Theodore Kaczynski, viewed all the visitors and the new regulations as the seeds of demise for wilderness. "In short the so-called 'wilderness' preserves will turn into artificially maintained museum-pieces," wrote the future Unabomber, "with 'do not touch' signs all over them. Real wilderness <u>living</u> will be impossible." From these many currents of concern, two dominant approaches began to emerge in this debate over the management—and the ultimate purpose—of the wilderness system.[33]

The Sierra Club's Wilderness Classification Study Committee, a volunteer committee that helped develop the club's wilderness policy, emerged at the center of the first of these views. Francis Walcott, the committee's iconoclastic chairman, argued fervently for the primacy of the biological value of wilderness. "The primary human benefit of wilderness is ecological," he explained; "wilderness will help to preserve endangered species and all other endemic wildlife, to protect fish habitat, and provide clear water, stable stream flows for downstream communities, islands of clean air, and, in general terms, maintain a livable environment for man." Although Walcott's arguments for a biological wilderness were not unique in the late 1960s, he was among the few supporters of the Forest Service's backcountry proposals and sharp limits on recreational access to wilderness. In terms of wilderness management policy, this placed the committee's view in an uncomfortable alliance with the Forest Service—both supported a pristine wilderness system little-used by the public.[34]

But the Wilderness Committee moved well beyond the Forest Service's approach to wilderness by elevating the wilderness system as the first tangible realiza-

tion of a new land ethic which harbored the revolutionary promise of redefining the relationship between society and the land. "The establishment, maintenance, and management of wilderness is a means towards achieving such a land ethic which provides a real respect for the land," Walcott explained. He believed through wilderness the environmental community was "pushing for … the integrity of the earth." In its scope and its forward-looking vision, the committee evoked the interwar years wilderness movement, yet its biocentricity suggested a distinct wilderness philosophy. It demanded that the Sierra Club, and the rest of the wilderness advocacy community, demonstrate a measure of restraint, in the form of limited access, as the moral foundation for a truly visionary wilderness system.[35]

A second view of wilderness management emerged from the ranks of professional wilderness advocates who oiled the legislative gears so important to the wilderness movement's success. Brock Evans, the Sierra Club's Pacific Northwest Representative, warned: "from a political standpoint, once we accept the idea of a backcountry system, there will be few, if any, new areas <u>ever</u> added to the Wilderness System."[36] Evans reminded both the club's Wilderness Committee and the Forest Service that "recreation is one of the <u>named</u> purposes of the Wilderness Act. In fact, it is the first named purpose—out of alphabetical order."[37] Although the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society endorsed the possibility of limits on wilderness access in the 1960s, this new debate called into question how tenable that earlier position was. Dick Sill, of the Sierra Club, explained the conundrum: "[I]f restrictive permits are adopted … many of the present supporters of wilderness—particularly the recreationists—will turn against wilderness entirely."[38] In 1970, the wilderness system measured only 10.5 million acres (of which 10.2 million acres were under Forest Service jurisdiction), less than one-tenth of its present-day size.[39] Instead of ratcheting down access to wilderness, promoting it as an overly pure system, and jeopardizing its political support, the pragmatic alternative was to encourage the recreational use of wilderness, while fighting to make the system as large as possible. As Sill noted, at the end of the day "the impact of thousands of Sierra Club hikers cannot begin to approach that of one work crew with chain saws, a bulldozer or two, and some appended logging trucks."[40]

In the first decade after the passage of the Wilderness Act, the wilderness advocacy community entertained these two sharply different visions of the future of the wilderness system. This debate, however, makes little sense in the context of the existing wilderness historiography. First, it reveals a wilderness advocacy community unsettled by a philosophical disagreement over the purpose of wilderness at a time when most historians have assumed that the wilderness community was unified in opposition to the federal land agencies and resource industries. Second, much of the historiographical debate has swirled around the assertion that environmentalists focused their energies on an idealized notion of wilderness freighted with romanticism and preoccupied with pristine nature. That argument, however, engages only one strand of a much more diverse and pragmatic wilderness discourse. All told, this late 1960s debate, which swept through the professional and volunteer wilderness advocacy community, marks an important and overlooked junction in the trails of wilderness history. In one direction lay a wilderness system

protected by strict visitation limits, dedicated largely as a biological reserve, and demanding a great deal of self-restraint on the part of the wilderness community. In the other direction lay a wilderness system that compromised the biological integrity of wilderness, prioritized human recreation, and promised to command political popularity. By the mid 1970s, it became clear that the wilderness advocacy community, along with a growing number of hikers, had chosen the latter path.[41]

Minimal-Impact Camping or "The Art of Using Gadgets"

Because many wilderness advocates believed that maintaining popular support for wilderness meant supporting liberal access for wilderness recreationists, the movement sought a pragmatic balance between use, political support, and preservation in the early 1970s. Central to that strategy was a new wilderness recreation ethic. As one author noted, the wilderness system could no longer tolerate an "old-style pioneer encampment" like the one his wilderness survey trip discovered in 1972 with "felled trees, a couple of shelters built of boughs cut green and, lying in the middle of it all, a Boy Scout Fieldbook." Rather, the wilderness advocacy community began to promote a new wilderness recreation ethic—minimal-impact camping—that promised to prop the doors to wilderness wide open for a better-educated wilderness visitor.[42]

This new wilderness recreation ethic made it easier for the Wilderness Society and Sierra Club to relax their support for limits on wilderness access. Stewart Brandborg, the Wilderness Society's executive director, noted in an internal paper: "Controls should be as flexible as possible to permit maximum freedom; dispersal of users should be encouraged; rationing: adopt politically acceptable forms." And, with emphasis, he wrote that "carrying capacity should be <u>increased</u>" by "training users in wilderness use to reduce impact." Wilderness advocates hoped many more recreationists, if properly educated, could be crowded into the wilderness "before we reach the ecological carrying capacity of intelligent use." New books such as Harvey Manning's *Backpacking, One Step at a Time* (1972), Paul Petzoldt's *The Wilderness Handbook* (1974), and John Hart's *Walking Softly in the Wilderness* (1977) represented a new genre of wilderness manuals that aimed to reeducate wilderness visitors, weaning them off woodcraft, and teaching them the new skills of minimal-impact camping.[43]

To the degree that this new minimal-impact ethic made sense, however, it also reflected the erosion of the skills and anti-modern concerns embedded in woodcraft. No longer did a working knowledge of nature anchor the wilderness recreation experience—the new literature aimed to replace woodcraft, which it dismissed as "old-style" camping. Hart, updating the Sierra Club's wilderness guide, captured the new backpackers ethic. "[G]oing light" had new meaning, he wrote. "[T]oday it refers less to the load in your pack than to the weight—the impact—of your passage on the land." As David Brower explained in 1971, backpackers aimed to visit wilderness without "leaving perceptible traces." Echoing the language of early-twentieth-century walkers, he continued, that was backpacking "in harmony with the spirit of

wilderness." In general, the new hiking guides dropped sections on building lean-tos, trapping, and hunting, and replaced them with instructions for selecting minimal-impact campsites, slowing trail erosion, and traveling as discreetly as possible. Hart explained the backpacker's new challenge and reward: It is "quite something … to know that you might have harmed a place and that you did not."[44]

The 1970s wilderness recreation ethic required that backpackers enter wilderness with more than a new set of camping skills. They also had to have the right gear. Because backpackers built no fires, hunted no wildlife, and constructed no makeshift shelters, they became increasingly dependent upon what they carried into wilderness with them. To reduce firewood consumption and fire rings, backpackers started carrying small portable stoves. Bedding down no longer meant gathering moss, grass, or tree boughs for a soft night's sleep. Lightweight foam pads offered an environmentally friendly alternative. Canvas tents and hastily assembled lean-tos disappeared in favor of nylon tents complete with metal poles and nylon stakes. To keep warm and dry, backpackers shelved their wool and fur and instead wore new garments made from engineered fabrics such as polypropylene and Gore-Tex. Marking the gulf separating the anti-modernist woodsman and the modern backpacker, the well-equipped backpack had become a showcase for advanced consumer technology.[45]

For those practicing the minimal-impact ethic, springing a temporary camp from a backpack of modern gear changed the dynamics of wilderness travel. The skills and risks at play in the 1970s backcountry differed significantly from those of the prewar years. Replacing camp-fires with stoves, twine with plastic fasteners, or a lean-to with a tent all diminished the wilderness travelers' immediate knowledge of the land around them. Aldo Leopold foresaw the emerging trend in *A Sand County Almanac*: "A gadget industry pads the bumps against nature-in-the-raw; woodcraft becomes the art of using gadgets." Lighting a stove or pitching a storm-worthy tent required new skills, but these skills did not promote the same hands-on knowledge of nature celebrated in the woodcraft handbooks or the early Boy Scout manuals. Instead, the modern wilderness ethic cultivated an aesthetic appreciation of wilderness. Long hikes, temporary camps, and an effort to leave no trace increasingly made backpackers transients in the wilderness landscape, observing, appreciating, visiting, but above all else, leaving wilderness unchanged.[46]

The new hiking guides not only abandoned the skills of woodcraft, they also abandoned its masculine rhetoric, supplanting it with language and metaphors that appealed to women and men alike. In part, this reflected a demographic shift, as more women ventured into wilderness in the 1970s, and carved a broader role for themselves in American society as a whole. But equally important, the ebb of frontier rhetoric reflected the decline of the masculine ideal that had been so potent in the early twentieth century. In the wake of the social and cultural upheavals of the 1960s and early 1970s, the image of the woodsman exercising dominion over the natural world with ax in hand struck a discordant note in a society preoccupied with the specter of the atomic bomb, Vietnam, and the unanticipated environmental consequences of the modern economy. For many Americans, particularly those involved in the 1960s social movements, the domineering language of the

woodsman no longer offered solace. The changed language of the wilderness experience recast the promise of wilderness—for challenge, self-realization, and escape—in ways that emphasized minimizing one's impact on wilderness, and by analogy, the environment as a whole.[47]

The minimal-impact recreation ethic arrived along with a wave of literature, consumer goods, and marketing campaigns aimed directly at the growing backpacking market in the 1970s. The old woodcrafter's criticism of the consumer economy seemed to disappear in the face of an industry that commanded a $400 million market by the mid-1970s. Sophisticated marketing campaigns for outdoor gear first swept across the pages of the backpacking magazines and journals at this time. Full-page color ads, using a strategy familiar today, framed outdoor gear and models against snow-covered mountain peaks, serene lakes, and streamside camps—the iconography of the National Wilderness Preservation System—advertising a seemingly endless array of outdoor gear. *Backpacker* magazine, founded in 1973, prided itself on a commitment to "spread the new ethic of clean, environmentally aware camping and hiking," but gear reviews quickly became its best-known features, and no doubt manufacturers' advertisements provided a major source of revenue. *Backpacker*, like the rest of the industry, worked to balance a genuine concern for protecting wilderness with the financial imperatives of the marketplace. Yet, as the advertisements, and the backpacker's ethic as a whole suggest, many modern backpackers were becoming increasingly fluent and comfortable with a powerful language of consumerism: Nature, in the form of wilderness, would stand out, and the equally real nature woven into the sleeping bag, tent, or GoreTex parka would be overlooked, effectively categorized as not-nature.[48]

These changes in wilderness recreation ethics suggest the difficulty the 1970s environmental movement had in fostering a sustained critique of the consumer economy. Even as the environmental movement branched out, taking on energy conservation, air and water pollution, and other problems of the modern industrial society—at least some of the most ardent environmentalists, the backpackers, seemed to give little consideration to the consumer economy. Unlike the woodcraft literature, which engaged both the practice of consumerism and the practice of wilderness recreation, the backpacking literature's zeal for minimal-impact camping eclipsed any dialogue regarding the new ethic's dependence on consumer goods, the waning knowledge of woodcraft, or the shortcomings of the backpacker's wilderness ideal. A few exceptions exist, among which Andrew Abbot's article in *Appalachia* stands out. In 1977, Abbott worried that environmentalists increasingly saw nature only in wilderness. To make his point, Abbot subverted the language of the trail guide to offer a comical, yet sobering, ten-mile hike through urban Los Angeles. At the hike's conclusion, Abbot offered backpackers a warning that surfaced again in the 1990s wilderness debates: "[B]y hiding in the 'real' wilderness, we deny categorically that men, and their works that we leave behind, are a part of nature. The more we run back to nature, the more we run from it."[49]

Considered as a whole, however, the backpacking literature gave little attention to the plethora of consumer goods marketed to backpackers or the importance of the new gear to the backpacker's ethic. Most guidebooks offered nothing more than

a complacent paragraph-long acknowledgement of the irony that underlay using ever-more modern technology to get back to nature. Hart pointed out that "the stronger our wish to preserve the wild places, the less we can meet them on their own terms; the more sophisticated, civilized, and complex become the gadgets we must bring into them." Similar statements, with the same tone of resignation, can be found sporadically in internal documents at the Sierra Club or the Wilderness Society, in magazine articles in *Appalachia* or *Backpacker*, and in narratives of wilderness adventure. In the 1970s, the new wilderness recreation industry appeared as an inevitable and seemingly unimportant symptom of backpacking's growth. Amidst all the material wealth of the modern consumer economy, the backpacking literature gave voice to little of the social concern that had been so important to the woodcraft literature.[50]

Together, the minimal-impact wilderness ethic, the rise of the wilderness recreation industry, and the wilderness advocates' relaxed policies on wilderness visitation collectively helped forge a powerful coalition in support of the National Wilderness Preservation System in the 1970s. For the minimal-impact wilderness ethic to make sense, however, the meaning of wilderness itself had to change. The modern wilderness movement embraced an aesthetic appreciation of wilderness which denied a working knowledge of nature, implicated the wilderness movement in the consumer economy, and held out wilderness as an ideal to be visited, but above all else, not altered. Many of the promises wilderness recreation offered in the interwar years remained—challenge, restorative experience, and retreat from modernity. Yet the discomfort with consumerism important to woodcraft, and the broader economic critique central to the wilderness movement, had both been diminished—dulling the social critique that once animated the wilderness ideal.

The rise of the minimal-impact wilderness recreation ethic both complements and challenges the recent debate over the place of wilderness in American environmentalism. Hoisting a backpack and returning to wilderness on the hiking trails reveals a sharp shift in the way recreationists have approached wilderness. At the center of this transition is a changing concept of work in nature: the woodsman's ax-swinging wilderness ethic evoked a nostalgia for a hands-on knowledge of nature that gave way to the modern backpacker's skills in insulating themselves from the land. This shift from a prosaic knowledge of the land to a more sublime appreciation of wilderness bolsters Richard White's charge that environmentalists all too frequently appear as a "privileged leisure class"—a charge the woodsmen themselves once sought to evade. The aesthetics of Leave No Trace also fit neatly into William Cronon's charge that environmentalists have elevated wilderness as an ideal, to the detriment of more challenging environmental problems closer to home.[51]

These recent critiques of the modern wilderness ideal, however, make little sense in the context of the interwar years wilderness movement. As the woodcraft literature suggests, and Sutter's study of the interwar years wilderness movement explains, many of the concerns central to the "great new wilderness debate" were precisely the concerns that once empowered the wilderness movement itself. Wilderness coalesced first as a social ideal, not the environmental ideal that distinguishes it

today. Despite the power of the recent critiques of wilderness that have roiled the academic and environmental community, these arguments have done little to explain how that interwar years vision of wilderness evolved into its contemporary form. Examining the evolution of wilderness recreation ethics only begins to map out these trails through wilderness history. But the same forces that transformed wilderness recreation played an equally important role in transforming the politics, science, and scope of the wilderness legislation that has expanded the National Wilderness Preservation System to its present-day size of 105.8 million acres. Historians have only begun to blaze these trails through wilderness.[52]

Leave No Trace

The genesis of Leave No Trace emphasizes the power of the new wilderness ideal. The development of the minimal-impact wilderness ethic in the 1970s laid the groundwork for the codification of a federally-sponsored Leave No Trace program in the 1980s. In the intervening decade, slowing visitation, new scientific research, and the influence of the wilderness recreation industry all helped reshape federal wilderness recreation policies. After consistent growth since World War II, backpacking's popularity appeared to level off in the early 1980s. Despite this temporary lull in visitation, the demographics of wilderness visitors continued to change. A 1995 survey revealed the trajectory of the changes taking place. Wilderness visitors were growing older: at one wilderness area the average age jumped from twenty-five to thirty-seven years. The number of women visiting wilderness continued to rise. More wilderness visitors claimed post-graduate education (at one wilderness area the figure jumped from 15 percent in 1969 to 41 percent in 1991). And more wilderness visitors claimed experience from previous wilderness trips, placed more emphasis on the importance of "pristine" wilderness, and belonged to environmental organizations. While surveys do not cover racial or economic profiles, the vast majority of wilderness visitors likely remained white, urban Americans.[53]

For wilderness managers, however, most important was new research that indicated visitation to some western wilderness areas in the early 1980s averaged only one- to two-thirds that of a decade before.[54] Citing the success of minimal-impact camping and predicting a plateau in wilderness visitation, land managers eased up on restrictive backcountry rationing programs.[55] Additional scientific research indicated that the 1970s "carrying capacity" theories had been misleading, which called into question the effectiveness of quotas and gave new emphasis to properly educating wilderness visitors.[56] If all backpackers could be encouraged to embrace minimal-impact ethics and to concentrate their travel and impact in already established sites (reversing an earlier emphasis on dispersing users), the new research indicated that most wilderness would be left relatively unharmed. Wilderness managers adopted a new strategy, called the "limits of acceptable change," which emphasized monitoring ecological conditions in wilderness ecosystems and limiting access only when impact exceeded set standards.[57] A 1985 national conference on wilderness management, drawing on this research, recommended that the four federal agen-

cies overseeing wilderness cooperate in creating a standard, federally-sanctioned education program for wilderness users. The better educated the users, they hoped, the more traffic wilderness could withstand.[58]

In the early 1990s, the public land agencies joined with the National Outdoor Leadership School to start Leave No Trace, a non-profit organization promoting environmentally-sound travel throughout the National Wilderness Preservation System. The wilderness recreation industry soon helped fund the organization: companies like North Face, Gregory Mountain Products, and Mountain Safety Research, which market clothing, backpacks, and stoves respectively, all signed on as Leave No Trace sponsors. Leave No Trace drew heavily on the 1970s wilderness recreation ethic, setting forth a concise set of guidelines in pamphlets, books, and teaching curricula. It urged hikers to comply with six voluntary restrictions on their wilderness behavior. And it explained why: to save wilderness from overuse. For many backpackers the program became a mantra for environmentally-conscious outdoor recreation. Revised wilderness guides helped spread the message. Leave No Trace instructions appeared sewn into the fabric of backpacks. New maps included them alongside the legend. Rick Curtis, author of the *Backpacker's Field Manual* (1998), urged backpackers to "look for the Leave No Trace logo on outdoor equipment and reading material." Even the Boy Scouts joined the program: In 1998, the Scout handbook urged scouts to follow the principles of Leave No Trace and "do your part in protecting our Earth."[59]

Even as the mainstream wilderness community gave official sanction to the Leave No Trace ethic, the ongoing emphasis on wilderness recreation it represented incited the animus of a small contingent of wilderness advocates. In fact, Earth First! revived much of the vision that had distinguished the Sierra Club's National Wilderness Classification Study Committee in the late 1960s, mixing their radical vision of a biocentric wilderness with a new commitment to activism and publicity in the 1980s. Although some EarthFirst! articles opposed recreation entirely, George Wuerthner, a contributor to the *Earth First Journal,* expressed a more commonplace frustration with the rules and regulations that confined the modern wilderness experience. Instead of rules, Wuerthner recommended "limit[ing] the technology which has mitigated the natural elements of the land that made it rugged, inhospitable and inaccessible in the first place." In 1989, William Worf, the Forest Service's foremost advocate of the purity policies in the 1960s, helped found Wilderness Watch—an advocacy organization committed to maintaining the ecological integrity of the nation's wilderness system, which has frequently made it one of the few organizations willing to challenge the federal land agencies' commitment to wilderness recreation. And in 1991, Jack Turner wrote a philosophical meditation on wilderness titled *The Abstract Wild,* in which he directly challenged the "'fun hog' philosophy that powered the wilderness-recreation boom for [the past] three decades." Collectively, however, these voices of dissent were overwhelmed by the sound of footsteps, as backpackers continued to visit wilderness in large numbers.[60]

By the mid 1990s, Leave No Trace signs and literature greeted hikers at trailheads and outdoor shops nationwide. In many ways, Leave No Trace represented a logical

response by the nation's federal land agencies and the wilderness community to the long-standing problem posed by the popularity of wilderness recreation. It reduced the 1970s minimal-impact camping ethic to an easily digestible code that could be advertised to all wilderness visitors. Yet, to the extent that backpackers actually embraced the notion that they "Leave No Trace," they risked divorcing themselves from their actions as consumers outside wilderness—the actions which had been at the heart of early wilderness recreation ethics. The new ethic focused the attention of backpackers largely on protecting wilderness as a recreational landscape, in turn dismissing larger questions of the modern economy, consumerism, and the environment. In its simplicity, Leave No Trace elided the calculus behind those minimal-impact ethics: the politically pragmatic trade-off between sharp limits on wilderness recreation and the wilderness system's popularity; the exchange of external resources (such as petroleum-fired stoves) for wilderness resources (such as wood-depleting camp fires); or the rise of an aesthetic appreciation of nature in place of a hands-on knowledge of wilderness. All this disappeared into the beguiling notion that anyone can "Leave No Trace." Rather than engaging these questions, the new code helped ally the modern backpacker with the wilderness recreation industry—encouraging backpackers to practice Leave No Trace in the wilderness and keep an eye out for the Leave No Trace logo in the shopping mall. Only in the convoluted logic of modern consumer culture did it make sense that those actions in the shopping mall were the best way to save wilderness beyond.

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Notes

1. Laurel Sorenson, "Camping to Extremes: Here, Eat Your Tinfoil," *Outside*, July/August 1983, 59.
2. Aldo Leopold, "Wilderness as a Form of Land Use," *Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics* 1 (1925): 401.
3. The most important arguments to the debate are compiled in J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, eds., *The Great New Wilderness Debate* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998). This compilation offers a cogent reinterpretation of the nationalistic approach to wilderness celebrated in Roderick Nash's thrice-revised *Wilderness and the American Mind.* 3rd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982).
4. Several historians and environmentalists have given attention to the "packaging" of wilderness. Catton argues this began in the 1930s with Robert Marshall in Theodore Catton, *Inhabited Wilderness: Indians, Eskimos, and National Parks in Alaska* (Albu-

querque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 135. Other historians observe it later: Ramachandra Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," in *The Great New Wilderness Debate,* 239; Carl Talbot, "The Wilderness Narrative and the Cultural Logic of Capitalism," in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, 328; Jack Turner, "In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World," in *The Great New Wilderness Debate,* 622.

5. For an overview of the movement, see Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). For an introduction to the movement's preoccupation with wilderness see Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,* chapter 9.

6. A growing body of scholarship on twentieth-century tourism lays out the variety of ways people returned to nature. See Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), chapter 6; John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), chapter 3; Scott Norris, ed., *Discovered Country : Tourism and Survival in the American West* (Albuquerque, N.M.: Stone Ladder Press, 1994); Chris Rojek, *Ways of Escape: Modern Transformations in Leisure and Travel* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), chapter 1; Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth Century American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998); Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

7. George Macaulay Trevelyan, *Walking* (Hartford, Conn.: E. V. Mitchell, 1928), 26-27.

8. The historians Warren Belasco and Allan Wallis offer scholarly accounts of autocamping's origins, tracing autocamping's influence on the rise of the modern motel industry and mobile homes respectively. Warren Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Allan D. Wallis, *Wheel Estate: The Rise and Decline of Mobile Homes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

9. George Washington Sears, *Woodcraft,* 14th ed. (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Co., 1891). Breck specifically cites Sears as the beginning of the genre in Edward Breck, *The Way of the Woods; a Manual for Sportsmen in Northeastern United States and Canada . . . With 80 Illustrations* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1908), 10.

10. Breck, *The Way of the Woods;* Horace Kephart, *The Book of Camping and Woodcraft* (New York: Outing, 1906), xi; Elmer Harry Kreps, *Camp and Trail Methods* (Columbus, Ohio: A. R. Harding, 1910). Note that walking manuals gave little attention to wilderness camping skills. For a selection of walking manuals, see Bayard H. Christy, *Going Afoot, a Book on Walking* (New York: League of Walkers, 1920); Stephen Graham, *The Gentle Art of Tramping* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1926); Elon Huntington Jessup, *Roughing It Smoothly, How to Avoid Vacation Pitfalls* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1923); Trevelyan, *Walking.*

11. Boy Scouts of America, *The Official Handbook for Boys,* 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1912).

12. Ernest Thompson Seton, *The Woodcraft Manual for Boys*, 15th ed. (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1917), 184.

13. Emerson Hough, *Out of Doors* (New York: D. Appleton, 1915), 31; Sears, *Woodcraft,* 4; Stewart Edward White, *Camp and Trail* (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1907), 26.

14. Seton, *The Woodcraft Manual for Boys,* 216-217.

15. Knowles, *Alone in the Wilderness,* 4, 193. Nash offers an engaging account of Knowle's popularity and the allegations of fraud in Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,* 141-143.

16. Regarding the frontier and masculinity, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917,* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995), chapters 1 and 5; Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992), chapter 1; Theodore Roosevelt, *The Wilderness Hunter, an Account of the Big Game of the United States and Its Chase with Horse, Hound, and Rifle* (New York: The Current Literature Pub. Co., 1893), 24-25. Similar statements are found in many of the early Boy Scouts manuals. This one came from Boy Scouts of America, *The How Book of Scouting* (New York: Boy Scouts of America, 1938), 277.

17. Knowles, *Alone in the Wilderness,* 98; Sears, *Woodcraft,* 3.

18. Leopold, "Wilderness as a Form of Land Use," 404; Benton MacKaye, "An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning," *The Journal of the American Institute of Architects* (October 1921). On MacKaye's vision and its connection to the interwar years wilderness movement, see Paul Sutter, "'A Retreat from Profit': Colonization, the Appalachian Trail, and the Social Roots of Benton MacKaye's Wilderness Advocacy," *Environmental History* 4 (1999), 553-577. Robert Marshall, "The Problem of the Wilderness," *Scientific Monthly*, February 1930, 147.

19. This report outlines the state of federal lands, threats posed by tourism, and potential management responses. It is, in effect, the government's reckoning with the surge in interwar years tourism. Joint Committee on Recreational Survey of Federal Lands, *Recreation Resources of Federal Lands* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1928), 90. Bob Marshall voiced similar concerns in Marshall, "The Problem of the Wilderness," 146-147. Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement,* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002).

20. This extensive survey also reveals a great deal of variety in the responses from the seven different wilderness areas. I have focused on the common characteristics of wilderness visitors. Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, "Wilderness and Recreation—a Report on Resources, Values, and Problems," (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1962), appendix B. David R. Brower, ed., *Going Light-with Backpack or Burro* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1951), xi.

21. For an excellent account of the Echo Park controversy, see Mark W. T. Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994). The environmental historiography includes numerous accounts of the subsequent fight for wilderness. For a start, see Stephen Fox, *John Muir and His Legacy: The American Conservation Movement* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1981) 281-289; Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,* chapter 12; and Hal K. Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the United States since 1945,* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998), chapter 2.

22. Many letters regarding overuse can be found in the papers of the Sierra Club Outing Committee. For instance, see Philip Hyde to Stewart Kimball, Chairman, Outing Committee, SC, 1 November 1956, folder "Outing Committee, Impact Study, 1956-1975," Box 43:3, Sierra Club records, BANC MSS 71/103 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley [hereafter, SCR]; John Bird, "The Great Wilderness Fight," *Saturday Evening Post*, 8 July 1961, 74-76; David Brower, "Wilderness Is for People, Too!," *Sierra Club Bulletin*, February 1962, 3. For a brief history of wilderness management, see Roderick Nash, "Historical Roots of Wilderness Management," in *Wilderness Management*, ed. John C. Hendee (Golden, Colo.: North American Press, 1990), 38-40.

23. Commentary on the paradox inherent in wilderness can be found in John C. Hendee, *Wilderness Management* 15; and Mark Woods, "Federal Wilderness Preservation in the

United States: The Preservation of Wilderness?," in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, 134-146.

24. Director Richard J. Costley, Division of Recreation, "Proposed Regulation of the Secretary of Agriculture Governing the Administration of National Forest Wilderness," 12 July 1965, folder "December 1965 Meeting," Box 1, Forest Service Records, Record Group 95, Entry 174/A1, National Archives II, College Park, Md., 3. [Hereafter, FSR].

25. Costley, "Comments on the Review Draft of 'Outdoor Recreation in the National Forests'," 30 March 1964, folder "Outdoor Recreation in the NFs", Box 2, FSR, 8.

26. Costley, "Proposed Regulation of the Secretary of Agriculture Governing the Administration of National Forest Wilderness", 12 July 1965, FSR, 6.

27. These visitation statistics are for the national forests only and can be found in Hendee, *Wilderness Management,* 380.

28. Chief William A. Worf, Recreation and Lands, Region 1, USFS to Brock Evans, Northwest Representative, SC, 9 March 1972, folder "Wilderness Correspondence, 1972-1973," Box 6, MSS 2678-1, Sierra Club Pacific Northwest records, University of Washington Library, Seattle [hereafter, SCPNWR]. United States Forest Service, "Recreation Management, Region One Supplement No. 42," February 1972, folder "RARE and FS Manual," Box 4, MSS 2678-6, SCPNWR, 1.

29. United States Forest Service, "Title 2300—Recreation Management—Chapter 2350—General Forest Environment Areas," 1972, Document No. 89, Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center Records, Missoula, Mont.

30. Worf, et al., "Wilderness Policy Review Committee Report," 19 May 1972, folder "Wilderness Primitive Areas," Region 1 Forest Service Archives, Missoula, Mont.

31. Recreation Staff Officer W. E. Ragland, Snoqualmie National Forest, "The Place for Recreation Backcountry on the Continuum of Forest Uses," 30 December 1971, folder "Wilderness," Box 5, MSS 2678-1, SCPNWR.

32. See Paul W. Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests since World War Two* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), especially chapters 6 and 10. Worf to Evans, 9 March 1972, SCPNWR, 2.

33. Statements supporting limits can be found sporadically in the Wilderness Society and Sierra Club files. For instance, Stewart Brandborg, The Wilderness Society, "Some Thoughts Regarding the Carrying Capacity of Wilderness Areas," 26 August 1963, folder "Stewart M. Brandborg," Box 3:100, Wilderness Society Records, Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colo. [hereafter, TWS]; Garrett Hardin, "We Must Earn Again for Ourselves What We Have Inherited: A Lesson in Wilderness Economics," in *Wilderness: The Edge of Knowledge*, ed. Maxine E. McCloskey (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1969), 263-265; Paul Petzoldt, *The Wilderness Handbook* (New York: Norton, 1974), chapter 13; David Brower, ed., *The Sierra Club Wilderness Handbook*, 2nd ed. (New York: Sierra Club/Ballantine, 1971), 147; and Theodore J. Kaczynksi, "Letter to the Wilderness Society," 26 February 1969, folder "California: Correspondence, 1969," Box 7:107, TWS.

34. Chairman Francis J. Walcott, Wilderness Classification Study Committee, "Sierra Club Policy for Wilderness Management and Preservation," 25 November 1969, folder "Wilderness Management," Box 6, MSS 2678-9, SCPNWR, 2.

35. Walcott to John Tuteur, Jr., folder "Wilderness Classification Study Committee, 1970," 12 October 1970, Box 222:26, SCR; Walcott to Shelley McIntyre, folder "Wilderness Correspondence, 1972-1973," 18 December 1972, Box 6, MSS 2678-1, SCPNWR.

36. Evans to Holly Jones, Northwest Chapter Chairman, Wilderness Committee Chairman, 10 November 1972, folder "Wilderness Correspondence, 1972-1973," Box 6, MSS 2678-1, SCPNWR.

37. Evans to Harry Crandell, Director of Wilderness Reviews, TWS, 15 December 1972, folder "Wilderness management: 1972," Box 2:5, Papers of Harry Crandell, Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colo.

38. Dick Sill, Impact Dialogue Committee, SC, "Memo Re: Wilderness Entry Permits," folder "Wilderness Committee," 12 June 1972, Box 53:38, SCR.

39. Statistics on the growth of the wilderness system are accessible through the database available at http://nwps.wilderness.net/advsearch.cfm (accessed April, 2002).

40. Dick Sill, "Memo Re: Wilderness Entry Permits," 12 June 1972, SCR.

41. For instance, see William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: Norton, 1995), 69-90.

42. John Hart, "Wilderness Adventure," *Sierra Club Bulletin*, March 1972, 7.

43. Stewart Brandborg's handwritten notes can be found on Harry Crandell, "Memo To All Reviewers Re: Initial Draft—Wilderness Management Policies," 27 April 1972, folder "Wilderness Management Policy: 1972," Box 2:1, TWS, 32. John B. Nutter, "Towards a Future Wilderness: Notes on Education in the Mountains," *Appalachia*, December 1973, 89. The following are three of many books published in the early 1970s on backpacking. John Hart, *Walking Softly in the Wilderness* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977); Harvey Manning, *Backpacking, One Step at a Time* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1972); Petzoldt, *The Wilderness Handbook.*

44. Hart, *Walking Softly in the Wilderness,* 35, 230; Brower, ed., *The Sierra Club Wilderness Handbook*, 55. Backpacking articles and books frequently dismissed "old style" woodcraft specifically, even referring to the Boy Scouts on occasion: Hart, *Walking Softly in the Wilderness*, 36; Hart, "Wilderness Adventure," 7; Wilfred Kerner Merrill, *The Hiker's and Backpacker's Handbook* (New York: Winchester Press, 1971), 47; Petzoldt, *The Wilderness Handbook,* 57; Ruth Rudner, *Off and Walking* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977), 30; and Guy Waterman and Laura Waterman, "The Clean Camping Crusade," *Appalachia*, June 1979, 90.

45. Gear descriptions drawn from Colin Fletcher, *The New Complete Walker*, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1974). On foam pads, see Petzoldt, *The Wilderness Handbook,* 57. Regarding GoreTex, see "Rainwear," *Backpacker* 7 (1979), 69+.

46. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949; repr., 1968), 166. On this point, a comparison between the 1933 Boy Scout Manual's wonderfully detailed instructions on making a pack from scratch (which included which types of wood to select for the thwarts versus the ribs) gave way to the 1979 Boy Scout Manual's imperative "buy the best . . . you can afford." Boy Scouts of America, *The How Book of Scouting,* 320; Boy Scouts of America, *Official Boy Scout Handbook*, 9th ed. (New York: Boy Scouts of America, 1979), 64-68. Historians Susan Strasser and Shosana Zuboff have noted sharp shifts in the repertoire of skills used at home and work during these same years, as changing technologies insulated homemakers and laborers from a hands-on knowledge of nature. Susan Strasser, *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1999); Shoshana Zuboff, *In the Age of the Smart Machine: The Future of Work and Power* (New York: BasicBooks, 1988), chapter 2.

47. While men continued to outnumber women in the wilderness, female visitation did increase between the 1970s and 1990s. Alan E. Watson, David N. Cole, and Joseph W. Roggenbuck, "Trends in Wilderness Recreation Use Characteristics," in *Proceedings of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Trends Symposium*, ed. Jerrilyn Lavarre Thompson (St. Paul, Minn.: University of Minnesota, 1995). On the 1960s, see David Farber,

ed., *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind,* 251-255.

48. On the gear market, see Hart, *Walking Softly in the Wilderness,* 15. Regarding *Backpacker's* mission, see: Gary Braasch, "You & Your Head," *Backpacker 2* (1974), 98; William Kemsley Jr., "Editorial: A New Voice for Backpackers," *Backpacker 4* (1976), 5. Jennifer Price explores the divisions between nature and not-nature in *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). In the same ways the consumer economy obscures environmental costs, it also obscures labor costs. On labor, see Talbot, "The Wilderness Narrative and the Cultural Logic of Capitalism"; and Richard White, "'Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?': Work and Nature," in *Uncommon Ground,* 171-185.

49. Andrew Abbott, "Fleeing Wilderness," *Appalachia,* June 1977, 75. See also the introduction to Manning, *Backpacking, One Step at a Time.*

50. Hart, *Walking Softly in the Wilderness,* 36.

51. White, "'Are You an Environmentalist or Do You Work for a Living?'"; Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness."

52. Sutter, "'A Blank Spot on the Map': Aldo Leopold, Wilderness, and U.S. Forest Service Recreational Policy, 1909-1924," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29 (1988), 187-214.

53. David Cole, "Wilderness Recreation Use Trends, 1964-1990," (Washington, D.C.: Intermountain Research Station, Forest Service, 1996). Wilderness survey data is available but remains inexact. Important variables such as race, economic standing, and occupation are unavailable for long-term surveys. This data compared 1960s surveys to late 1980 and early 1990s surveys. Watson, Cole, and Roggenbuck, "Trends in Wilderness Recreation Use Characteristics." For more information on the changes in wilderness demography (and the accuracy of surveys) see Alan E. Watson, "Wilderness Use in the Year 2000: Societal Changes That Influence Relationship with Wilderness," in *Wilderness Science in a Time of Change*, ed. David N. Cole (Ogden, Utah: Rocky Mountain Research Station, Forest Service, 2000), 55.

54. Hendee, *Wilderness Management,* 282-383. More recent research indicates that this lull in wilderness visitation was only brief. For more detailed analysis see Cole, "Wilderness Recreation Use Trends, 1964-1990."

55. Nash, "Historical Roots of Wilderness Management," 40.

56. Society of American Foresters, "Report of the Society of American Foresters' Wilderness Management Task Force," (Bethesda, Md.: Society of American Foresters, 1989), 19.

57. J. Douglas Wellman, *Wildland Recreation Policy: An Introduction* (New York: John Wiley, 1987), 249.

58. Wilderness Research Center, "Wilderness Management: A Five-Year Action Program," (Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho, 1985).

59. Jeffrey L. Marion and Scott E. Reid, "Development of the U.S. Leave No Trace Program: An Historical Perspective," (Boulder, Colo.: Leave No Trace, 2001). Rick Curtis, *The Backpacker's Field Manual: A Comprehensive Guide to Mastering Backcountry Skills* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998), 100. Boy Scouts of America, *Boy Scout Handbook,* 11th ed. (Irving, Texas: Boy Scouts of America, 1998), 219.

60. George Wuerthner, "Managing the Wild Back into Wilderness," *Earth First!,* 21 December 1986. See http://www.wildernesswatch.org (accessed April, 2002). Jack Turner, *The Abstract Wild* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 87.