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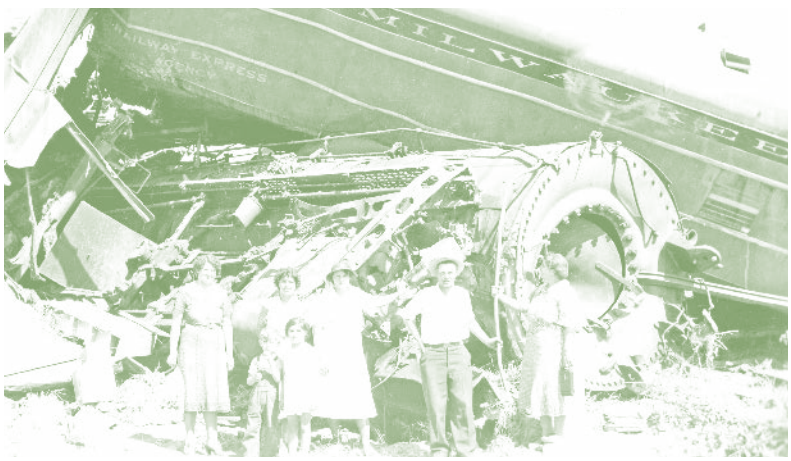

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ON THE COVER (*front*) African American artist Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000) produced *Celebration of Heritage* for the 1992 World's Fair Exposition, held in Seville, Spain. In this print, held in the Montana Museum of Art and Culture's Permanent Collection, Lawrence, using vibrant colors and imaginative shapes, depicts the unity of the natural and human world integral to the Native American experience. Lithograph, 30" × 22". Gift of Geoff Sutton, 2021.17.01, MMAC Permanent Collection

(*back*) In the 1820s, an unknown Chinese ceramist created this intricately decorated coral and white Tao Kwang vase. Not much is known about its creator, but it caught the eye of art collector Stella Louise Duncan, who donated it along with hundreds of other pieces of art from her holdings to the Permanent Collection of the Montana Museum of Art and Culture in 1948. Porcelain, 8.5" × 4.5". Stella Duncan Collection, 48–092, MMAC Permanent Collection

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We acknowledge that the offices of *Montana The Magazine of Western History* at the Montana Historical Society are on the ancestral lands of the Niitsítapi and Séliš peoples. We acknowledge the displacement of these and other tribes from their spiritual and cultural homelands through settler-colonialism and offer our respect to the many diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this region.

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Erring on the side of Public Use

BY MICHAEL CHILDERS

James Watt and the fight over the National Park System

On the afternoon of March 23, 1981, James G. Watt, the newly confirmed secretary of the interior, addressed the Conference of National Park Concessionaires. He outlined what the Department of the Interior's (DOI) planned policy changes within the National Park System meant for those in the room. Balding, standing over six feet tall, and peering at the audience through thick glasses, Watt opened by discussing the incoming Reagan administration's ambitions to address the nation's decade-long pattern of stagflation by slashing the federal budget, instituting regulatory reform, and tax cuts. "We have lived off the future for too long," he declared. By its logic, the incoming administration would have to make significant budget cuts to correct "40–50 years of bad government."

Watt argued that those looming cuts did not mean the administration would not fulfill the National Park Service's (NPS) dual mandate of recreation and ecological preservation. Watt assured the room that he would seek to balance visitor use with conservation within the National Park System. The national parks faced a challenging dilemma: confronted with federal fiscal austerity and growing costs, the NPS needed to reprioritize where and how it spent its budget. "We must be stewards of what we have before we grab out for more," Watt explained to the room of concessionaires whose livelihoods depended on the national parks. As such, he was ordering a moratorium on the acquisition of

U.S. Secretary of the Interior James Watt poses with a hunting rifle at the One Shot Antelope Hunt in Lander, Wyoming, in 1982. Watt's tenure as secretary became especially controversial with environmental groups that feared the incorporation of his conservative ideology into public lands management would undermine the National Park System's dual mandate of recreation and ecological preservation.
160180, James G. Watt Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

all new parklands to focus on restoring those existing national park units in desperate need of repair. Moreover, Watt sought to "put people back into the environmental equation" within the National Park System by focusing more on recreation than on preservation.[1]

The moratorium was just one fiscal remedy by which Watt sought to rescue the national parks from environmentalists who wanted to prioritize preservation over recreational enjoyment. He promised that businesses would play a larger role in the parks going forward. "We have a bias for private enterprise," the secretary told the audience on the DOI's plans to turn to concessionaires for even more visitor services within the parks. The concessionaires in the audience would find the DOI a much more willing partner going forward, seeking to both help solve issues and collaborate on renovating the nation's parks' deteriorating infrastructure. If conflict arose between preservation and use, he declared, "I will err on the side of public use versus preservation."[2]

While it is difficult to gauge the audience's reaction to the secretary's proclamation through the transcript, most of the questions that followed Watt's speech centered on issues specific to individual parks. The most notable question came from a concerned outfitter worried that the NPS sought to ban his horses from Rocky Mountain National Park. Watt assured the outfitter that as secretary he supported the continued use of horses in the parks before quipping, "I don't like to paddle, and I don't like to walk." Environmental organizations including the Wilderness Society jumped on Watt's attempt at humor as proof that he did not like the outdoors, foreshadowing his tumultuous tenure as secretary of the interior.[3]

Within three years of that speech, Watt resigned as secretary of the interior, victim of his own hubris, unpopular administration policies, and one of the most successful campaigns to remove a sitting cabinet secretary in modern American history. As historian James Skillen notes, the fight between Watt and environmental groups was really about the federal administrative state, not the environment. For the national parks, this meant overhauling NPS policies into the mold of New Right ideology that prioritized decentralized federal power and an emphasis on private enterprise. As secretary of the interior, Watt oversaw these policy shifts within the National Park System, making him the target of environmental groups who vehemently opposed the Reagan administration's rightward tilt in federal land policy. Environmental groups attacked the reversal of policies that had historically enjoyed wide bipartisan support, including Watt's moratorium on the acquisition of new parklands, his proposal to give urban park units like San Francisco's Golden Gate Recreation Area to local and state governments, and the increasing role of private concessionaires within the national parks.[4]

The fights between Watt and environmental groups over the national parks stemmed from different interpretations of the National Park Service's mandate requiring that the agency preserve the natural and cultural resources within all national park units for the enjoyment of future generations. Watt rejected the National Park Service's changing role over the past twenty years, asserting the agency had expanded far beyond its original mandate by adding new parklands and focusing more on preservation than use. An adamant supporter of monumentalism—the idea that national parks should contain unparalleled scenery that captured America's unique environmental heritage—Watt argued that the rapid expansion of the National Park System had diluted the national park ideal and overstretched its budget. Environmentalists disagreed, arguing instead that the expansion of the National Park System and the NPS's revision of its mandate toward focusing principally on natural resource preservation over visitor use was the continuation of the national park idea. To environmentalists, Watt presented a clear and present danger to the national parks, and so the only recourse, many within the environmental movement concluded, was to remove him from office. In a letter to Wilderness Society members, society counselor Gaylord Nelson bluntly stated, "The dismissal of Watt as Secretary is, without question our principal present objective."[5]

At first glance, Watt seemed an unlikely villain. The middle child of three, he grew up in the small town of Lusk, on the high prairie of eastern Wyoming. Like many in the region, the Watt family saw the federal government as a hindrance to their independent way of life. "My father had always been an activist, conservative Republican," Watt later told his biographer, Ron Arnold. "I remember Franklin D. Roosevelt's

Wilderness Society counselor and former senator Gaylord Nelson (right) tours the Schmeeckle Reserve in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, during Earth Week in 1988. In his role at the Wilderness Society, Nelson pushed for Watt's removal.
Nelis R. Kampenga University Archives, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point

name was a cuss word in our house." Watt married his high school sweetheart, Leilani Bomgardner, and enrolled at the University of Wyoming (UW). Over the next seven years, the couple had two children. Watt completed his law degree at UW College of Law, and after passing the bar, he approached family friend Milward Simpson about working on the former Wyoming governor's 1961 U.S. Senate campaign. When told there was no money for staff, Watt told Simpson that he would take any job, paid or not. Impressed with the young lawyer's drive, Simpson hired Watt on the spot and, after winning the special election, brought him on as a legislative assistant and counsel.[6]

It was the beginning of Watt's career in public service and politics. Following Simpson's single Senate term, Watt took a job with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, working on natural resources and pollution issues. Richard Nixon's 1968 election opened the door for Watt to return to government service, this time with the DOI as deputy assistant secretary for water and power resources. Four years later, he was appointed and confirmed Director of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. In 1975, Watt became the vice chairman of the Federal Power Commission under President Gerald Ford. As a career bureaucrat, he hardly embodied his own opinion that government was the problem. Still, his conservative politics reflected those of the burgeoning New Right. His avid support of free-market capitalism led Watt to believe in the efficiency of private enterprise and view the government's role as to foster economic growth through deregulation and business investment. Democrat Jimmy Carter's election to the presidency in 1976 brought an abrupt pause to Watt's public service career, and the troubled economy of the 1970s likely strengthened Watt's views.[7]

This period also reinforced Watt's spiritual commitment. A lifelong Christian, Watt had converted to evangelical Christianity during his early years in Washington, D.C., while working for Senator Simpson. His wife had suggested he attend a meeting of evangelical businessmen. It was a transformative experience, appealing both to Watt's worldview as

well as to his political aspirations. Watt's conversion reflected the growing evangelical movement throughout the country that redefined not only Americans' discussions of faith but their cultural values.[8]

Watt's conservative political views and evangelical Christian faith caught the eye of Republican operative Cliff Rock, a former staffer for Ronald Reagan's 1976 presidential campaign. Beer magnate Joseph Coors had asked Rock to recruit a suitable lawyer to head the Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF), a Denver, Colorado, conservative public interest firm founded in 1977. Coors was a co-founder of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank that promoted free market economics as the solution to many of the nation's policy challenges. Through these organizations, Coors hoped to push back against what he saw as the federal government's overly zealous environmental tilt. Watt was the ideal fit to lead MSLF, with his western upbringing, government experience, and conservative bona fides.[9]

The Mountain States Legal Foundation sought to defend property rights against increased federal regulations, particularly focusing on western public lands. Like MSLF's benefactors, Watt believed environmentalism and environmentalists presented a clear threat to the West's economic viability. Home to most of the nation's public lands, the American West relied heavily on federal largess for its economic survival. The mining, timber, ranching, and outdoor recreation industries formed the economic foundation for many of the region's rural communities and tied them to the West's rapidly growing metropolitan areas. In Watt's view, environmental regulations threatened the region's prosperity. He saw environmentalism as an Eastern plot to further subjugate the West and undermine the national economy. Watt brought these views with him to the DOI.[10]

Environmental groups pointed to Watt's work at MSLF as evidence of his anti-environment bias and his sympathy for the Sagebrush Rebellion. Despite environmentalists' concerns, Watt won senate confirmation on a bipartisan 83–12 vote. That broad vote did not stop environmentalists' attacks on his fitness to be secretary of the interior. However, environmental groups railed against Watt's pro-development, anti-preservation stances, and on a wide range of issues, from offshore oil drilling to wilderness preservation. The Sierra Club gathered over a million

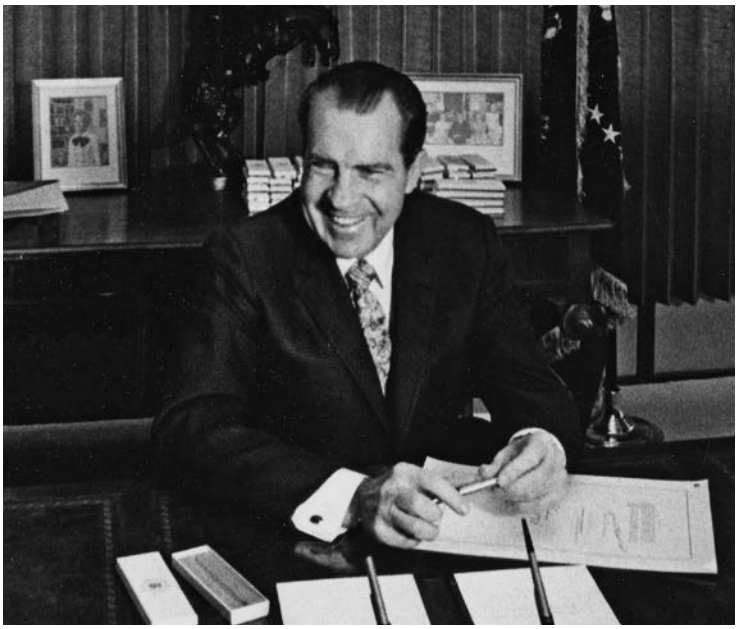
Milward Simpson, Leilani Bomgardner Watt, and James Watt (left to right) pose for a photo on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court. James and Leilani were high school sweethearts and married while James attended the University of Wyoming. Shortly after finishing his law degree, Watt worked on Simpson's 1961 Senate campaign. After winning, Simpson brought Watt on as a legislative assistant. 160615, James G. Watt Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Beer magnate Joseph Coors was a conservative activist and used his fortune to finance the Heritage Foundation and the Mountain States Legal Fund. These two organizations pushed free market principles and protection of property rights as a panacea to modern problems. They used their influence within the Reagan administration to further their policy prescriptions.
Michael Evans, photographer. ME408–1, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

signatures on a petition calling for Watt's ouster. The Wilderness Society produced the two-volume *Watt Book* outlining his wrongs as a part of their campaign to remove the secretary. These actions proved politically and economically successful. The news media published numerous articles decrying Watt's policies, swaying public opinion. Both the Sierra Club and Wilderness Society gained hundreds of thousands of new members, dramatically adding to their coffers.[11]

Watt angrily responded that environmental groups lied about his policies, misrepresented his goals, and undermined him at every turn, and so he barred DOI employees from speaking to environmental lobbyists until they demonstrated a "positive, constructive change of attitudes" that would allow a meaningful dialogue over balanced stewardship of the nation's public lands. Watt's ban on the lobbyists of environmental groups underlined his mercurial personality and contributed to the public's growing perception of his anti-environmental stances. Casting Watt as the villain further polarized the national debate over public lands, which was already tense. Coming out of the 1970s, the Sagebrush Rebellion had challenged the federal government's role in managing the nation's public lands. By Ronald Reagan's 1980 election, public lands management had grown from an area of broad consensus into one of growing partisan distrust.[12]

Intertwined with the debate over public lands, the 1970s energy crisis came on the heels of several major environmental calamities. Deadly smog inundated New York City in 1966, and in 1969 the Santa Barbara oil spill and the Cuyahoga River fire led Americans to call for greater environmental regulation. But, in the mid-1970s, as gasoline prices spiked due to the OPEC embargo and the economy stagnated due to inflation, a fickle American public began to question the price of environmental legislation such as the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. Free-market economics and the belief that individual freedom relied upon



President Richard Nixon signing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Nixon, in tune with the times, signed several major pieces of environmental legislation, including the Clean Air Act and the Endangered Species Act. The era of bipartisan environmental legislation fizzled by the late 1970s as conservatives recoiled against regulations and further federal land acquisitions that they believed hurt the economy. 27580121, Nixon White House Photographs, Richard Nixon Presidential Library

its implementation became widely adopted by the Republican Party as the path back to abundance.[13]

Federal land policy lay at the center of this broader economic debate in the American West. Home to most of the nation's federal public lands, the economies of rural areas of the region were reliant on extracting value from public lands through grazing allotments, mining, oil and gas leases, timber harvesting, and other industries. Because of this reality, federal power played an oversized role in western politics. Nowhere was this more evident than the fight over environmental protection. Bolstered by federal environmental legislation such as the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, environmental groups pressed for greater regulation. These changes in environmental regulation spurred resentment in vast swaths of the West, giving rise to what quickly became known as the Sagebrush Rebellion. Partly a reaction to reduction in grazing and timber leases, and partly a denunciation of federal power, the rebellion's anti-government stance became an important plank in the Republican Party's platform.[14]

The Sagebrush Rebellion played an important role within the National Park System as well, due to the controversy over inholdings—privately owned property—within park boundaries. As NPS director George B. Hartzog Jr. testified in front of the House of Representatives in 1968, the NPS viewed the thousands of inholdings within the parks as "a serious and growing threat to the integrity of the National Park System." Tensions between the NPS and inholders came to a head in 1977, when after touring Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, chairman of the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Insular Affairs Phil Burton (D-CA) concluded the large number of inholdings scattered throughout the national parks had to go, an opinion shared by both the NPS and environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club.[15]

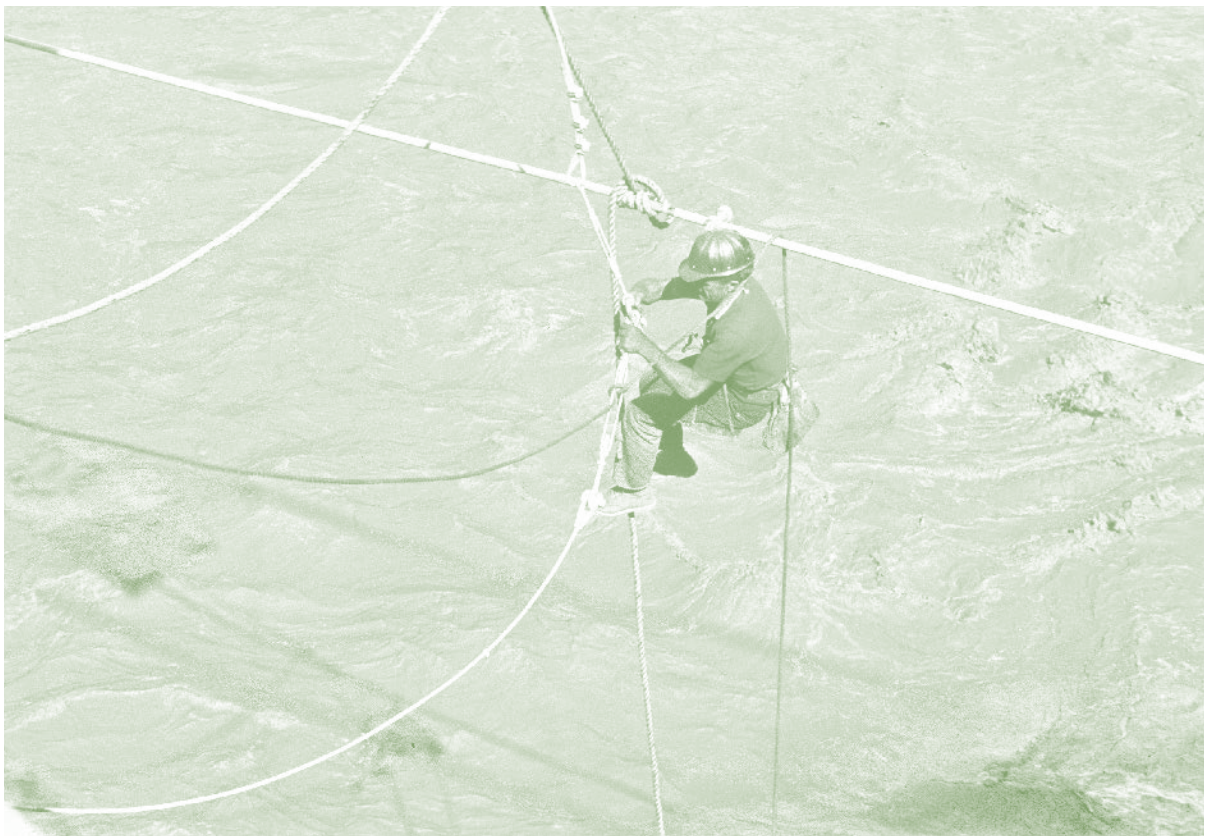
Inholding owners spoke out against the NPS's efforts to remove them as a clear violation of their private property rights. In an interview with *Newsweek*, Charles Cushman, a Yosemite inholder and leader of the National Parks Inholders Association, proclaimed, with remarkable racial insensitivity, "We are the Indians of 1978. Except we're being kicked off the reservation, instead of being moved from one reservation to another." Cushman rose to national prominence as a property rights advocate and a voice of the Sagebrush Rebellion. To the chagrin of environmental groups, Watt later nominated Cushman to the National Park System Advisory Board.[16]

Many concessionaires shared the Sagebrush Rebellion's anger over the NPS's shifting policies. Controversies such as media giant MCA's purchase of the controlling interest of the Yosemite Park & Curry Company in 1973 heightened criticisms of commercial development within the parks as antithetical to their fundamental purpose. Concessionaires rejected such analyses, asserting they had long provided the necessary facilities for visitors to enjoy the national parks. Reflecting on his time running concessions in four western national parks, entrepreneur and politician Don Hummel noted, "The seemingly populist envi-

ronmental movement has something against people in the national parks." That Hummel and others viewed environmental groups as wilderness purists who wanted to lock up the national parks to the American public reflected the broader conservative movement's criticism of the nation's swiftly changing environmental regulatory landscape that they saw as hampering economic growth.[17]

Views on national parks had not always been partisan, with several western Republicans supporting environmental legislation through the 1970s until rightward political shifts within the party. Western Republicans increasingly viewed environmental regulation as a hindrance to the region's traditional economic reliance on extractive industry and tourism. The national parks came to play a central role in this fight with NPS's shifting focus from visitor enjoyment to preservation starting in the early 1960s. Led by ecologists within the agency, this redefinition of the NPS's mandate toward preservation frustrated many politicians who viewed the national parks as fundamental to the economic well-being of rural communities reliant on tourist dollars. Additionally, the expansion of the National Park System, particularly in urban areas and Alaska, placed additional financial burdens on the NPS and withdrew vast acreage from oil development.[18]

For its first fifty years, the National Park Service viewed its mandate as to provide for the American public's enjoyment of the scenic and historic wonders of every national park unit. By the 1950s, controversies such as the completion of the Tioga Road in Yosemite National Park and the proposed dam at Echo Park in Dinosaur National Monument brought about a reinterpretation of the agency's mandate. The 1964 passage of the Wilderness Act, combined with the park service's 1963 publication of *Wildlife Management in the National Parks*, known as the Leopold Report after its primary author, and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall's reclassification of national parks into natural, historic, and recreational, crafted a new narrative around the parks that emphasized



Suspended over the Colorado River, a worker attaches a cable during the construction of the Silver Bridge and the Transcanyon Waterline in the late 1960s. Building and maintaining visitor infrastructure in the National Park System is a difficult and expensive endeavor due to the remote nature of many projects. By the 1980s, the maintenance backlog in the National Park System threatened to overwhelm the park service's budget.

Dan Cockrum, photographer. Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collection

ecological preservation over visitor enjoyment. All three events reflected the era's changing tenor and marked the cultural shift occurring within the National Park Service. While the old guard with the agency viewed the Wilderness Act as an intrusion on the NPS's mandate, many within the ranks celebrated both its passage and Udall's realignment of the parks. Within a generation, many natural resource managers with the agency, especially in parks classified as natural, understood the NPS's larger mission to protect wilderness and ecological resources to the point of trying to re-create a "primitive America."[19]

In the 1960s, NPS increasingly came to see resource protection as its primary obligation, even if it came at the cost of visitor enjoyment. To many within the park service, this reinterpretation was long overdue. Hired as Yosemite's first natural resource manager in 1968, Robert Barbee contended that many of the nation's most popular parks were being loved to death, and that the agency must balance the public's recreational use with each park's ecological limits. Echoing the language within the 1963 Leopold Report, he argued that inside the boundaries of many parks, including Yosemite, were found priceless vignettes of "primitive" America. Therefore, naturalness should be the rule to leave such national parks unimpaired, a view that would slowly become accepted policy as a new generation of wildlife biologists came to interpret the park service's mandate in ecological terms.[20]

Public opinion on the dual mandate varied, and not everyone was convinced that the national parks should focus more on ecological preservation. Speaking on the Senate floor in 1968, Senator Frank Moss (D-UT) questioned, "Are we overemphasizing wilderness and underemphasizing people?" Others asked the same question, believing the national parks should focus on recreational enjoyment rather than ecological preservation. Based on visitor numbers, the American public appeared to agree. Millions of Americans visited the parks not only to enjoy the scenery, but also to camp in their recreational vehicles, hike along interpretive trails, downhill ski, and even play a round of golf. To many park visitors, the national parks were synonymous with recreational enjoyment.[21]

Pulled in several directions, the NPS struggled to balance visitor use against a litany of increasingly stringent federal environmental regulations. Combined with shrinking

Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco, with its namesake bridge in the background. Urban park units entered the debate over the scope of the National Park System, with critics arguing that mixed-use metropolitan parks should be under state or local control instead. 18326–49, Park Archives and Records Center, Golden Gate National Recreation Area

An oil drilling rig and a production facility in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. Conserving Alaska's public lands became especially controversial during the 1970s as the OPEC oil embargo led to increased gas prices and inflation, which in turn led to an expansion of federal lands for domestic oil and gas production. Concurrently, President Jimmy Carter used the Antiquities Act to designate more than a dozen national monuments in Alaska, withdrawing them from development. The debate over Alaskan oil production continues to this day. HABS AK,15-PRUBA.V,1, Library of Congress

budgets and a growing focus within the agency on science, the national parks were a ticking time bomb by Watt's appointment. The divide between Watt and his detractors was more than just a semantic debate over the NPS's Organic Act of 1916—it was a fight over the expansion of the National Park System and its philosophical purpose.

The NPS's mission grew more complicated with the addition of its first two urban parks in 1972. New York City's Gateway National Recreation Area and San Francisco's Golden Gate National Recreation Area pushed the NPS squarely into the business of urban mass recreation, a task not previously understood as a federal responsibility. Both recreation areas stretched across sprawling metropolitan areas, mixing recreational use with wildlife conservation. Proponents celebrated the creation of the two recreation areas for bringing the national parks to underserved urban populations. Critics argued that such park units fell well beyond the NPS's mandate, that neither held national significance, and that their addition would overburden an already overtaxed agency. Watt and his ilk argued that both recreation areas should be state or local parks, not national parks.[22]

However, it was the controversy over Alaska's public lands that pushed the politics of the National Park System's expansion into the national limelight. Alaska's 1959 admittance as the forty-ninth state intensified the debate over how to divvy up its vast territory. The state's enabling legislation affirmed existing Native land claims until later settlement,

while also allowing the state government to claim lands deemed vacant. After a decade of debate and struggle, President Nixon signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971. The law settled the dispute by allowing both Native corporations and the state government to select millions of acres as their own. In addition, the act set aside eighty million acres for conservation, whether as national parks or wilderness.[23]

President Jimmy Carter speaks at the 1980 signing ceremony for the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Following decades of debate over Alaska's public land management, Carter's use of the Antiquities Act and his signing of ANLICA doubled the size of the National Park System and made NPS responsible for managing more than a dozen new park units and tens of millions of acres of designated wilderness.
NLC-WHSP-C-20649, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta

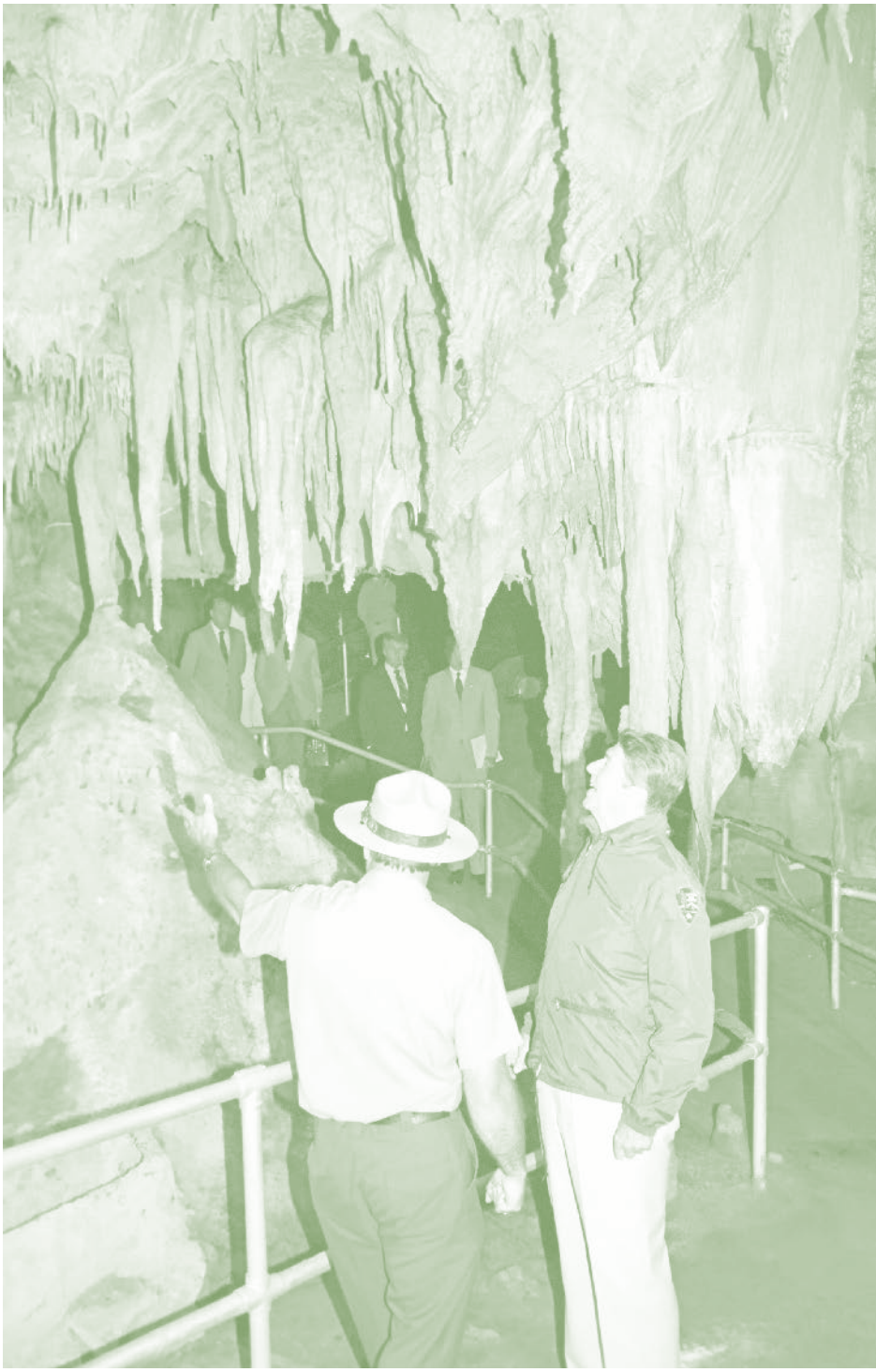
The discovery of oil in Prudhoe Bay in 1968 along with the 1973 OPEC oil embargo threw Alaska lands back into controversy. Environmentalists saw Alaska as the last wilderness and grew restless over Congress's failure to act on ANCSA. To Republicans, especially Alaska's newly elected Republican senator, Ted Stevens, the state promised American energy independence and Alaska's economic salvation. Frustrated with Congress's failure to address the issue, President Carter invoked the Antiquities Act and set aside fifty-six million acres as national monuments, more than doubling the size of the National Park System. Republicans condemned the president's actions, but his establishment of seventeen new national monuments within the state spurred Congress to action. In 1980, Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), making the NPS responsible for tens of millions of acres of designated wilderness, more than any other land management agency.[24]

While popular with the public, the addition of new units like New York's Gateway National Recreation Area, Montana's Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, and the new Alaska national monuments stretched the NPS's budget far beyond its meager limits. Staffing reached crisis levels. The NPS noted these realities in its *State of the Parks* report to Congress in 1980. Based on a service-wide survey, the report found that all national park units, no matter their classification, faced tremendous external and internal threats, including air pollution, heavy visitor use, soil erosion, habitat fragmentation, and noise. Since its limited budget could not address its expanding mission, the NPS could not meet its dual mandate. As the report noted, the current levels of science and resource management activities were completely inadequate to cope effectively with the broad spectrum of threats and problems facing the National Park System.[25]

The Republican Party increasingly viewed the problems facing the National Park System as one of federal overreach. Despite being created by President Nixon, many within the party viewed both the Golden Gate and Gateway National Recreation Areas as out of step with the NPS's mission. Neither park unit met national park standards, conservative critics argued, and so were, in the words of future NPS director James Ridenour, "thinning the blood of the national parks." The Alaska parks were a larger issue for Republicans. Not only did a Democratic president establish these parks, Democrats also took millions of acres out of potential development for oil and gas, which Republicans argued was a pressing issue as the nation's energy crisis continued. Park policy entered into an era of increasing partisan polarization, which had been percolating since the 1960s.[26]

In 1971, far-right activists Joseph Coors and Paul Weyrich created the Heritage Foundation to cultivate conservative intellectual thought. This think tank promoted a potent mix of neoconservative politics and Christian nationalist viewpoints as solutions to the nation's economic woes and cultural strife. Accordingly, following Ronald Reagan's election to the presidency, the Heritage Foundation published the voluminous *Mandate for Leadership* as the new administration's blueprint for reducing the size of the federal government through free market ideals. While tackling everything from the federal debt to the tax code, the report spent just six pages on the National Park System. Its authors argued that the Carter administration had managed the National Park System in a "grossly unbalanced manner," and that significant changes were necessary to meet growing problems within the parks.[27]

The *Mandate for Leadership* laid out its plan to remake the national parks by cutting the National Park Service's budget, embracing free market ideas in parks operations, and focusing on the development of "National Treasure" parks such as Yosemite and Grand Canyon. The report's authors pointed to the National Park Service's acquisition of land under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) as corrosive to local and state control and personal freedom. They argued that, in conjunction with Congress, the NPS had added far more national park units than the federal government could afford. This "park-of-the-month" mentality not only was financially unsustainable but added national park units whose values were not equal to the larger crown jewel parks. The Heritage Foundation suggested halting the acquisition of new parklands, reviewing those that had been purchased over the past decade, amending the LWCF, and reviewing attempts by the National Park Service to alter its



President Ronald Reagan takes a tour of Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky in 1984. Using the economic crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s as a justification, the Reagan administration pushed a number of controversial policies for the National Park Service in an attempt to address budget shortfalls by halting new land acquisitions and focusing on visitor use. C23114–17, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

mandate from its responsibility of providing recreation resources and protection of those resources to "only the preservation of the scenic landscape." The report argued that there was no reason that LWCF monies should not be used to preserve or maintain existing parks rather than the acquisition of more parklands. They argued that this shift would save the federal government millions. This conflicted with the legal purpose of the LWCF, however, which was to acquire more federal lands for conservation and recreation. Any changes to the LWCF would require congressional action.[28]

First imagined in 1965 by the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission as a solution to outdoor recreation's exponential rise in popularity, the LWCF took monies collected from user fees, the sale of surplus federal lands, and a tax on motorboat fuel to pay for the management and acquisition of federal lands while also providing grants to state and local governments for recreational planning and building recreational projects both large and small. The LWCF helped fund a wide array of recreational projects, including city and state parks, roads and trails, golf courses, and reservoirs. It became so popular that within three years of its passage it was in danger of running out of money. To solve this shortfall, Congress amended the act to include a share of oil and gas receipts from drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf. Eventually, the entirety of the fund came from royalties from offshore drilling.[29]

Famous western author Wallace Stegner called the National Park System "the best idea we ever had." He criticized Watt's moratorium on new park acquisitions and proposed changes to the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Margaretta K. Mitchell, photographer. Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, The University of Utah

None of President Reagan's cabinet embraced the Heritage Foundation's proposals more enthusiastically than Watt. After his confirmation as secretary of the interior, he placed the moratorium on new land acquisitions, earning the ire of environmental groups. With the LWCF's land acquisitions effectively shut down, he then asked Congress to amend the LWCF, allowing its funding to go to park improvement projects. "I urge Congress to change the priorities and allow us to protect and preserve those beautiful facilities that have been allowed to deteriorate," he pleaded to Congress, asking for the changes to the LWCF first laid out by the Heritage Foundation two years prior. Congress rejected Watt's request, but the attempt to fundamentally alter the LWCF shook environmental organizations, which saw the fund as central in conserving the nation's undeveloped lands.[30]

Environmentalists, horror-struck by these shifts, acted swiftly to bring attention to Watt's policies. Renowned landscape photographer and Sierra Club member Ansel Adams attacked Watt's moratorium on the acquisition of new parklands as "halting 100 years of growth in the National Park System." The National Parks and Conservation Association's (NPCA) vice president, T. Destry Jarvis, proclaimed the moves as "outrageous" and would only lead to further overcrowding within the parks. The *New York Times* editorial board seconded Jarvis's criticisms, publishing a scathing op-ed warning readers that Watt's free market views and plans to halt the establishment of new urban parks within the National Park System would be devastating. Perhaps the most stinging rebuke came from writer and historian Wallace Stegner, who in his 1983 essay, "The Best Idea We Ever Had: An Overview," attacked the secretary, writing, "Watt's interest in parks, if any, is an interest in the resort aspect," and not in their preservation of nature.[31]

Watt understood the unpopularity of the policies he was planning to pursue going into the job. Challenging environmental lobbyists, used to open access

Cartoonist Herb Block targeted James Watt's anti-environmentalist stances. In "Onward, Christian Soldier," Block cast Watt's zealous Christianity and belief in the second coming of Christ as so imminent that he saw little need to preserve natural resources. Not alone, other political cartoonists lampooned Watt for his policies and his proclivity for making offensive statements. These helped spur the larger campaign to remove him from office. Herb Block, cartoonist. Courtesy of the Herb Block Foundation

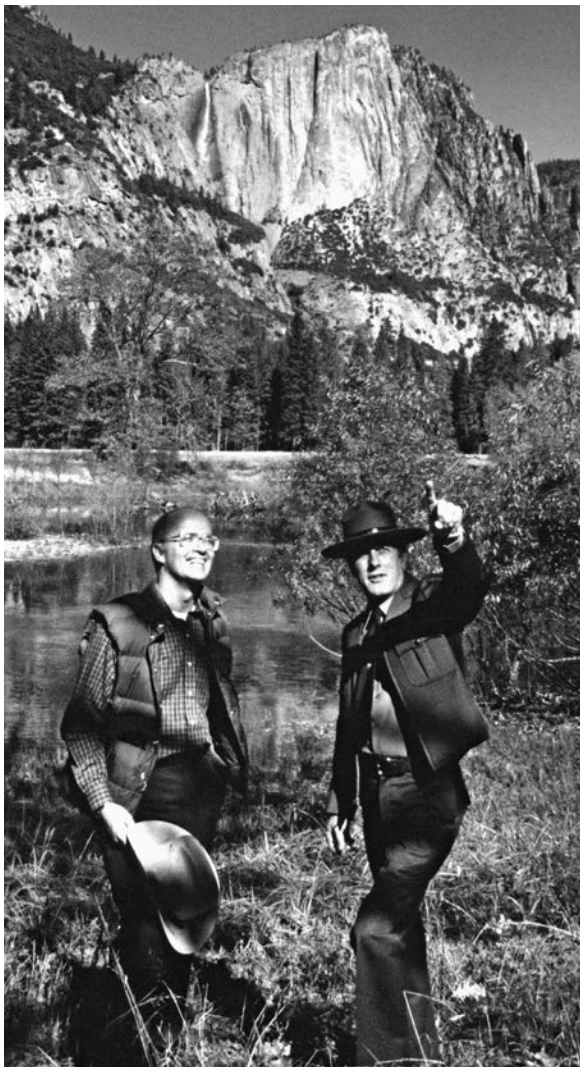
to the White House, was going to be a heavy lift, he told President Reagan. To accomplish what they both saw as necessary, Watt told Reagan that he would have to back him until it hurt the president politically, at which point Reagan should distance himself and make Watt the fall guy for the unpopular administration policies. Reagan agreed he would do just that. This strategy worked as environmental groups targeted Watt personally and pressured Reagan to fire him. To remove Watt, the Wilderness Society and its allies needed to convince the American public that the secretary was indeed a threat to the national parks and the nation's environmental future.[32]

The Wilderness Society's first step was the publication of the *Watt Book*. Contained in two large binders, the deeply researched "book" listed Watt's actions as secretary that the Wilderness Society deemed as dangerous to the environment. Its authors noted that, since Albert Bacon Fall's involvement in the Teapot Dome Scandal in 1922, no interior secretary had aroused such negative public sentiment. "It is both incredible and tragic," William Turnage, Wilderness Society director, said in introducing the book at a news conference, "that a cabinet officer can go astray so quickly that he prompts production of a four-pound book on his actions during his first six months."[33]

In the opening pages of the *Watt Book*, titled "Watt's Wrongs," the Wilderness Society noted that visitor numbers at the national parks were at an all-time high. In the face of such overwhelming popularity and overcrowding in some parks, they argued, it was wrongheaded to halt the addition of new national park units. "There is no reason to stop all park acquisition just because some facilities need to be upgraded to meet health and safety standards," its authors argued, asserting that maintenance costs should come out of NPS's general budget rather than stealing from the LWCF. The book exhaustively covered Watt's proposed policy changes, laying out the secretary's rationale and the Wilderness Society's response, all supported by a bevy of newspaper clippings.[34]

The *Watt Book* placed Watt's actions at the center of its campaign to remove him from office, specifically his mortarium on future park expansions and his embrace of private concessionaires. Why the Wilderness Society placed these issues at the center of their campaign rather than Watt's expansion of offshore drilling is unclear. It could be that most Americans understood and loved the national parks. Fewer, however, felt deeply about energy policy and public lands management. Whatever the reason, the national parks became the flash point between Secretary Watt and the environmental movement.

The Wilderness Society sent copies of the *Watt Book* to conservation organizations, politicians, and members of the media in the hopes that the narrative laid out in the tome would take root and lead to Watt's removal. While it is difficult to draw a straight line from the *Watt Book* to the avalanche of bad press on Watt, within a year of its release, he became the most beleaguered and reviled member of Reagan's cabinet. Watt's face graced the cover of *Time* magazine with the headline "Going, Going . . . ! Land Sale of the Century" about his plan to sell off federal public



Secretary Watt gets a tour of Yosemite Valley from Yosemite National Park superintendent Robert Binnewies. Amid growing pressure from environmentalist organizations for his policies and from the general public for his offensive comments, Watt resigned his office on October 9, 1983. James G. Watt Papers, bx 8, fldr 8, Collection 07667, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

lands. Political cartoons lampooned Watt as an ardent anti-environmental crusader. Critics attacked his evangelical faith in efforts to undermine his legitimacy as the nation's top land manager by casting his beliefs as so apocalyptic that he was trying to hasten Christ's return rather than protect the nation's lands.[35]

Alongside Watt's own tactics, the campaign against Watt reflected the changing tenor in national politics to a more confrontational tone, a point of concern for longtime Republican members of conservation organizations like DeWitt Peterkin Jr. The former vice chairman of J.P. Morgan & Co., Peterkin was far from a foaming at the mouth radical. But, as director of the Audubon Society, he feared the rhetoric coming out of Watt's DOI. He wrote to his longtime friend Prescott Bush—father of vice president George H. W. Bush—stating that he was puzzled by the Reagan administration's stance on the environment. He noted that a recent letter to the society's membership asking for donations to halt the administration's efforts garnered $850,000, a sum far more than the $50,000 typically collected by similar campaigns. Peterkin was concerned that the administration was not listening to the public's concerns over the environment, and asked Bush how to gain Reagan's attention on the issue.[36]

Peterkin's letter made it to George H. W. Bush's desk. In response, Bush suggested the Audubon director sit down with Watt. Bush doubted that there was anything Watt could do to placate the "extremists within the environmental movement." But the administration did not want to lose the support of more mainstream environmentalists, he wrote, adding that many of the positions taken by Watt were directed by the president himself and most would agree with the secretary if those positions were better understood.[37]

By 1983, the Wilderness Society had been working for two years to remove Watt. Public opinion had soured against the secretary. Political cartoons lampooned Watt as willing to go out of his way to stomp on wildflowers, strip-mine Mount Rushmore, and use Smokey Bear as a rug. Watt's tendency toward offensive remarks did not help. While his allies chuckled at statements such as, "I never use the words Democrats and Republicans. It's liberals and Americans," most voters did not, a reality not lost on President Reagan. Congress had rejected Watt's attempt to transform the LWCF. Mired in controversy, the constant barrage of negative press was taking a toil. Watt even ran afoul of Nancy Reagan when he replaced the Beach Boys with Wayne Newton for a Fourth of July concert on the Washington Mall, citing rampant drug use by the band's fans as his rationale.

Ultimately, it was not Watt's politics, religion, or effectiveness as secretary that finally caused him to resign, but his unguarded tongue. When asked about affirmative action at a breakfast meeting of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Watt quipped, "We have every kind of mix you can have. I have a black, I have a woman, two Jews and a cripple. And we have talent."

The offensive joke proved too much. After three years of controversy, he resigned as secretary of the interior on October 9, 1983. The campaign to pressure him out of office had succeeded.[38]

While environmental groups won the battle, they may have lost the war. Watt's replacement, William Clark, continued many of the same policies through 1984. Donald Hodel, who one senior national park official called "a Watt clone in a three-piece suit," followed Clark in running the department until 1989, the remainder of Reagan's presidency. Like Watt, Hodel promoted use over preservation within the national parks, supporting snowmobiles in Yellowstone and aircraft tours in Grand Canyon. Even after Reagan left office, such ideas remained as Republican administrations continued to promote free market solutions to the National Park Service's continuous funding shortages. Gale Norton, a former senior lawyer for the Mountain States Legal Foundation and President George W. Bush's secretary of the interior, played a key role in the park service's decision to continue allowing snowmobiles in Yellowstone. Environmentalists cast each as just another pro-development, anti-environmentalist set on defiling the national parks for profit. While such rhetoric shaped the public debate over the national parks, it never held the same resonance as it had against Watt. One reason for this was none of Watt's successors had the same tendency for making offensive comments in public. Another was that by 1984, Americans had increasingly moved into their political corners, and polarized rhetoric became normalized when discussing environmental issues. This reality played out on a university campus stage twenty years after Watt's resignation.[39]

On the evening of February 11, 2004, Watt sat down with University of Colorado professors Patricia Limerick and Charles Wilkinson to reflect on his time as secretary of the interior. The conversation began with Watt giving boilerplate answers to questions on his actions as secretary. As he slowly warmed to Limerick and Wilkinson's prodding, he grew franker in his assessment of his critics and accomplishments as secretary of the interior. Watt remained angry at his portrayal by environmentalists yet remained proud of the work he had done while in office. He wanted to rewrite his legacy when it came to his management of the national parks, and resorted to hyperbole. "I added more to the national parks system and the national wildlife refuge system than had been added in any other single year, greater than the Carter administration, greater than the Johnson administration, greater than Teddy Roosevelt's administration, greater than the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration, greater than Stewart Udall," Watt claimed. Only Secretary of State William Seward's 1867 purchase of Alaska had added more federal land, he asserted. "Does that make me a preservationist? Why don't you accuse me of being a preservationist? I presented the facts.

Donald P. Hodel briefs Ronald Reagan on the 1988 Yellowstone National Park fires. Hodel succeeded Clark and served as secretary of the interior for the rest of the Reagan administration. Derided as a "Watt clone in a three-piece suit," Hodel continued the administration's policies of use over preservation, including allowing snowmobiles in Yellowstone and aircraft tours of Grand Canyon.
C48561–10, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library

A line of snowmobiles stops at a gas station in Yellowstone National Park. Allowing snowmobiles in Yellowstone in the winter was a part of Watt's push for prioritizing visitor use over ecological preservation in the National Park System, This policy continued under Watt's successors, well beyond the Reagan years.

Yellowstone National Park Photograph Collection

Those are facts. I did more than Secretary Udall. Come on. Accuse me of being a preservationist," he implored the audience.[40]

Watt's claims were patently false. While it appears that he was claiming credit for the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, in truth he had adamantly opposed it as secretary. *High Country News* editor Greg Hanscom was in the audience that evening and noted that Watt really seemed to believe in his version of history, even after Wilkinson gently pointed out to the former secretary that the laws that Watt chafed against as secretary were the result of a rising tide of public opinion. Watt's claims of being a victim of attacks from environmentalists and the media failed to convince the audience.[41]

Watt remains a polarizing figure decades after leaving office. This underlines the continued polarization and push-and-pull over the administrative state and public lands management. This ideological divide has continued to cause divergent policy swings between Republican and Democratic administrations over budgeting and staffing, the role of science in informing decision making, and maintaining the system's infrastructure. Such divisions often say more about the ideological views of the administrative state than empirical concerns over the environment. The national parks have since played a central role in this back-and-forth debate over federal power and how best to manage the nation's public lands and environment, bringing the NPS's mandate into question. Watt's rise and fall from power pit New Right ideology against the decades-old environmental movement. In doing so, it brought these issues to the forefront of public debate and reshaped the very meaning of the National Park System.[42]

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Abbreviations used in the notes include Montana Historical Society Research Center and Archives, Helena (MHS); and *Montana The Magazine of Western History* (*Montana*). Unless otherwise noted, newspapers were printed in Montana.

The Jewel on the Crown (Chacón and Reintjes)

1. The Montana Historical Society in Helena and the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman are the State of Montana's two other museums. The University of Chicago's museum, founded in 1893 and now known as the Smart Museum of Art, has a similar trajectory. Sue Taylor, ed., *The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art: A Guide to the Collection* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990).

2. The two-year delay in enrolling students was due to the time it took to acquire the land for the campus and set up the academic programs. Research for this article was originally intended for the publication of Brandon Reintjes, ed., *The State of the Art: 120 Artworks for 120 Years, Selections from the Montana Museum of Art & Culture Permanent Collection at the University of Montana* (Missoula: Univ. of Montana Press, 2013). The early history of the museum can be found in Annual Reports in Office of the President records, the Museum Register or Bulletin, museum directors' reports to and correspondence with the university administration, and other unpublished documents starting in 1895. These documents and photographs are located in both the MMAC Research Files and in the Archives and Special Collections at the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library at the University of Montana–Missoula (hereafter Mansfield Library).

3. University Hall is now known as Main Hall. H. Rafael Chacón, *The Original Man: The Life and Work of Montana Architect A. J. Gibson* (Missoula: Univ. of Montana Press, 2008), 62–72. "University of Montana Report of the President, 1903–04," 10–12, Office of the President records, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library.

4. Morton J. Elrod, "Many Museum Specimens Received," *Anaconda Standard*, Sep. 20, 1903.The 1899 fire that almost entirely destroyed the university's Science Hall only a year after it opened more than likely precipitated Elrod's appeal for a fireproof building.

5. An inscription on the back of *Hunting Party* indicates that John did the drawing while he was in jail, accused of murdering prospector Jack Rombo in the Bitterroot Valley. Museum Bulletin, 1912, Museum History, MMAC Research Files.

6. Phillips later claimed to have founded the museum: "I started this collection soon after I came to Montana 35 years ago." Paul C. Phillips, "Letter to Dean J. E. Miller," Sep. 5, 1946; "Preliminary Report to President Ernest O. Melby," Dec. 4, 1944, Paul C. Phillips Papers, MSS 375, bx 1, fldr 1–32, Northwest History Museum 1944–1950, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library.

7. Phillips, "Letter to Dean J. E. Miller" and "Preliminary Report to President."

8. *Missoula County Murals* brochure (Missoula: Missoula Art Museum, 2022), cited in "New, free brochure about the Edgar S. Paxson murals in Missoula County Courthouse is available," Jul. 20, 2022, https://www.missoulacounty.us/Home/Components/News/News/17778. An important source for the Gibson Collection was the materials acquired through former Indian agent Joseph Sherburne on the Blackfeet Reservation. Sherburne, Gibson's brother-in-law, owned and operated the trading post and general store in Browning, Montana.

Chacón, *The Original Man*, 24; Sherburne Family Papers 1823–1962, MSS 067, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library.

9. Paul C. Phillips, "Note to John E. Lewis," n.d., Mary Elrod Ferguson Papers, MSS 205, bx 1, fldr 8, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library; Paul C. Phillips, "Important Donations," in "Noted Warriors Revived Amidst Relic Property: Cowboy Artist, Athlete Starts Hobby Founding Lewis Memorial," *Montana Standard*, Jun. 7, 1936.

10. Paul. C. Phillips, untitled note, Aug. 17, 1937, "Women's Club Art Building 1935–1937," Exhibitions, MMAC Research Files. This folder contains copies of correspondence between President George F. Simmons, V. H. Walsh of the Public Works Administration, and the Woman's Club of Missoula between 1935 and 1939, as well as the application for the PWA grant, building contracts, newspaper clippings, and Montana Board of Education documents. "Montana Erects First Art Museum in the Inland Northwest," *Art Digest* 12:1 (Oct. 1, 1937): 7.

11. "Montana Erects First Art Museum in the Inland Northwest," 7; "*Newsweek* Gives New Art Building High Recognition: October 18 Issue of Magazine Tells How Frontier Area is Culture Center," *Montana Kaimin*, Oct. 19, 1937; Macbeth Gallery Records, 1838–1968, bx 59, fldr: "Montana State University, 1937," Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

12. Favorable press for the museum came from the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, *Art Digest*, and the *International News Service*, according to a press release, "State University, Missoula (Special)," Nov. 1937, "Women's Club Art Building 1935–1937," Exhibitions, MMAC Research Files. From 1945 to 1965, the University of Montana in Missoula was known as "Montana State University." The latter is now the name of the former Agricultural College of the State of Montana in Bozeman.

13. "*Newsweek* Gives New Art Building High Recognition," *Montana Kaimin*, Oct. 19, 1937.

14. "Art Director Opens Exhibition of Own Work," *Missoulian*, Nov. 23, 1937.

15. Nerissa Cook, "Latin American Art at the University of Montana," unpublished essay, Spring 2013, in "Latin American Paintings, January 14–February 4, 1945," Exhibition Files, MMAC Research Files. The exhibition is perceived today as a highly ideological and propagandistic display of selected Modernists from Latin America intended to display kinship with the United States and ensure loyalty to the West during the Cold War.

16. Information about these exhibitions is available in the Exhibitions Folders, MMAC Research Files.

17. James A. McCain, "Letter to the Museum Committee," Jan. 8, 1949, RG 72, Faculty Committees, bx 1, fldr: "Faculty Committees-Museum," Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library.

18. A female WPA employee accused Phillips of assault. He filed a libel suit and won the case in a second jury trial in 1938. President George F. Simmons refused to reinstate him, causing considerable friction between them and on campus. Phillips's appeal to the Montana State Board of Education was denied, but the state Supreme Court ruled in his favor in 1944 and he was reinstated. The conflict between the co-directors came to a head in 1945. Immediately upon reinstatement, Phillips was granted a leave of absence due to the war. Turney-High filed for his own yearlong leave the following year and threatened to resign if the request were not granted. The request was denied and Turney-High departed, leaving Phillips as the museum's first lone, full-time director. Paul C. Phillips, "Annual Report to President James A. McCain," Oct. 7, 1946, Paul C. Phillips Collection, MSS 375, bx 1, fldr 30, Office of the President records, Mansfield Library. Phillips's account is riddled with errors and contradictions. For example, he cites 1912 as the start of the museum although collection records stretch back to the 1890s. In other correspondence, he cites the year 1920 as its beginning date. He states that "expansion was slow" during his absence, ignoring rapid growth by all accounts. Ernest O. Melby, "Letter to Paul C. Phillips," Sep. 8, 1944, Paul C. Phillips Collection, MSS 375, bx 1, fldr 30, Office of the President records, Mansfield Library.

19. Paul C. Phillips, "Letter to the President James A. McCain," Dec. 4, 1944, Paul C. Phillips Collection, UM-1, bx 1, fldr 2, Office of the President records, Mansfield Library.

20. The president's office created the faculty committee on Jan. 8, 1949; it included W. J. Marshall (chair), Mrs. and Mr. Oakley Coffee, Mary Elrod Ferguson, and Phillips. The group later expanded to include faculty members Aden Arnold from the Department of Fine Arts and Dr. Carling Malouf from anthropology. "Minutes of the Museum Committee," Jan. 8, 1949, RG 001, bx 82, fldr: "Museum Committee," Office of the President records, Mansfield Library. Phillips later incorrectly argued that the committee was established on Mar. 22, 1948. Paul C. Phillips, "Letter to President James A. McCain," Sep. 28, 1951, RG 001, bx 82, fldr: "Museum Committee," Office of the President records, Mansfield Library; James A. McCain, "Letter to Dean J. E. Miller," Oct. 9, 1946, Phillips Papers, RG 001, bx 82, fldr: "Museum Committee," Office of the President records, Mansfield Library.

21. Carling Malouf, "Minutes of the Museum Committee," Aug. 5 and Aug. 9, 1949, RG 001, bx 82, fldr: "Museum Committee," Office of the President records, Mansfield Library. See also RG 39, Physical Plant, bx 1, fldr: "Museum, Plans for New," Office of the President records, Mansfield Library; "Minutes of the Museum Committee," Jan. 8, 1949, RG 001, cx 82, fldr: "Museum Committee," Office of the President records, Mansfield Library; Gordon Browder, "Minutes of the Museum Committee," Feb. 5, 1952, RG 001, bx 82, fldr: "Museum Committee," Office of the President records, Mansfield Library.

22. Gordon Browder, "Minutes of the Museum Committee," Mar. 23, 1949, RG 001, bx 82, fldr: "Museum Committee," Office of the President records, Mansfield Library. Mary Elrod Ferguson, "Catalogue or accession lists in Museum," ca. 1952, Mary Elrod Ferguson Papers, MSS 205, bx 1, fldr 8, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library. It is unclear why they chose the acronyms "PI" and "I."

23. Ferguson was appointed acting dean of women in 1935 and rewrote the "Women's Code of Conduct" at the University of Montana but was still bypassed for the dean of students position. John R. Habeck, "Morton John Elrod, Pioneer Montana Biologist, with Additional Information on Mary Elrod Ferguson," unpublished historical information compilation, 2007, 7–8, 49–51. Paul C. Phillips, "Letter to McCain," Oct. 7, 1946. Phillips later questioned Ferguson's competence and demanded she be fired. Paul C. Phillips, "Letter to Vice President R. H. Jesse," Mar. 16, 1953, Mary Elrod Ferguson Papers, MSS 205, bx 1, fldr 8,

Mansfield Library. Although she had secured the McGill Collection in 1952, including close to 1,500 valuable objects, Phillips stated that she only brought in "50–60 pieces of useless hotel crockery." Habeck, "Morton John Elrod," 56–58. A thorough accounting of his complaints against Ferguson can be found in Paul C. Phillips, "Resignation Letter to President Carl McFarland," Mar. 17, 1952, copy in Museum History, 1949–1959, MMAC Research Files.

24. Montana's most gifted Impressionist, Dana was a student of Sharp in Cincinnati, Chase in New York, and Cassatt and Maurer in Paris. She married Montana cattle rancher Edwin Dana in 1896, settled on the Crow Indian Reservation, and traveled extensively in Europe, Latin America, and North Africa throughout her career. Valerie Hedquist and Sue Hart, *Fra Dana: American Impressionist in the Rockies* (Missoula: Montana Museum of Art and Culture, 2011).

25. *The Stella Duncan Memorial Fund* (Missoula: Trustees of the Stella Duncan Memorial Fund of Montana State Univ., Nov. 1952), 5; Last Will and Testament of Stella Duncan Johnstone, Jan. 13, 1949, Stamford, Connecticut Court of Probate, 6–8, "Stella Duncan Bequests, Biography and Will," Museum History, MMAC Research Files. Born in 1887 in Glendive and trained as a teacher, Duncan studied fine arts, art history, and languages at the University of Montana from 1907 to 1911 before attending Northwestern University. After completing a course of study at the Prince School of Merchandising and working at Filene's Department Store in Boston, she opened her own antiquities shop on Beacon Hill. Stella Louise Duncan, "Diaries of European and Russian Trips," Coll. 656 series, Stella Duncan, bx 1, fldrs 1/10 and 1/11, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library.

26. McGill was only the third female physician in Montana. She received her PhD in 1908 from the University of Missouri and her MD from Johns Hopkins University. Elizabeth Lochrie, "Talk Given for Homer Club after an interview with Dr. McGill," unpublished transcript, Mar. 3, 1953, Museum History, Dr. Caroline McGill Collection, MMAC Research Files. Connie Staudohar, "Caroline McGill: Mining City Doctor" in *Motherload: Legacies of Women's Lives and Labors in Butte, Montana*, ed. Ellen Crain and Janet L. Finn (Butte: Clark City Press, 2005), 84–105. The University of Montana honored Dr. McGill by naming the Home Economics building after her. From 2018 to 2023, the MMAC's offices were in McGill Hall.

27. Object Files, 1952–1958, MMAC Research Files.

28. Paul C. Phillips, "Report of the Museum and Northwest History Collections 1947-48," Museum History, MMAC Research Files; Phillips, "Resignation Letter to McFarland," Mar. 17, 1952, Museum History, MMAC Research Files; Museum History, 1949–1959, and Museum History, 1960–1969, MMAC Research Files.

29. Unknown author, likely Earl C. Lory, "About the Museum," 1967; Museum History 1960–1964, MMAC Research Files. The typed document contains handwritten annotations and is signed "L."

30. "Malouf was disappointed about the lack of a permanent home and separated the Native American artifacts and placed them in a locked, secure storage off public display." Habeck, "Morton John Elrod," 64. The collections are presently housed in the University of Montana Anthropological Collections Facility (UMACF) in the basement of the Social Science building.

31. M. C. Wren, "Annual Report, 1966-67," Museum History, 1960–1969, MMAC Research Files.

32. Don Bunse, "Letter to William Craig," Feb. 2, 1970, Fra Dana Collection, Correspondence, 1947–1970, Museum History, MMAC Research Files; Frank R. Johnston, "Letter to Academic Vice-President Richard G. Landini," Aug. 19, 1970, Fra Dana Collection, Correspondence, 1947–1970, Museum History, MMAC Research Files. Bryan Abas, "The UM Museum Collection: Years of Neglect," *Montana Kaimin*, Apr. 16, 1975.

33. The three were tried and acquitted. Welch was arrested on the last day of their trial on Jun. 14, 1977, in Vancouver, Washington, possibly planning to cross into Canada. He was sentenced to ten years for felony theft after a plea-bargain agreement on Jan. 18, 1978. "June 6 Trial Date Set in UM Art Theft Case," *Montana Kaimin*, May 26, 1977; "Welch Gets Continuance in UM Art Theft Case," *Montana Kaiman*, Nov. 29, 1977; "Welch Gets 10 Years," *Montana Kaiman*, Jan. 19, 1978.

34. Daniel Gallacher executed the inventory, a Herculean effort that took nineteen days. "Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Investigate the Use of the University Museum Collection," unpublished document, May 16, 1977, Museum History, MMAC Research Files.

35. The School of Fine Arts later became the College of Fine Arts under Dean Stephen Kalm. It has since changed its name twice, becoming the College of the Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) and most recently the College of the Arts and Media (CAM). Kern was a recent graduate of the MFA program in art. Conversations with Dennis Kern, Dec. 31, 2022, and Jan. 1, 2023. See also Robert Chaney and Barbara Koostra, "Dennis Kern," unpublished transcript, Dec. 9, 2005, Museum History, 2005-2015, MMAC Research Files. Working with Kern and Martin, administrative officer Bryan Spellman secured over $2 million in grants for the conservation of the Permanent Collection. Conversations with Kern and Spellman, Feb. 12, 2023. See also "University of Montana Permanent Art Collection Grant Status," Apr. 15, 1985, Museum History, Conservation Grants, 1982–1995, MMAC Research Files. MAGDA was founded in 1992. Deaccessioned items included weapons and decorative objects that were damaged or did not meet the criteria or standards of quality for inclusion in the Permanent Collection. Conversation with Kern, Feb. 9, 2023.

36. Anneli Hartikainen wove the textile with the assistance of Pirkko Sillfors of the Friends of Finnish Handicraft.

37. In 2014, the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington, D.C., closed its doors and transferred Senator Clark's collection to the National Gallery and other museums and academic institutions. The MMAC was the only recipient outside the Washington area to receive a part of the senator's collection. In Aug. 2021, Barbara Koostra joined two former administrators and one faculty member in a class-action lawsuit against the University of Montana and the Montana University System claiming sexual discrimination and retaliation. Koostra claimed she was wrongfully dismissed and replaced by a less-qualified male. "Lawsuit against University of Montana Alleges Sex Bias," *AP*, Aug. 6, 2021. In October 2022, U.S. District Judge Brian Morris denied the plaintiffs' certification as a class-action lawsuit. Skylar Rispens, "Judge Denies Plaintiffs Class Action Certification in Title IX Suit against UM," *Missoulian*, Oct. 4, 2022.

38. In 2014, Bruce and Suzanne Crocker endowed a fund at the UM Foundation to support the MMAC director and curator positions.

Last Stop Mildred (Wilson)

1. August Derleth, *The Milwaukee Road: Its First Hundred Years* (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 2002), 247; Stan Johnson, *The Milwaukee Road Olympian: A Ride to Remember* (Coeur d'Alene: Museum of North Idaho, 2001), 142.

2. Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, "Olympian, Fit for the Gods," 1912, Michael Sol Collection, milwaukeeroadarchives.com; Johnson, *Milwaukee Road Olympian*, 56.

3. Johnson, *Milwaukee Road Olympian*, 138.

4. "400 Sheep Are Drowned During Cloudburst at Ranch Near Hedgesville," *Great Falls Tribune*, Jun. 24, 1938.

5. Ralph S. Podas, "A Point in Time on the Milwaukee Road: The Custer Creek *Olympian* Tragedy, Jun. 19, 1938," *Railroad History*, no. 166 (Spring 1992): 39.

6. Interstate Commerce Commission, *Investigation Inv.-2278*, Aug. 9, 1938, 12.

7. *Investigation Inv.-2278*, 10.

8. Podas, "A Point in Time on the Milwaukee Road," 39.

9. *Investigation Inv.-2278*, 11.

10. *Investigation Inv.-2278*, 10.

11. "Porter Risked Life to Save Others," *Minneapolis Star*, Jun. 20, 1938.

12. Michael Bugenstein, *Since the Days of the Buffalo: A History of Eastern Montana and the Kalfell Ranch* (Helena: Farcountry Press, 2013), 8.

13. *Terry Tribune*, Jul. 22, 1937; Bill Kiley, "Montana's Red-Headed Legend," *Range Magazine*, Spring 2006, 65.

14. Denise Harte, "A Tiny Montana Community Was the Scene of One of the Worst Train Disasters in American History," *Montana Best Times*, Jul. 2004, 12.

15. Rose Hand, "History of My Life," unpublished memoir, 1976, 33. Provided to the author by the Hand-Maguire family.

16. *Investigation Inv.-2278*, 11, 14–17.

17. See "Porter Risked Life to Save Others," *Minneapolis Star*, Jun. 20, 1938; *Billings Gazette*, Jun. 22, 1938; *Cullman (AL) Banner*, Jun. 24, 1938; *Pittsburgh Courier*, Jul. 9, 1938.

18. *Miles City Star*, Jun. 21, 1938.

19. "Chicago Train Plunges into Montana Creek," *Chicago Tribune*, Jun. 20, 1938.

20. "Train Crash Takes Nearly 40 Lives," *(Kalispell) Daily Inter Lake*, Jun. 20, 1938.

21. *Lincoln (NE) Star*, Jun. 20, 1938.

22. Podas, "A Point in Time on the Milwaukee Road," 49.

23. *Lincoln Star*, Jun. 20, 1938.

24. *Lincoln Star*, Jun. 20, 1938.

25. "The Custer Creek Disaster," *Chicago Tribune*, Jun. 21, 1938.

26. *Investigation Inv.-2278*, 19.

Erring on the Side of Public Use (Childers)

1. In a 1982 op-ed, Secretary James Watt noted, "We [the Reagan administration] are protecting natural resources *for* people." In doing so, the administration sought to balance managing the nation's natural resources for society's economic benefit with stewardship. This meant focusing more on recreational enjoyment and less on ecological preservation within the national parks. James Watt, "A Blueprint for Balance in Public Land Management," *Journal of Soil & Water Conservation* 37:1 (Jan.–Feb. 1982): 6.

2. James Watt, "Address to Conference of National Park Concessionaires," Mar. 23, 1981, bx 11, fldr 9, Wilderness Society Papers, Denver Public Library. In Donald Hummel's 1987 memoir, *Stealing the National Parks*, the former park concessionaire and member of President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration applauded Watt's reaffirmation of private enterprise's place within the national parks, writing that by the early 1980s concessionaires had suffered "from years of administrative deterioration by an increasingly rigid and stratified National Park Service." Watt and others within the Reagan administration shared Hummel's views. Donald Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks: The Destruction of Concessions and Park Access* (Bellevue, WA: Free Enterprise Press, 1987), 372.

3. Watt, "Address to Conference of National Park Concessionaires"; Bill Prochanu and Valarie Thomas, "The Watt Controversy," *Washington Post*, Jun. 30, 1981, A1.

4. James R. Skillen, *This Land Is My Land: Rebellion in the West* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2020), 79; *Watt Book*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: The Wilderness Society, 1981), James G. Watt Papers, Accession #7667, bx 17, fldr 7, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, hereafter Watt Papers. For more on the National Park Service's role in managing urban parks, see Jerome Tiniow, "In Defense of Federal Parks Near Urban Areas," *Natural Resources Lawyer* 14:3 (1982): 567–88.

5. In the third edition of his *National Parks: The American Experience*, Alfred Runte argued that Watt thought that he might support the national parks without supporting preservation by evoking back to the idea of monumentalism, which drove the early creation of the national parks. Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1997), 259–61. Gaylord Nelson to Rebecca Leet, Meg Maguire, Chuck Clusen, Jun. 29, 1981, Wilderness Society CONS 130 Series 5, bx 35, fldr 20, Conservation Collection, Denver Public Library.

6. Ron Arnold, *At the Eye of the Storm: James Watt and the Environmentalists* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1982), 4–5.

7. Leilani Watt, *Caught in the Conflict: My Life with James Watt* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1984), 5–10; Arnold, *At the Eye of the Storm*, 8–21.

8. David Farber, *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010), 154–57.

9. Jefferson Decker, *The Other Rights Revolution: Conservative Lawyers and the Remaking of American Government* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016), 92–93.

10. Decker, *The Other Rights Revolution*, 99.

11. Prochanu and Thomas, "The Watt Controversy," *Washington Post*, Jun. 30, 1981, A1. James M. Turner noted that Sierra Club membership grew from 48,000 to 100,000, and the Wilderness Society's membership grew from 181,000 to 346,000 between 1979 and 1983 due in large part to their campaign against Watt. James M. Turner, *The Promise of Wilderness: American Environmental Politics Since 1964* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2012), 236.

12. Joanne Omang, "Watt Finds Time to Hear Audubon Society," *Washington Post*, May 14, 1981, A7.

13. Hal K. Rothman, *Saving the Planet: The American Response to the Environment in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), 158–62.

14. Skillen, *This Land Is My Land*, 64.

15. Statement of George B. Hartzog Jr., Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, Jan. 18, 1968; Mark David Spence, *Building a Forest for the Trees: Redwoods and the Future of National Parks* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2018); Laura Alice Watt, *The Paradox of Preservation: Wilderness and Working Landscapes at Point Reyes National Seashore* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2016).

16. "Land Grab by the Parks," *Newsweek*, Aug. 14, 1978, 21; George B. Hartzog Jr., *Battling for the National Parks* (Mount Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell Unlimited, 1988), 5; Jacqueline Vaughn Switzer, *Green Backlash: The History and Politics of the Environmental Opposition in the U.S.* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), 11–12.

17. Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 3.

18. Skillen, *This Land Is My Land*, 77–79; James Morton Turner and Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Republican Reversal: Conservatives and the Environment from Nixon to Trump* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2018), 61.

19. Robert B. Keiter, *To Conserve Unimpaired: The Evolution of the National Park Idea* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2013), 86; Robin Winks,

"The National Park Service Organic Act of 1916: A Contradictory Mandate?" *Denver University Law Review* 74:3 (Mar. 1997): 573–623; A. Starker Leopold et al., *Wildlife Management in the National Parks* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1963); Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (P.L. 88-577), 16 U.S.C.; Memorandum, Secretary Stewart Udall, "Management of the National Park System," Jul. 10, 1964.

20. Scholars have long pointed to the tension between preservation and use with the National Park Service's Organic Act as a dual mandate. Historian Robin Winks noted that Congress did not consider the 1916 act as contradictory, but rather understood its mandate to the newly formed NPS as ensuring enjoyment of the parks in a manner that left them unimpaired. Richard West Sellars made the point that what this meant shifted beginning in the 1960s with the growing emphasis on ecological protection. More recent scholarship by Laura Alice Watt and James Fieldman examined how the NPS conflated ideas like wilderness and resource protection in managing the National Park System. Finally, law professor and national park scholar Robert Keiter noted that since the 1970s, the courts have overwhelming agreed that the NPS's first obligation under the Organic Act is resource protection. Winks, "National Park Service Organic Act of 1916," 573–623; Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), 214–17; James W. Feldman, *A Storied Wilderness: Rewilding the Apostle Islands* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2011), 6–21; Watt, *Paradox of Preservation*, 4; Keiter, *To Conserve Unimpaired*, 86. Bettie Willard to Senator Frank Moss, Aug. 15, 1968, Rocky Mountain National Park, bx 3, Bettie Willard Collection, Rocky Mountain National Park Archive; Robert Barbee, "Rebuke for Chase," *Rocky Mountain News*, Jan. 19, 1968; Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 204.

21. Sen. Frank Moss, "Parks are for People," Congressional Record, U.S. Senate, Aug. 1, 1968, 24617. For more on recreational views of the national parks, see Joseph L. Sax, *Mountains Without Handrails: Reflections on the National Parks* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2018); Marguerite Shaffer, "Performing Bears and Packaged Wilderness: Reframing the History of National Parks," in *Cities and Nature in the American West*, ed. Char Miller (Reno: Univ. of Nevada Press, 2010), 137–53; Michael Childers, "For Public Use, Resort, and Recreation: The Struggle Over Appropriate Recreation in Yosemite," *George Wright Forum* 35:2 (Nov. 2018): 304–11.

22. Barry Mackintosh, Janet A. McDonnell, and John H. Sprinkle Jr., *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Hancock, MI: George Wright Society, 2018), 56.

23. Roxanne Willis, *Alaska's Place in the West: From the Last Frontier to the Last Wilderness* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2010), 126–27; Stephen Haycox, *Battleground Alaska: Fighting Federal Power in America's Last Wilderness* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2016), 33–35.

24. Sellers, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, 211; John C. Miles, *Wilderness in National Parks: Playground or Preserve* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2009), 222.

25. National Park Service, Department of the Interior, *State of the Parks: A Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Office of Science and Technology, May 1980), 36.

26. James M. Ridenour, *The National Parks Compromised: Pork Barrel Politics and America's Treasures* (Merrillville, IN: ICS Books, Inc., 1994), 16.

27. Farber, *Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism*, 3; Charles L. Heatherly, ed., *Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management in a Conservative Administration* (Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation, 1981), 384.

28. Heatherly, *Mandate for Leadership*, 382–88.

29. Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 16 U.S.C. § 4601-4.

30. A. O. Sulzberger, "Watt Says Funds for Park Lands Should Be Used for Restoration," *New York Times*, May 8, 1981, A1.

31. "Watt Orders Changes on Park Concessions," *New York Times*, Jun. 18, 1981, A15; "Beware the New Park Ranger," *New York Times*, Apr. 5, 1981, E20; Wallace Stegner, "The Best Idea We Ever Had: An Overview," *Wilderness* 45:5 (Spring 1983): 13.

32. Joanne Omang, "Man with a Mission: Watt Targets Strip-Mining Law," *Washington Post*, Mar. 9, 1981, A1.

33. *Watt Book*, 1:7; Richard Sandomir, "William Turnage, Who Reinvented the Wilderness Society, Is Dead at 74," *New York Times*, Oct. 18, 2017.

34. *Watt Book*, 1:7.

35. *Time Magazine* 8:120 (Aug. 23, 1982).

36. DeWitt Peterkin Jr. to Prescott Bush, Dec. 11, 1981, bx 4, fldr 15, Watt Papers.

37. George Bush to DeWitt Peterkin Jr., Jan. 27, 1982, bx 4, fldr 15, Watt Papers.

38. Francis X. Clines, "Watt Asks That Reagan Forgive 'Offensive' Remark About Panel," *New York Times*, Sep. 23, 1983, A1.

39. Ronald Taylor, "State and Federal Parks: Two Battles Over Different Visions of the Future: Hodel and Mott Locked in a Struggle Over U.S. Policies," *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1987, 3; Michael J. Yochim, *Yellowstone and the Snowmobile: Locking Horns over National Park Use* (Lawrence: Univ. of Press of Kansas, 2009), 190–91.

40. James G. Watt, interview by Patricia Limerick and Charles Wilkinson, Feb. 11, 2004, Univ. of Colorado Center of the American West.

41. Greg Hanscom, "Watt Turns History on Its Head," *High Country News*, Mar. 1, 2004, 2.

42. Jonathan Jarvis and T. Destry Jarvis, *National Parks Forever: Fifty Years of Fighting and a Case for Independence* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2022), 3–6.

Organizing Western History (Etulain)

1. James F. Willard to F. B. R. Hellems, Oct. 25, 1928, James F. Willard Collection, COU 1730, Univ. of Colorado Boulder Libraries, Rare and Distinctive Collections (hereafter Willard Papers).

2. The Boulder conference papers were published as James F. Willard and Colin B. Goodykoontz, eds., *The Trans-Mississippi West: Papers Read at a Conference Held at the University of Colorado, June 18–21, 1929* (Boulder: Univ. of Colorado, 1930).

3. "Biographical Note" in the online description of James F. Willard Collection at the Univ. of Colorado, https://archives.colorado.edu/repositories/2/resources/217.

4. The Willard Collection includes correspondence with all of these western historians, as well as several others, inviting them to take part in the coming conference and requesting their opinions on how the program ought to be organized.

5. James F. Willard to Turner, Oct. 1, 1928, Frederick Jackson Turner Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (hereafter Turner Papers).

6. Turner to Willard, Oct. 15, 1928, Turner Papers.

7. Turner to Willard, Mar. 11, 1929, Turner Papers.

8. Richard W. Etulain, "After Turner: The Western Historiography of Frederic Logan Paxson," in Richard W. Etulain, ed., *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1991), 137–65.

9. Paxson to Willard, Nov. 10, 27, 1929, Willard Papers.

10. Paxson to Willard, Dec. 4, 1929, Willard Papers.

11. "Biographical Note," Solon J. Buck Papers, P1494, Minnesota Historical Society, Minneapolis.

12. Willard to Buck, Jul. 5, Oct. 1 and 20, Dec. 28, 1928; Buck to Willard, Sep. 3, Nov. 5, Dec. 18 and 20 1928, Buck Papers, copies in Willard Papers.

13. For useful introductions to the careers of Turner, Paxson, Bolton, and Webb, see the following essays in Etulain, *Writing Western History*: William Cronon, "Turner's First Stand: The Significance of Significance in American History," 73–101; Michael C. Steiner, "Frederick Jackson Turner and Western Regionalism," 103–35; Etulain, "After Turner," 137–65; Elliott West, "Walter Prescott Webb and the Search for the West," 167–91; and Donald E. Worcester, "Herbert Eugene Bolton: The Making of a Western Historian," 193–213.

14. Albert L. Hurtado, *Herbert Eugene Bolton: Historian of the American Borderlands* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2012).

15. LeRoy Hafen to Willard, Nov. 30, 1928, Willard Papers. See also Willard to Buck, Dec. 16, 1928, Buck and Willard Papers.

16. Willard to Bolton, Oct. 29 and Dec. 4, 1928; Bolton to Willard, Nov. 2 and Dec. 11, 1928, Herbert Eugene Bolton Papers, Bancroft Library, Univ. of California, Berkeley. Copies available in Willard Papers.

17. Eugene Barker to Willard, Dec. 19, 1928, Willard Papers.

18. W. P. Webb to Willard, undated, Willard Papers.

19. Webb to Willard, Jun. 27, 1929, Willard Papers.

20. The following discussions of western historiography and cultural history in the 1920s draw on Richard W. Etulain, *Re-imagining the Modern American West: A Century of Fiction, History, and Art* (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1996).

21. See Cronon, "Turner's First Stand," and Steiner, "Frederick Jackson Turner and Western Regionalism," 73–135.

22. Etulain, "After Turner," 137–65; Frederic Logan Paxson, "A Generation of the Frontier Hypothesis: 1893–1932," *Pacific Historical Review* 2:1 (Mar. 1933): 51.

23. Frederic L. Paxson, "Finance and the Frontier," in Willard and Goodykoontz, *Trans-Mississippi West*, 259, 266.

24. Colin B. Goodykoontz, "Protestant Home Missions and Education in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1835–1860," in Willard and Goodykoontz, *Trans-Mississippi West*, 65. The Turner quote appears in his classic essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1893* (Washington, DC: GPO and American Historical Association, 1894), 224–25.

25. John Parish, "By Sea to California," in Willard and Goodykoontz, *Trans-Mississippi West*, 137, 138.

26. For a discussion of the upsurge of western literary history in the 1920s, see Richard W. Etulain, "The American Literary West and Its Interpreters: The Rise of a New Historiography," *Pacific Historical Review* 45:3 (Aug. 1976): 311–48. In addition to the writers mentioned, James Willard also contacted cultural historian Vernon Louis Parrington and novelist Ole Rølvaag about participating; neither was free to attend.

27. Percy H. Boynton, "The Conquest of the Pioneer," in Willard and Goodykoontz, *Trans-Mississippi West*, 163, 168.

28. Boynton, "The Conquest of the Pioneer," 174.

29. Walter S. Campbell, "The Plains Indians in Literature—and in Life," in Willard and Goodykoontz, *Trans-Mississippi West*, 194.

30. Lucy Lockwood Hazard, "The American Picaresque: A By-Product of the Frontier," in Willard and Goodykoontz, *Trans-Mississippi West*, 211.

31. Eugene C. Barker, "On the Historiography of American Territorial Expansion," in Willard and Goodykoontz, *Trans-Mississippi West*, 226.

32. Carl Saur, "Historical Geography and the Western Frontier," in Willard and Goodykoontz, *Trans-Mississippi West*, 277.

33. A recent exception to this general rule is Brenden W. Rensink, ed., *The North American West in the Twenty-First Century* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2022).

34. Willard to Bolton, Dec. 21, 1929, Willard Papers; Buck to Willard, Sep. 3, 1929, Buck and Willard Papers; "14 Noted Scholars Attend History Conference Being Held on Colorado Campus," *Silver and Gold*, Jun. 19, 1929; "Bolton Address Feature of Successful First Conference in Trans-Mississippi History," *Silver and Gold*, Jun. 27, 1929; George Norlin to Willard, undated; Norlin to Willard, Jul. 2, 1929, Willard Papers.

35. The most thorough examination of western historiography from Turner to 1990 is Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West: Historical Interpretations 1890–1990* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1991). The discussion here also draws on Richard W. Etulain, "Transitions in Western Historiography" and "Research Opportunities in Western History" in *The American West and Its Interpreters: Essays in Literary History and Historiography* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2023).

36. Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1950).

37. Earl Pomeroy, "Toward a Reorientation of Western History: Continuity and Environment," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 41:4 (Mar. 1955): 579–600, quote on 581; Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965).

38. Key works in the New Western History are Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1987); Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1991); and Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986). A helpful collection of examples of the New Western History and comments on it appear in Patricia Nelson Limerick et al., *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1991). The most recent comment on the New Western History is Nathalie Massip, "When Western History Tried to Reinvent Itself: Revisionism, Controversy, and the Reception of the New Western History," *Western Historical Quarterly* 52:1 (Spring 2021): 59–85.

39. Elliott West introduced his "Greater Reconstruction" thesis in "Reconstructing Race," *Western Historical Quarterly* 34:1 (Spring 2002): 7–26. He went on to show how the thesis could be employed in his later book, *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), esp. xvi–xix, 318–19; and in his new volume, *Continental Reckoning: The American West in the Age of Expansion* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2023).

40. The 1920s and most of the 1930s beg for a thorough, probing examination of how frontier and regional interpretations of the American West competed for prominence and—possibly—dominance during those years.