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Cultural Wilderness: How the Historical Evolution of American Wilderness Values Influence Cultural Resource Management within Wilderness Areas in National Parks

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Cultural Wilderness: How the Historical Evolution of American Wilderness Values Influence Cultural Resource Management within Wilderness Areas in National Parks

Abstract

This thesis is divided into five chapters that will provide a conceptual framework for understanding the evolving concept of wilderness in the United States, and the ways in which that concept has advanced or impaired preservation policy within designated Wilderness areas. The perceived conflict between wilderness and culture has changed over time and created disconnect between cultural and natural resource management in National Parks, an issue that has only recently come into view. Understanding the relationship between wilderness and culture is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of how these two resources are intrinsically linked, shaped, and defined by one another. The continuing shift in wilderness values has redefined the relationship between wilderness and culture as two components of a larger Cultural Wilderness Landscape. By regarding wilderness and culture this way, solutions can be formed to help solve the management issues at stake.

Disciplines

Historic Preservation and Conservation

Comments

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CULTURAL WILDERNESS:

HOW THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN WILDERNESS VALUES INFLUENCE CULTURAL
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WITHIN WILDERNESS AREAS IN NATIONAL PARKS

Alison Emlyn Swing

A THESIS

in

Historic Preservation

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INTRODUCTION

Wilderness is many things; it is a place, an idea, and a quality. American wilderness is a cultural construction that has continuously evolved over time alongside changing American attitudes and values. A paradox emerged from this evolution suggesting that nature and culture are inherently different and incompatible, when in reality, they are historically and perpetually intertwined.

In 1964, the United States Congress passed the Wilderness Act, which authorized the protection of land retaining primitive character and without permanent improvements or human habitation.¹ Designating and managing wilderness, whether through limited use, reconstructing, or “rewilding,” places cultural value and significance on it. As a product of twentieth century wilderness values, the Wilderness Act, in effect, established an artificial boundary between nature and culture that contributed to what historian William Cronon refers to as a “cultural myth.”² In many Wilderness areas, natural and cultural resources are important for their combined value as a cultural landscape. Their historic relationship produced a number of cultural resources located within designated Wilderness areas and their history and presence cannot be ignored. To do so, Cronon insists, would be detrimental to the understanding of the place because it suggests that wilderness is separate from human culture, when in fact, it is not. In reference to the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in northern Wisconsin, Cronon explains,

If visitors come here and believe they are experiencing pristine nature, they

¹ Public Law 88-577, The Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136 78 Stat. 890) September 3, 1964.

² William Cronon, “The Riddle of the Apostle Islands” *Orion* 22, no. 3 (2003), 39.

will completely misunderstand not just the complex human history that has created the Apostle Islands of today; they will also fail to understand how much the natural ecosystems they encounter here have been shaped by that human history. In a very deep sense, what they will experience is not the natural and human reality of these islands, but a cultural myth that obscures much of what they most need to understand about a wilderness that has long been a place of human dwelling.³

This thesis is divided into five chapters that will provide a conceptual framework for understanding the evolving concept of wilderness in the United States, and the ways in which that concept has advanced or impaired preservation policy within designated Wilderness areas. The perceived conflict between wilderness and culture has changed over time and created disconnect between cultural and natural resource management in National Parks, an issue that has only recently come into view. Understanding the relationship between wilderness and culture is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of how these two resources are intrinsically linked, shaped, and defined by one another. The continuing shift in wilderness values has redefined the relationship between wilderness and culture as two components of a larger Cultural Wilderness Landscape. By regarding wilderness and culture this way, solutions can be formed to help solve the management issues at stake.

This thesis refers to wilderness in two forms. The objective term, “wilderness,” refers to wilderness ideology as it has been conceptualized by society. This generally indicates a physical place in its natural state, whereas “Wilderness,” refers to the officially designated areas of federal land enacted by the Wilderness Act. Ultimately, the difference is the formalization and canonization of Wilderness areas as protected landscapes.

Chapter One is a literature review that will provide a historical account of the evolution of wilderness values using American environmental history as a framework. Four

³ Ibid., 38-39.

broad evolutionary themes are proposed to interpret how Americans' view of wilderness has changed. These shifting views, in turn, will demonstrate how this evolution has produced current attitudes and policies for cultural resource management in Wilderness areas.

Chapter Two will explain how cultural landscape studies have emerged as a new tool for understanding land and the historic relationship between humans and the environment. While progress has been made with the implementation of cultural landscape methods, and the understanding that both natural and man-made resources contribute to cultural landscapes within National Parks, there is still a divide between Wilderness management and cultural resource management. This is especially true for those parks established primarily for their natural resources. Parallel policies and objectives exist on either side that prevents the establishment of a shared leadership strategy that incorporates an interdisciplinary approach beneficial to both. The second part of this chapter will examine how current legislation has affected policy and added to the management divide. The Wilderness Act and the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 are products of the specific values and objectives of the time in which they were created. A 2005 lawsuit at Olympic National Park exemplifies the tension that has evolved with the presence of multiple value systems and stakeholders, a lack of collaborative planning between cultural and Wilderness management, and because of this tension, the failure of the National Park Service to protect historic resources in Wilderness areas.

Chapter Three introduces Yosemite National Park in California as symbolic product of and generator for the development of American wilderness values. What is now Yosemite emerged as a key product of the development of nineteenth century wilderness

theory as one of the first areas of land set aside and recognized as a place deserving protection and admiration for its scenic and natural qualities. Yet Yosemite also possesses some of the most iconic and unique historic resources in the park system, stemming from the heyday of park and recreational planning and development of the twentieth century. Yosemite represents one-of-a-kind beauty, and was a pioneer for the National Park idea and the epitome of a national culture.⁴ Its resources exemplify the management issues that the National Park Service currently faces in regard to the Wilderness Act, over how to preserve historically significant resources in the Park's wilderness areas: as a cultural landscape that acknowledges the rich history and culture of the Park, or by a more doctrinaire approach.

Currently at the crux of these issues at Yosemite is the Half Dome Cables and Trail corridor. Chapter Four will examine Half Dome as a case study which explores the management conflict arising when a significant and iconic cultural resource exists in an equally compelling wilderness setting. By understanding and reflecting on how wilderness values have changed, and what attitudes and policies have developed as a result, the National Park Service can make decisions about managing Wilderness and cultural resources in a way that does not negate the values and characteristics of either.

The National Park Service has taken steps to consolidate the divide between cultural and Wilderness management in the twenty-first century, but there is still progress to be made. Chapter Five concludes by proposing how the National Park Service can further close the gap between Wilderness and cultural resource management by integrating cultural landscape values and objectives firmly within the organization. Using history as a precedent, managers must evaluate both the best and the worst ideas that have emerged from American

⁴ John F. Sears, *Sacred Places* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 130-134.

environmental history to formulate the best way to proceed.

The creation of cultural landscape terminology acknowledges the contribution and relationship of both natural and man-made resources in the National Parks. Currently, landscape methodology omits Wilderness areas as a separate type of cultural landscape. New terminology that includes Wilderness areas will accommodate the emerging values that have evolved to produce Wilderness as a historic landscape type and will help account for the multiple resources that are included within the area, including historic resources. Additional guidelines that focus on evaluating Wilderness as a new type of cultural landscapes must be created. Redirecting how cultural resources in Wilderness areas are perceived, as components of a larger Cultural Wilderness Landscape, is an integral step to embrace cultural resources as an inherent quality of wilderness.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis incorporates secondary source material, significant legislation, court cases, and governmental documents and publications into a larger conceptual framework. This framework includes the National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, and American environmental history to explain the historical development of wilderness as a cultural construction, and how this development has evolved to shape current wilderness values and management policies at the National Park Service. This framework was then used to suggest how to incorporate newly emerging attitudes and views about wilderness into future management strategies through the development of new terminology and guidelines at an organizational level.

Field documentation of the Half Dome Cables and Trail corridor was conducted in the summer of 2010 in assistance with Yosemite National Park's History Architecture, and Landscapes branch. This documentation, combined with visitor use studies of Half Dome that were being conducted simultaneously were used to formulate this thesis' case study.

CHAPTER 1
WILDERNESS IN AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY: AN OVERVIEW

Wilderness, like culture, is in a process of continual change. This literature review will provide a conceptual framework for understanding the historical development behind Wilderness and cultural resource management by discussing the overlapping and competing ways that Americans have viewed and conceived wilderness over time. This understanding is necessary in order to fully consider the reciprocal relationship between the two. The chapter highlights four themes of American environmental history and how they have influenced currently behavior. Current management practices are the result of over two hundred years of human interaction with the environment. Because history is a good indicator of present and future action, understanding the contradictions that exist in wilderness values from a historical perspective provides insight into the best long-term management strategies. This framework will also support subsequent discussion of this thesis' main case study, Yosemite National Park and the Half Dome Cables and Trail corridor, and how history and theory can be used to determine the best practices for managing cultural resources within designated Wilderness areas.

American perceptions of wilderness can be interpreted through a series of themes that have continuously changed over time. Wilderness advocate, forester, and founder of the Wilderness Society, Aldo Leopold wrote, "it is only the scholar who appreciates that all history consists of successive excursions from a single starting-point, to which man returns again and again to organize yet another search for a durable scale of values."⁵ While

⁵ Aldo Leopold, *Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York, 1949), 200-201, quoted in Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 199.

Leopold was referring to wilderness in its initial, raw state, wilderness can also be seen as the medium through which we discover human history because culture can be measured by the degree to which humans have altered the environment.⁶ Therefore, identifying how past attitudes have influenced the present is important for understanding the subsequent set of values that Americans attribute to wilderness.

Wilderness as an ideology and as a formal Park Service designation is a social construction. Both forms of wilderness were created as an ideal condition that is unknowable, unattainable, and is antithetical to civilization and culture.⁷ Kenneth R. Olwig, an American professor of landscape planning in Sweden who focuses on the changing conceptions of landscape, explains, “nature has a double meaning and represents at one and the same time both a physical realm and the realm of cultural ideals and norms—all of which we lump together as the ‘natural.’”⁸ Nature is abstract; it signifies what is natural, yet offers no explanation to quantify these values. “[People] must realize,” Olwig concludes, “that the ‘natural’ values they find in their environment are given not by the physical nature but by society.”⁹

The varying views of wilderness that have evolved in American environmental history have been organized into four comprehensive themes which have been chosen to help explain how wilderness as a place, an idea, and a quality has evolved over time. These themes are: Conquest, Romanticism, Nationalism, and Protection. It must be noted that

6 Nash, 257.

7 Ibid, xi-xiv; 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: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 81.

8 Kenneth R. Olwig, “Reinventing Common Nature: Yosemite and Mount Rushmore—A Meandering Tale of a Double Nature,” in *Uncommon Ground*, 380.

9 Ibid.

these themes are layered, overlapping, and complex. They overlap both chronologically and contextually, and are at times parallel, while at other times converging. Most importantly, they help interpret the relationship between nature and culture, to reveal how both can be managed together when wilderness is accepted as a product of culture.

The first wilderness theme is Conquest. When European-Americans first colonized and settled in America, from a European perspective, anything that was not under their control was seen as wild. Historian Roderick Nash, in his groundbreaking book on the history of the wilderness idea, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, asserted that the concept of wilderness emerged alongside the establishment of agriculture and settlement. Agriculture and settlement represented civilization, whereas wilderness represented the opposite of civilization. Prior to this, wilderness had no meaning; land was merely a habitat in which people existed.¹⁰ When white Americans began to control and manage the land for the purpose of supporting human existence, they simultaneously announced their superiority over nature and, most importantly, defined wilderness.

This construct ignored the long-standing human presence on the American landscape. While Native-Americans viewed land differently than Europeans, they still used it, altered it, and essentially conquered it as they saw fit. The point at which humans began to control and manage the land in North America long predated European settlement. It is only with the European presence that land was defined and seen as wilderness. This point is crucial because Native-Americans' patterns of use have influenced later European-American developments. There are significant remnants of pre-history in addition to later examples

¹⁰ Nash, xi-xiv, 24-32.

of early American history in Wilderness areas.¹¹ Wilderness areas in Yosemite National Park, for example, contain a large number of Native-American artifacts which show these groups' long-standing existence and effect on the landscape.¹² According to cultural historian Raymond Williams, "The idea of nature contains, though often unnoticed, an extra-ordinary amount of human history."¹³ Early white Americans created wilderness when they defined it, and in doing so created a culturally constructed ideology, a physical place, and added a new layer to the complex and intertwined history between nature and humans.¹⁴

European-Americans united nature and culture in Western thought when they defined wilderness and established their dominance through the use and management of it. The conquest of nature and the civilization of wilderness became the goal of pioneers, frontiersmen, and later, inadvertently, of Wilderness managers and everyday Americans. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, conquest was driven by the fear of the unknown; wilderness was seen as dangerous and as a threat to survival, and therefore, needed to be subdued.¹⁵

The conquest theme in American wilderness history has been ongoing, but has

11 Alton Chase, *Playing God in Yellowstone: The Destruction of America's First National Park* (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), 92-115; Cronon, "Trouble with Wilderness," 79-80; Carolyn Merchant, ed., "Chief Luther Standing Bear Gives an Indian View of Wilderness, Recorded in 1933," in *Major Problems in American Environmental History* (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath & Company, 1993), 395.

12 Jim Snyder, "Summary Report on 1995 Season," *Wilderness Historic Resource Survey* (unpublished manuscript, 1995). Copy provided by History, Architecture, and Landscapes Branch, Resources Management and Science Division, Yosemite National Park, El Portal, CA.

13 Raymond Williams, "Ideas of Nature" in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Veso, 1980), 67.

14 There are many other historical moments which wilderness was defined. While early settlers were influenced by Old World notions of wilderness, and later, romanticism evolved from European ideas pertaining to art and nature, for the purpose of this study I am only focusing on when wilderness was defined in American. For discussions on early metaphors for wilderness that influenced early American perspectives including Anglo-Saxon literature, notions of good versus evil, and biblical references to wilderness as the antithesis of the Garden of Eden (Genesis) and as a place where man acquires his freedom and solidifies his faith (Exodus), see Nash.

15 Nash, xi-xiv, 24.

varied in degree in its effect on the physical environment. After pioneers no longer needed to battle wilderness for day-to-day survival, human superiority was bolstered by using nature to serve the needs of human civilization, both economically and for personal fulfillment. Pioneers recognized wilderness as a potentially valuable resource for human consumption.

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the economic use of wilderness continued, and eventually helped drive the conservation movement that contributed to modern environmental history and controversy. Nash explains, “Wherever they encountered wild country they viewed it through utilitarian spectacles: trees became lumber, prairies farms, and canyons the sites of hydroelectric dams.”¹⁶ A well-known controversy surrounding the exploitation of natural resources was the creation of the O’Shaughnessy Dam in the Hetch Hetchy Valley of Yosemite National Park in 1913. Many historians believe this was the catalyst for the modern-day wilderness preservation movement on a national scale.¹⁷

While wilderness was being used as an extractive resource, the creation of the Yosemite Grant in 1864 and Yellowstone National Park in 1872, conceptualized the National Park idea, and subsequently defined these areas as places that should be managed for the additional values attributed to them. Doing so led to the alteration of the physical and ecological landscape of the parks in the name of natural resource management and protection, but also placed white American cultural values firmly into the natural world.

Despite their best intentions, managers unintentionally demonstrated a subconscious desire

¹⁶ Ibid., 31.

¹⁷ The effects of the Hetch Hetchy Valley controversy on wilderness preservation will be discussed further. For additional information on the controversies surrounding the economic use of natural resources see Nash, 161-181, 200-237; Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 38-64; and Hans Huth, *Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 164-212.

control the environment.¹⁸

Another motive for conquering wilderness was for personal achievement. What Nash referred to as “wilderness therapy”¹⁹ was the human attempt to master wilderness for personal, spiritual, and emotional gain and satisfaction—arguably a benign purpose compared to resource extraction and utilitarian uses of wilderness, yet merely another form of consumption. In the nineteenth century, wilderness was valued for its spiritual and emotional qualities as idealized in art and literature. This can be seen especially at Yosemite where its initial protection through the Yosemite Grant was not for environmental reasons, but rather for its scenic beauty and natural wonders.²⁰ By the end of the nineteenth century, Yosemite had already been commodified.²¹

In the nineteenth century, outdoor recreation was popularized, due in a large part to advances in transportation.²² Hans Huth also suggested that outdoor recreation rose in

18 Natural resource management will be discussed more fully, but for an extensive account of how the National Park Service has fundamentally and irreversibly altered the landscape and history of the National Parks, see Alton Chase, *Playing God in Yellowstone*.

19 Nash, 266. Nash also discusses the popularization of outdoor programs such as Outward Bound, the Sierra Club, and the use of the outdoors as sanitariums to promote health and wellbeing.

20 Runte, 29; Sears, 130. Runte suggests that land considered to be economically worthless from an extractive resource standpoint were made into National Parks. Yosemite and Yellowstone were seen as economically unviable landscapes. Reversely, if Congress saw them as profitable, he suggested that they would not have been set aside, 48-64. For information on the aim of the creation of National Parks, see Huth, 148-164; Nash, 67-95; and Cronon, “Trouble with Wilderness,” 70-78. For information on the aesthetic, spiritual, and emotional qualities of nature, see Thomas Cole, “Essay on American Scenery,” *American Monthly Magazine* 1 (1836); Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods* (New York: Dover Publications, 1995); and Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (1836), facsimile of the first edition, with an introduction by Jaroslav Pelikan (Boston: Beacon, 1985).

21 Information on the early tourist development of the Yosemite Valley will be discussed in Chapter 2.

22 Huth, 71-86. Before 1820, horseback was the primary mode of transportation. Excursions into what were then popular destinations in the Adirondacks and Catskills was an arduous journey. Advances in transportation are widely denoted as the catalyst for the growth in outdoor recreation and wilderness appreciation. In 1820s, canals allowed for a greater ease of transportation followed by railroads beginning in 1825. In the twentieth century, automobiles became the primary mode for transportation and the single most significant factor in the popularization of the outdoors to the general American public. For information on automobiles and their effect, see Chase; Cronon, “Trouble with Wilderness;” Huth; Nash; Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle:

popularity when affluent people saw it as beneficial to their physical, emotional, and spiritual health and wellbeing.²³ Today, through the achievement of personal victories, outdoor recreation is a popular way contemporary Americans conquer wilderness. A prime example of this is the ascent of Half Dome and El Capitan, or extensive backpacking excursions in the Yosemite backcountry.²⁴ As a result, new strategies in wilderness management have emerged to offset the potentially devastating effects of overuse, most recently through education and limiting access. Thus, contemporary attempts to conquer wilderness, and strategies applied to mitigate the effects, can be seen as an extension of the past.

A second major theme of wilderness is Romanticism. Beginning in the 1780s, a new appreciation for wilderness emerged in generations of Americans who were separated from the “wilderness condition” of their forefathers. Because they were not faced with day-to-day survival, subsequent generations were able to gain a greater appreciation for wilderness, which continues today.²⁵ By the late-eighteenth century, cities were larger, more populated, and frontier life was becoming increasingly rare as cities sprawled outward. Wilderness became a novelty for city dwellers compared to their predecessors.²⁶ As will be discussed, the scarcity of wilderness also played a large role in the emergence of the protection movements and the subsequent creation of designated Wilderness areas as a means to

University of Washington Press, 2002).

23 Huth 55-56. Before 1830, “recreation” and “sport” meant gambling and other vices rather than the outdoor activities, a significant indicator in the evolution of wilderness thought in terms of outdoor recreation.

24 The advancement of modern-day rock climbing in which formerly unclimbable mountains are conquered, backpacking trips in which hikers must overcome mental and physical barriers of survival, and the popular culture seen in television shows like *Survivor*, all demonstrate how Americans continue to attempt to reign over wilderness.

25 Nash, 43; Sutter, 8.

26 Nash, 57, 249; Carr, 70; Merchant, 338; Sutter, 9. I would argue that one’s proximity to wilderness, or nature in general, is directly proportional to the extent that it is idealized and valued as an asset. For city dwellers and urbanites who are separated from nature, it is unknown and incomprehensible, and therefore, more desirable than to those experience it on a day-to-day basis where it becomes commonplace.

preserve resources valued as increasing rare.

The growing notion that wilderness was something beyond just the physical manifestation of wild, undeveloped land became more ever-present in the minds of the city elite who had more time for leisure and who were influenced by English depictions of nature, the picturesque, and the sublime as understood through gardens, art, literature, and poetry. Some of this thinking was by Transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.²⁷

Nineteenth century thinkers such as Emerson and Thoreau postulated that wilderness was the medium for understanding and achieving spiritual truths. Transcendentalism proposed that wilderness was really a metaphor for the unused potential of the human mind. Compared to cities, wilderness was a more conducive atmosphere for achieving such wisdom. Yet these thinkers did not completely reject the role of the city. Wilderness that emerged from the wilderness condition needed to be balanced by “the delicacy, sensitivity, and ‘intellectual and moral growth’ characteristic of civilization.”²⁸

Thoreau believed that people should straddle the line between wilderness and civilization by alternating between the two rather than making civilization wilder, wilderness more refined, or by creating a separate, middle condition.²⁹ Existing cultural resources in

²⁷ For a history of the various influences for Thoreau’s writings and understanding of nature, see W. Barksdale Maynard, *Walden Pond: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Another theoretical notion of Romanticism comes from nineteenth century landscape designer and horticulturist, Andrew Downing. For information on Downing’s influences, see Adam W. Sweeting, *Reading Houses and Building Books: Andrew Jackson Downing and the Architecture of Popular Antebellum Literature, 1835-1855* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1996); and Linda Flint McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 18-35. Downing believed that a domesticated and commodified version of the Romantic, what he saw as the Picturesque, was the underlying foundation for American culture. He believed that the beautification of one’s home in a way that took into account the healing power of nature “produced morally beautiful and spiritually clean people,” Sweeting, 3-4.

²⁸ Nash, 85-92. See also Sweeting; and Marx.

²⁹ Nash, 92-95; Maynard, 77-86.

designated Wilderness areas follow this principle through their association with two separate conditions, cultural and natural. Yet while in the same context, they influence different emotional and spiritual needs. Environmental historians including Cronon promulgated the balance of wilderness and civilization, understanding that “wildness and refinement were not fatal extremes but equally beneficent influences Americans would do well to blend.”³⁰ In the past several decades, this idea has manifested itself in American cultural landscape studies.

Literary scholar, Lawrence Buell, suggests that Romanticism played a role in re-mystifying nature in America. Emerging American literature, he claims, constructed ideologies of Old World desires, nationalism, and exceptionalism into a new, purely American wilderness that has “stressed the historic importance of pastoral, frontier, and wilderness themes to the American imagination.” American literature highlights rusticity and wilderness, which skews reality to make nature seem more rural than it really is.³¹ The belief that wilderness is less affected by humans than is in reality, is a significant cultural basis that contributed to the twentieth century designation of Wilderness areas as pristine and untrammled. This idea also contributed to the cultural myth Cronon suggests exists in Wilderness areas.

Wilderness is historically important for its visual qualities that humans find significant.³² The historical value placed on natural settings, as exemplified at Yosemite

30 Even Thoreau, who was well-known for being somewhat of a hermit, built his house at Walden Pond at the edge of town in order to see its “foibles” clearly, while allowing himself to retreat to the woods in order to better understand civilization, Maynard, 85-86; Nash, 95; Cronon, “The Riddle of the Apostle Islands,” 36-42; Matthew Lockhart. “The Trouble with Wilderness’ Education in the National Park Service: The Case of the Lost Cattle Mounts of Congaree.” *Public Historian* 28 (2006): 11-30.

31 Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 6-31.

32 Bonnie Stepenoff, “Wild Lands and Wonders: Preserving Nature and Culture in National Parks” in *Cultural Landscapes: Balancing Nature and Heritage in Preservation Practice*, ed. Richard Longstreth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 91.

National Park, and the subsequent management practices enacted to capture these qualities, were the products of these places' perceived value as physical, spiritual, and emotional qualities that Romanticism embraced. Wilderness today is a product of past values expressed through nineteenth century Romanticism. Nash explains that, "the concept of wilderness as a church, as a place to find and worship God, helped launch the intellectual revolution that led to wilderness appreciation."³³

The third theme is Nationalism. Once Americans ceased to view wilderness as an inherent threat, the romantic appreciation of wilderness as spiritually valuable initiated the nationalistic response that claimed wilderness as a definitive symbol of American nationalism, pride, and superiority. By the middle of the nineteenth century, there was an increasing eagerness to legitimize a fledgling nation that lacked Europe's architectural achievements and long history. Natural areas such as Yosemite Valley, whose granite cliffs and waterfalls were considered to be distinctively American and equal, if not better, than any cathedrals in Europe, supported such nationalistic claims.³⁴

The appreciation of wilderness through the lens of nationalism led to wilderness preservation in the nineteenth century, but for its scenic wonders and monumental qualities rather than for its ecological value. Introductory acts to protect America's assets such as the 1864 Yosemite Grant, and, later the creation of National Parks, were evidence of America's engagement to protecting its cultural identity in perpetuity.³⁵ These efforts were the first acts of land preservation to protect lands considered valuable and defining American assets for inherent qualities beyond their physical capacity as extractive resources. The cultural

³³ Nash, 268.

³⁴ These views are indicative of American nationalism and exceptionalism as suggested by Buell, 5-6; Nash, 67; Runte, 29; and Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1995), 3-19.

³⁵ Runte, 29-34.

values assigned to these areas supported the notion that wilderness could be a natural, unaltered setting that merely had special meaning to humans.³⁶ The idea that wilderness had additional value and significance beyond its physical capacity as an extractive resource, was a precursor to the formulation of cultural landscapes ideology. It also foreshadowed future protection movements the end of the nineteenth century.

The fourth theme of wilderness, and the most multidimensional, is Protection. Wilderness protection initially emerged as the conservation movement, which focused on the sustained use of resources for future use. It branched into the preservation, wilderness, and environmental movements throughout the twentieth century. The multitude of protection movements that emerged suggests the complex and overlapping nature of American environmental history.³⁷ Many factors contributed to their development. While previous generations eventually found spiritual and cultural value in wilderness, it was not until wilderness was recognized as scarce that efforts to protect it began in earnest.³⁸ While wilderness preservation was not the goal of the Yosemite Act in 1864 or the creation of National Parks, their establishment suggests a shift in values concerning wilderness and were precedent for future action.³⁹

The closure of the frontier in the 1890s has long been considered a catalytic event for wilderness preservation. By setting aside land and restricting private claims and development, Wilderness emerged as a definitive American national quality in the mid-

36 Richard Longstreth, ed., "Introduction: The Challenges of Cultural Landscape for Preservation, in *Cultural Landscapes: Balancing Nature and Heritage in Preservation Practice*, 1.

37 The preservation movement refers specifically to land preservation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as opposed to historic preservation and the preservation of buildings. Historic preservation will be a relevant tool for cultural landscape preservation as the idea of cultural landscapes develops at the end of the twentieth century.

38 Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 70; Nash, 249.

39 Nash, 108; Runte, 29.

nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Many stakeholders including mining and logging companies, railroads, and wilderness naturalists advocated the protection of wilderness for varying reasons. Forest preserves were created under U.S. Forest Service management and represented wilderness' value from a utilitarian standpoint. This appropriation of land is reminiscent of the early days of conquest and the view that wilderness was a resource for human consumption.⁴¹ Furthermore, railroads exploited the increasing popularization of outdoor recreation in the nineteenth century by supporting wilderness protection for potential tourist revenue.⁴²

Today, management policies in designated Wilderness areas in National Parks and Forests still reflect the early conservation movement's values. The National Park Service Organic Act provides provisions for the cutting of timber and the destruction of wildlife as the Secretary of the Interior sees fit. Additionally, the Wilderness Act grants mining and mineral rights, the use of water resources, and the grazing of livestock in Forest Service Wilderness if it is deemed beneficial to the American public.⁴³ These are salient indicators of the persisting values for resource conservation.

The landscape preservation movement branched off from the conservation movement in the early twentieth century, led by well-known individuals such as John Muir. Muir saw the scenic and ethical value of wilderness as something worthy of protection in its own right, regardless of commercial value.⁴⁴ The Hetchy Hetchy controversy, as mentioned previously, made wilderness preservation a national movement and commenced the divide

40 Nash, 145.

41 Rather than from a utilitarian standpoint, Paul Sutter argues that wilderness in the twentieth century, particularly after World War II, was defined through American consumption through leisure and experiences as a part of American consumerism. See Sutter.

42 Nash, 111, 119; Carr, 60-70.

43 National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 through 4); The Wilderness Act.

44 Nash, 145-149. For information about Muir's contribution to wilderness preservation, see Muir, *John Muir: Nature Writings*, ed. William Cronon (New York: Library of America, 1997); Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

between conservationists and preservationists that has framed conservation history ever since.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the movement's failure to preserve the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite rallied future advocacy for the prevention of the Echo Park Dam in Dinosaur National Monument and the damming of sections of the Grand Canyon.⁴⁶ The impact of the failure to preserve the Hetch Hetchy Valley on the future of National Parks cannot be understated.

The wilderness movement coincided with the emerging popularity of wilderness in popular culture and eventually led to the creation of the Wilderness Act in 1964. This is the era at which contemporary definitions of wilderness also emerged. Historian Paul Sutter argues in his book, *Driven Wild*, that the conceptualization of modern wilderness is a response to various developments in the twentieth century rather than a product of it. This supports the idea that historical attitudes have affected current perceptions of wilderness. Developments in wilderness protection evolved throughout the twentieth century as new threats emerged, specifically with the proliferation of automobiles. Increased leisure time in the Interwar Period and the rise of automobiles in American culture accelerated new consumer trends that were manifested in the consumption of wilderness through outdoor recreation. These trends fundamentally established wilderness as it is seen today. Ultimately, Sutter argues, the need to scale back the negative effects of automobiles was the key motivation behind the wilderness movement and the creation of the Wilderness Act.⁴⁷ (Fig. 1.1)

⁴⁵ Sutter, 58.

⁴⁶ For a more detailed history of the Hetch Hetchy controversy see Huth, 183-212; Alfred A. Knopf, "The National Park Idea" in *This is Dinosaur: Echo Park and Its Magic Rivers* 2nd ed, ed. Wallace Earle Stegner (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1955); and Nash, 161-237.

⁴⁷ Sutter, 19-53.



Fig. 1.1 Cars lined up below Arch Rock at Yosemite National Park, CA, n.d. Source: Yosemite Park & Curry Company, Yosemite Archives, Yosemite National Park, El Portal CA.

In the twentieth century, interest in wilderness as a source of recreation grew significantly. In addition to recreational activities such as hiking and camping, outdoor recreation included the use of wilderness for the spiritual and inspirational value it held, an idea reminiscent of romanticism. The recreational use of wilderness expanded greatly beginning in the 1920s and 1930s at the height of National Park planning, development, and publicity. At scenic parks, such as Yosemite, roads were constructed to accommodate the increasing number of visitors and were designed to guide visitors through a choreographed movement of specific visual experiences. Landscape historian Ethan Carr, explains, “It was during this era that the ‘developed areas’ in national parks...acquired the consistent appearance, character, and level of convenience that most visitors have since come to

associate, almost unconsciously, with their experience of park scenery, wildlife, and wilderness.”⁴⁸

This era in park planning is also important because most of the historic resources in National Parks were built at this time. Now deemed significant in their own right, National Park Service buildings are associated with the heyday of National Park planning and development, and as examples of the National Park Service Rustic architectural style. The popularity of National Parks and Wilderness areas eventually led to need to manage their users to protect the very resources that draw users to visit the parks. This will be a significant consideration when looking at the management of Yosemite Wilderness and the Half Dome Cables and Trail corridor.

The environmental movement emerged concurrently with the wilderness movement after mid-century. The environmental movement arose from several concerns: the finite amount of wilderness left, and the growth of ecological science. Critiques of anthropocentrism—that humans are not central to the world—spurred arguments that other species had the right to exist regardless of human values.⁴⁹ Colin Fletcher, a writer and avid hiker in the 1970s, stated that in wilderness, “you know deep down in our fabric... that you are part of the web of life, and the web of life is part of the rock and air and water of pre-life. You know the wholeness of the universe, the great unity, [and cease to believe] the crass assumption that the world was made for man.”⁵⁰ The premise of the interconnectedness of all biotic and abiotic forms is the basis of ecology.

48 Carr, 1, 6-7, 80; Tim Davis, “A Pleasant Illusion of Unspoiled Countryside: The American Parkway and the Problematics of an Institutionalized Vernacular,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 9 (2003), 237; and Sutter.

49 Nash, 270. For additional arguments about ecology, see Carl H. Moneyhon, “Conservation as Politics” in *Major Problems in American Environmental History*, 363.

50 Fletcher, *Complete Walker* (New York, 1970) 322, 7, quoted in Nash, 256.

The growth in ecological science induced a greater appreciation in the balance between wilderness and culture as a medium for explaining human history. Nash explains,

Wild places could be valued as documents, sources of information about the human past. As a 'library,' wilderness had more than ecological importance; it preserved potential historical knowledge, providing opportunities to know first-hand how most of the people who had ever occupied the planet felt about themselves and the world.⁵¹

The environmental and wilderness movements did not necessarily claim that wilderness was superior to human culture for its intrinsic qualities, but rather that they are equal.⁵² This is important when considering the current tension between cultural resource management and Wilderness management. Often it is supposed that Wilderness resources are more important than the cultural resources that are included in Wilderness areas, but because of the interconnectedness between nature and culture, this is not the case.

Aldo Leopold called the interconnectedness between nature and culture "land ethics."⁵³ Land ethics refers to the integrated relationship between nature and culture and forms the basis for cultural landscapes as they have emerged in the past thirty years as a viable way to mitigate the disparities between cultural and Wilderness management. One of the founders of the modern Wilderness movement, Leopold contributed significantly to the understanding that nature and culture are intertwined and his views would eventually help drive the designation of millions of acres of land as Wilderness.⁵⁴ Thus, even as a founder of the Wilderness Society and a proponent of Wilderness preservation, Leopold understood the conforming relationship between humans and nature.

Finally, the last component of wilderness protection is the attempt to manage, if not

51 Nash, 260.

52 Ibid., 244.

53 Chase, 314-315; Huth 204-205.

54 Chase, 315.

reverse, the damage that has been done in the past through the various stages of conquest, romanticism, and nationalism. While tourism is benign compared to logging and damming, the growing popularity of National Parks throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, has created new managerial problems for park managers. During the 1920s, the National Park Service focused on publicizing the parks and promoting visitation. Ironically, their campaigns and wilderness advocacy were so successful that the National Parks now face the problem of being “loved to death.”⁵⁵ While everyone should be able to enjoy National Parks, whether for adventure, solitude, or inspiration, the Parks have become so crowded that not only are the physical resources negatively impacted, but so is the visitor’s wilderness experience. Nash refers to this as wilderness’ “psychological carrying capacity.” Unmanaged recreation destroys wilderness, but it also adversely affects its users because wilderness experiences are defined by individual perception. Allowing too many visitors into the parks and Wilderness areas strips the illusion of wildness from wilderness. Previously, people could hike for days without encountering another human being, but now popular trails, such as the Half Dome Cables and Trail corridor, have become so overcrowded that many parks like Yosemite have established quota systems. Quota systems are intended to manage how many people can use a trail at a time to reduce the environmental impact and increase the wilderness quality in which people visit in the first place. The quota and permit systems implemented in parks are not an ideal solution because they undermine the feeling of wildness.⁵⁶ But the system is the best one available at the moment. Some wilderness proponents believe that wilderness has vanished because it no longer represents

55 Nash, 316.

56 Ibid., 320-340.

what it used to in the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ While the granite cliffs in Yosemite, for example, have remained unchanged in a geological sense for thousands of years, the way they are experienced has vastly changed.

There is growing pressure on the National Parks to phase out visitor facilities, essentially reversing the Mission 66 era, and to stop trying to interpret every aspect of the parks.⁵⁸ Joseph Sax, a law professor at the University of Michigan, wrote in 1980,

There is no need to encourage visitation, as there was in the era of John Muir and Stephen T. Mather, by providing accommodations and a circus atmosphere. The parks can afford to eliminate such civilized forms and functions as being inappropriate for an institution specializing in natural environments.⁵⁹

Yet because parks contain both natural and cultural resources, there are other concerns that managers must consider. Parks like Yosemite have multiple value systems and stakeholders that make it impossible to completely disentangle nature from culture as it has formed throughout history. Additionally, many interventions cannot and should not be covered up or erased because they are a part of a greater cultural landscape, as will be discussed in the next section.

Americans' view of wilderness has changed with social values and trends. These four evolutionary themes in American environmental history help explain how Americans have attempted to reconcile with the artificiality of wilderness. They also provide

⁵⁷ Ibid., 319-324; Chase, 45.

⁵⁸ Nash, 321; Mission 66 is almost fifty years old and many Mission 66 era resources will be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for their association with postwar park planning and the new architectural style of the parks which adapted postwar American modernism to aesthetic requirements of National Park architecture. This will in turn add yet another layer of human intervention to the National Parks, which managers will have to tend to. Mission 66 may have actually saved many parks by improving infrastructure and by reinventing “the national park system and the National Park Service—and to some extent the national park idea—to meet the exigencies of postwar American society,” 12-13 in Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

⁵⁹ Joseph Sax, paraphrased by Nash, 329. Stephen T. Mather was the first director of the National Park Service from 1917-1929 and is credited with helping to promote the creation of the National Park Service in its early development.

valuable insight for how wilderness is currently appreciated based on its context within the cultural past. New wilderness values have enabled its protection, but have also caused problems concerning how to incorporate and protect significant cultures resources and what priority the Park Service should take when considering multiple resources types.

“Cultural landscape” has emerged as a new resource designation that has proved valuable in understanding the historic relationship between wilderness and culture.

CHAPTER 2
WILDERNESS IN PRACTICE: PHILOSOPHY MEETS POLICY

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first will discuss the relationship between cultural resources and the designated Wilderness areas in which they exist by focusing on the emergence of “cultural landscapes” as a formal designation in land management. Cultural landscapes are the product of the realization that nature and culture are not separate forces, but are historically connected cultural and ecological processes, whose significance extends beyond their value as disparate resources. Understanding past attitudes and actions, and their effect on current attitudes and actions, as developed in the first chapter, helps ensure that both types of resources are protected and appreciated in a way that highlights their intersection. In the past thirty years, the inclusion of cultural landscapes in cultural resource management has become an important segue that has helped bridge the gap between cultural resource management and Wilderness management. This segue has provided a powerful tool for reinforcing and celebrating how nature and culture exist together. But there are limits to how cultural landscapes have been implemented in Wilderness areas. These limits and their repercussions will be introduced in this chapter. Current terminology does not include Wilderness values, which prevents Wilderness areas from being fully integrated into the National Park system in a way that recognizes all of its cultural distinctions.

The second part of this chapter will examine and then reflect on how current legislation has affected policy and has added to the management divide. How the National Park Service understands, and has responded to, the ever-present tension between cultural resource management and Wilderness management is discussed through the examination

of significant legislation, including the 1964 Wilderness Act, the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. A 2005 lawsuit at Olympic National Park concerning the proposed reconstruction of two historic shelters located in the Olympic Wilderness is a prime example of the tension that exists between Wilderness and cultural resource managers. The events at Olympic National Park provide an important example of why management goals and objectives needs to be better integrated in order to prevent the loss of cultural resources while still protecting the wilderness character in which they are included.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

As the previous chapter makes clear, “wilderness” is not only a cultural construction, but also contains a significant amount of human history and interventions which have culminated in the presence of historic resources in wilderness that exist as organic components of the landscape. With the formal designation of Wilderness areas, this has caused problems between the different value systems beholden to cultural and Wilderness management. In light of the argument that wilderness values are continuously evolving, in the past thirty years, cultural landscapes have emerged as a new concept within the field of historic preservation and as a way to reconcile the complex relationship between nature and culture. The progression of cultural landscape practices can be seen at Shenandoah National Park and the Apostle Island National Lakeshore, which will be discussed in this section. Historic preservationist and architectural historian, Richard Longstreth, explains that looking at places as cultural landscapes is a method for considering, analyzing, and evaluating how “natural and man-made components of the environment and the ways in which they have

changed over time” relate to one another.⁶⁰ Acknowledging the interconnectedness between nature and culture is a concept derived from the environmental movement which looked at ecology and “land ethics” as a way to interpret and mitigate humans’ impact on the environment. Geographer Carl Sauer famously said, “The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural are the medium, the cultural landscape is the result.”⁶¹

The National Park Service defines a cultural landscape as “a geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein), associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.”⁶² The Park Service uses this definition to measure an area’s cultural significance and associated values to determine if and how to manage it. Landscapes are the interaction between people and nature. Where this interaction exists, cultural landscapes are created.⁶³ From a historic standpoint, every place is a cultural landscape because every place has been affected by history and humans in some way or another. Designated Wilderness areas are no different. Cultural landscapes emerge through a process of change over time that combines history and geography. Using cultural landscape methodology as a way to understand how the relationship between humans and the environment has changed can be a useful tool in managing cultural resources in designated Wilderness areas in a way that does not undermine the values of either resource type.

60 Longstreth, 1.

61 Carl Sauer, “The Morphology of Landscape,” in *Land and Life: A Selection from the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, ed. John Leighly (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 343.

62 “Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes: Defining Landscape Terminology,” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service) accessed March 31, 2011, http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/hli/landscape_guidelines/terminology.htm.

63 Paul Groth, “Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study” in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, eds. Paul Groth and Todd Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 1.

Designated Wilderness areas are cultural landscapes and should be considered so when determining how they should be managed. The dynamic relationship between nature and culture is integral to understanding the significance of nature and culture as a combined force. Wilderness areas, especially those that contain a high level of cultural influence, must be managed as cultural landscapes so as to not ignore the human and natural relationship that exists regardless of their designation as unaltered and wild. As discussed previously, wilderness is a cultural construction and does not actually exist in its “raw” form. Like previous values that have been imposed on the landscape over time, such as its value as an extractive resource and its quality as nationally, symbolically, and ecologically significant, the very act of designating and defining an area as Wilderness places human value on it as well.

The recent emphasis on ecosystem management, as opposed to Wilderness management or natural resource management, views ecology as a system rather than component parts. Ecology is important in managing Wilderness areas as cultural landscapes because it acknowledges the interconnectedness between humans and nature in management policies. In his essay, “Is Landscape Preservation an Oxymoron?” Robert E. Cook, director of the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University, refers to what he calls the “New Paradigm.” The “New Paradigm” replaces older concepts suggesting that change occurs in a linear pattern following human disturbance as a way to balance outside forces. Instead, it suggests the concept of a continually changing, dynamic configuration of natural elements called an ecosystem. This new “flux of nature” concept for natural resource management is significant because it includes human interventions as an integral part of the ecological process, and it supports the idea that the perception of nature is constantly evolving, and in

return, affecting new management policies. “The New Paradigm places great importance on the pervasive presence of disturbance as a continuing agent of change within the system,” he says.⁶⁴ Human disturbance is not necessarily bad, it is simply a part of the process. Cultural resources in Wilderness serve a specific purpose in the specific setting in which they are located. The New Paradigm suggests that changing or altering either the resource or the setting affects the entire process. All land management, including wilderness preservation, reconstruction, and “rewilding” efforts in Wilderness areas, are a form of interpretation and change the land’s context.

The wilderness idea is not wholly for natural resource preservation, but is means for humans to hold onto something as culturally significant which contains intangible value. Cultural resources exist in Wilderness areas and change the land forever regardless of how managers try to hide or interpret them. They are just one part of Wilderness’ “dynamic living present.”⁶⁵ Change, evolution, and all the different processes should be held onto and acknowledged. The draft *Ecosystem Management in the National Parks* document explains,

The bifurcation of the world into human and natural spheres is a false dichotomy under ecosystem management...The National Park Service should reduce the barriers to ecosystem management that result from artificially separating cultural and natural resources and strive to replace them with collaboration planning, research, and resource management efforts that reflect the real-world integration of material, human, and natural features.⁶⁶

Cultural landscape preservation offers a middle ground between natural and cultural resource management. This is becoming evident through the standardization of cultural landscape terminology in the National Park System as well as the use of Cultural Landscape Inventories (CLI) and Cultural Landscape Reports (CLR) as tools to identify, evaluate,

⁶⁴ Robert Cook, “Is Landscape Preservation an Oxymoron?” *The George Wright Forum* 13 (1), 1996, 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 5.

and document cultural landscapes. Yet current terminology is lacking in its application to Wilderness areas.

Wilderness protection in National Parks has been an evolving practice in the twentieth century as cultural landscape methods have progressed. Yellowstone National Park, as the first National Park, exemplifies the dynamic change in management policies since the end of the nineteenth century. Yellowstone is a completely different place today than it was in 1872, when it became a National Park. The evolving values that have been placed on it over time and the human interventions to fix past human interventions have fundamentally changed the landscape. Philosophy scholar, Alston Chase, in his book *Playing God in Yellowstone*, argues that nothing about Wilderness is pristine anymore. Various management policies over the history of the park have attempted to reverse prior interventions to bring back the land to its perceived original condition. But these policies are human interventions that fundamentally and irreversibly changed the landscape and history of the place. Take, for example, the repopulation and management of deer populations and predator control. In 1963, re-creation became official National Park Service policy. But Chase argues that even if a place could be re-created, it should not be, because re-creation ignores the past.⁶⁷ In cultural resource management, preservationists are taught that interventions are supposed to be apparent and make a clear distinction of change over time. Even non-action, the conscious decision to manage an area by doing nothing, is in itself a kind of intervention. An attempt to ignore humanity's impact on wilderness does it an injustice. As Chase further explains,

⁶⁷ Chase, 35. In his book, Chase questioned the ethical and effectiveness of management priorities in Yellowstone over the course of its history. He argued that management policies, in the name of environmental protection, essentially destroyed the park, because of the refusal to take into account the relationship humans had in the environment.

Wilderness was defined into existence. It did not matter that there never was a place on earth untrammelled by man...The human race has been on the earth for more than a million years. All western lands, in particular, had been trod by the early white man. Fur trappers and gold prospectors stepped on nearly every square foot of the West at one time or another.⁶⁸

There is no land in the United States, with the exception of some parts of Alaska that has been untouched by humans. The historical progression of human interaction with the landscape did not begin with European contact. Native Americans were modifying and cultivating the landscape long before the first Europeans arrived. Therefore, it is more realistic to view Wilderness areas as cultural landscapes because it does not ignore history or write man out of it. The non-existence of the pristine wilderness ideal, combined with the acceptance of human intervention as an intrinsic part of the natural ecological process, is the only way to create informed management policies that do not ignore the inherent relationship between wilderness and culture. Wilderness values can be embraced without denying the historic processes that have affected it.

Shenandoah National Park in Virginia exemplifies an area where human intervention in the landscape has been embraced and incorporated into management policies through the medium of cultural landscape methodology.⁶⁹ As an eastern park with a longer history of white American intervention, Shenandoah Wilderness is in no way the true untrammelled Wilderness as defined in the Wilderness Act, and which ceases to exist in reality. The grey

⁶⁸ Ibid., 45.

⁶⁹ For more detailed accounts about the re-making of the Shenandoah landscape as a National Park, see Darwin Lambert, *The Undying Past of Shenandoah National Park* (Boulder, Colo: Roberts Rinehart, Inc. Publishers, in cooperation with Shenandoah Natural History Association, 1989); Katrina Powell, *The Anguish of Displacement: The Politics of Literacy in the Letters of Mountain Families in Shenandoah National Park* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); Carolyn Reeder and Jack Reeder, *Shenandoah Heritage: The Story of the People before the Park* (Washington: Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, 1978); and Anne Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

area between cultural and natural resource management is managed as a cultural landscape where the impact of humans on the Wilderness' character, and values which are present, are incorporated into the landscape and acknowledged as a combination of human history and nature.

National Park Service Associate Director of Cultural Resources, Stephanie Toothman explains that categorizing land as Wilderness, National Parks, and National Historic Parks obscures the diversity of each place.⁷⁰ A National Historic Park, at first glance, indicates that the area's primary significance is historical, yet it may also contain natural significance. Conversely, a designated Wilderness area suggests its remoteness and obscurity from human intervention, yet Wilderness areas contain significant cultural resources as well. Therefore, she suggests, management strategies need to be based in identification, evaluation, and protection of all components of the landscape. Personnel should be trained on either side of the spectrum of cultural and natural resource management so there will be more collaboration between the two management goals.⁷¹

Because of the change and continuity of cultural landscapes, new interventions will become significant over time. When the Organic Act was written, it created the National Park Service to preserve wilderness and history, but the National Park Service had no history yet. Now, in addition to their role as land managers, the National Park Service has assumed a new role because their own interventions are now deemed historically significant.⁷²

The creation of the National Park Service Rustic architectural style, developed under

⁷⁰ Stephanie Toothman, "Cultural Resource Management of Natural Areas of the National Park System," in *The Public Historian* 9, no. 2, 66.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 66-69.

⁷² Bob Krumenaker, "Culture Resource Management at Shenandoah: It didn't come naturally" in *CRN* 1, 1998, 4-6.

the auspice of the National Park Service in the twentieth century, created a style uniquely American.⁷³ In addition to this nationalistic undertaking, the National Park Service Rustic style was designed to harmonize with the landscape and is significant to the understanding of the contributing, complementary, and historic nature of National Park landscapes. As cultural landscapes, the presence of architecture in Wilderness is demonstrative of the Romantic notions of balance as suggested by Andrew Downing, as well as Thoreau's vision of straddling the line between wilderness and culture.

William Cronon uses the example of the Apostle Islands in Wisconsin to exemplify the relationship between nature and culture and the problematic management issues that it presents. The Apostle Islands are an archipelago of twenty-two, small, wooded islands containing northern hardwood forest, swamp, marsh and shore. The area has been a National Lakeshore since 1973 based completely on natural resource protection but without any wilderness protection. The area has a strong presence of human history despite its remoteness. In the early nineteenth century, logging and commercial fishing industries took place in the area. It also contains the largest collection of lighthouses in the United States, as well as summer cabins, remnants of its tourist past. Cronon explains that "natural and cultural resources are equally important to any full understanding [a] place."⁷⁴ A holistic understanding of the landscape that includes past human interventions when determining how to interpret a Wilderness area prevents a "cultural myth" from occurring that suggests wilderness is untouched. Similar to a cultural landscape, Cronon suggests that places like the Apostle Islands should be managed as "historic wilderness" where "we commit ourselves

73 Davis, 228-246.

74 Cronon, "Apostle Islands," 36-38.

not to erasing human marks on the land, but rather to interpreting them so that visitors can understand just how intricate and profound this process of rewilding truly is.” Such designation would better balance natural and cultural resources.⁷⁵ Wilderness designations draw artificial boundaries around nature and culture without considering the huge grey area that exists. Cultural resources can actually have positive effects on the landscape because they offer visitors a greater and more authentic understanding of the complexities beholden to the natural world. Because “rewilding” is in itself a human intervention, “Rewilding landscapes should be interpreted as evidence neither of past human abuse nor of triumphant wild nature, but rather as evidence of the tightly intertwined processes of natural and cultural history.”⁷⁶

In 2004, eighty percent of the area was designated as the Gaylord A. Nelson Wilderness. This designation is a significant advancement in Wilderness management and is a promising indicator for the future of cultural resource management in designated Wilderness. The designation acknowledged the significant human presence on the Apostle Islands as an enhancement to and not as a competitor to the wilderness quality of the area. It provided a new solution that weighed the various values attributed to the area by managers and visitors to come up with alternative solutions that accounted for these different values. The designation was also important as a model for the future integration of cultural and wilderness values and for the integration of natural and cultural resource protection.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid., 39. “Rewilding” is a management strategy which attempts to remove traces of human intervention, which in doing so, ironically intervenes in the landscape. Rewilding, as historian Bonnie Stepenoff pointed out, is an oxymoron because the main characteristic of wilderness is its wilderness, or its freedom from intervention. See Stepenoff, in *Cultural Landscapes*, 92-93. “Historic Wilderness” also implies a static quality. Instead, designation as a Cultural Wilderness Landscape, which will be discussed in Chapter Four, implies a more changing and continuous quality that is inherent of nature.

⁷⁶ Cronon, “Apostle Islands,” 41-42.

⁷⁷ Krumenaker, “A New Wilderness Area: The Gaylord A. Nelson Wilderness in Apostle Island National Lakeshore” in *National Park Service Wilderness Report 2004-2005* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of

The management of the Apostle Islands demonstrates how it is possible to acknowledge the significance of many types of resources while not undermining the characteristics or qualities of either.

The National Park Service development and formalization of cultural landscapes as a method for managing wilderness and cultural resources is a product of the contradictions that have arisen in American environmental history over time and has become a useful mitigation strategy to come to terms with these contradictions. Yosemite has begun to appreciate and acknowledge the multiple values that coexist in the Park. This is evident in the creation of a separate History, Architecture, and Landscapes branch within the Resources Management and Science division, and through the addition of a wide variety of cultural landscapes to the Park's Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI).

Cultural landscapes as a land management concept compliments the underlying mandates of several legislative acts which are at theoretical odds with each other through their obligation to protect wilderness, and to protect cultural resources and public use. Ultimately, each piece of legislation was created as attempt to mitigate the contradictions that have resulted from American's changing notions and values of wilderness.

LEGISLATION

Legislative acts established in the twentieth century, including the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, the Wilderness Act of 1964, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, are each the result of the attempt to protect a certain set of values that existed at the time of their passage. As discussed in previous sections, these values

the Interior, National Park Service, 2005), 4-8.

grew from the historical evolution of Americans' attitudes and views of wilderness. Yet the individual mandates of each Act are potentially at odds with one another, and specifically with the Wilderness Act. Understanding past contentions that have arisen between the inherent discrepancies between the Wilderness Act and other resource protection legislation is necessary to find solutions to the tension between cultural and wilderness management. A recent lawsuit at Olympic National Park, which resulted in the failure to preserve two historic shelters, demonstrates the incongruities between the legislation's mandates and the need to develop solutions that can be applied to other parks, such as Yosemite, in order to prevent similar losses from occurring in the future.

The passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964 was a significant victory for wilderness advocates who had been fighting for such legislation since Howard Zahniser first drafted it in 1956.⁷⁸ Its passing eight years later legally sanctioned the preservation and protection of large tracts of federal land for enjoyment in its natural condition. For many early supporters of the Wilderness Act, it was a means to prevent the creation of roads in natural areas; roads were viewed by many wilderness advocates as the fundamental indicator of human presence and as the key factor in the degradation of the wilderness condition.⁷⁹ The Wilderness Act defined wilderness as:

An area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain...without permanent improvements or human habitation...which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation...and may also contain ecological,

⁷⁸ Mark W.T. Harvey, *Wilderness Forever: Howard Zahniser and the Path to the Wilderness Act* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 3.

⁷⁹ Sutter, 19-53; Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 219-220. Carr asserted that the Wilderness idea started from the increasing threat to wilderness values by the growing automobile population in parks. Ironically, the popularization of wilderness is owed to the popularization of automobiles in the first place.

geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value.⁸⁰

In 1921, Aldo Leopold defined wilderness as “a continuous stretch of country preserved in its natural state, open to lawful hunting and fishing, big enough to absorb a two weeks’ pack trip, and kept devoid of roads, artificial trails, cottages, or other works of man.”⁸¹ While Leopold also understood the underlying relationship between wilderness and culture, this description foreshadowed the creation and definition of wilderness in the Wilderness Act.

Yet despite the best intentions of policy makers and supporters, the Wilderness Act has been interpreted by the National Park Service in different ways depending on the goals, requirements, and specific characteristics of each Wilderness area. Wilderness areas are designated for their individual qualities and values. Therefore, it is difficult to manage them under one specific guideline that does not account for the uniqueness of each. The disconnect between cultural and natural resource management when it comes to managing Wilderness areas has led to the selective interpretation of the Wilderness Act to meet specific goals which has resulted in the loss of cultural resources in Wilderness areas.

As the enacting legislation for the National Park Service as the managing agency for the National Park system, the Organic Act of 1916 states:

The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations...*which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.*⁸²

This mission clause established two important precedents that demonstrate very forward thinking for cultural landscapes and historic preservation. First is the dualistic mission

80 The Wilderness Act, Section 2(c).

81 Nash, 186.

82 Organic Act, Section 1 (emphasis added).

of the National Park Service as managers of both natural and cultural resources. The other, is its intentional ambiguity. The Act does not explicitly state how the National Park Service should manage the parks. Rather, individual parks are left to determine the best management policies based on its specific requirements. This acknowledged, from the beginning, the diverse array of the nation's resources. Each National Park and cultural landscape is different, and there is not one management policy that is suitable for all of them. Therefore, collaboration on behalf of Park managers is necessary to find solutions which comply with the requirements of both the Organic Act and the Wilderness Act. The same applies for Wilderness areas.

The Wilderness Act does not preclude cultural resources within the boundaries of Wilderness areas. The most problematic issue for managers, therefore, is determining *how* to manage cultural resources in a way that fulfills both mandates that apply to Wilderness areas: the preservation of cultural resources, public access, and the preservation of the wilderness character of the natural environment.

The Wilderness Act specifically prohibits certain uses in designated Wilderness Areas including commercial enterprises, permanent and temporary roads, motor vehicles including motorboats, mechanized equipment, mechanical transport, or any structure or installation.⁸³ These prohibitions are often focused on when determining the nonconformity of various resources that exist in Wilderness areas. Yet the Act also states that the designation of any area of the National Park system as Wilderness, “in no manner lower[s] the standards evolved for the use and preservation of such park, monument, or other unit of the national

⁸³ The Wilderness Act, Section 4(c). These provisions apply except where necessary to meet the minimum requirements necessary in administering the areas for the purpose of the Act and for the health and safety of visitors.

park system,” and that, “nothing in this Act shall modify the statutory authority under which units of the national park system are created,” specifically citing the Organic Act, Antiquities Act of 1935, and what would later be the National Historic Preservation Act, which grants the National Park Service authority to manage cultural resources.⁸⁴ Historic preservation in Wilderness areas has legal standing. The main stipulation is that the wilderness character of the area must be preserved.⁸⁵ Chapter Six of the National Park Service’s 2006 *Management Policies* stipulates that historic preservation laws are applicable in Wilderness areas, but must be applied using methods consistent with the preservation of the area’s wilderness character and values. The management plan further explains that the *Secretary of Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* provides direction and guidance for the preservation and maintenance of cultural resources and should be referred to.⁸⁶ Thus, the *Secretary of Interior’s Standards* offer alternative methods to consider when managing cultural resources. As long as treatments are consistent with the preservation of an area’s wilderness character and values, it is legally justifiable to manage resources according to these *Standards*.

A 2005 lawsuit at Olympic National Park exemplifies the tension between Wilderness and cultural resource management, as well as the varying ways the Wilderness Act can be interpreted. The lawsuit involved the proposed reconstruction of two historic trailside shelters located in Olympic Wilderness: the Home Sweet Home shelter, located at the headwaters of the Duckabush, and the Low Divide shelter, located on the Quinault Pass. The structures collapsed in the winter of 1998-1999 due to lack of maintenance and heavy snow loads from a severe winter storm. The Park Service rebuilt them off-site and proposed

84 Ibid., Section 4(a)(3).

85 Ibid., Section 4(b).

86 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service “Wilderness Preservation and Management,” Chap. 6.3.8 in *Management Policies*, (2006), 83-84.

to use a helicopter to transport and then reconstruct them in their original locations. The lawsuit prevented the National Park Service from transporting and rebuilding the structures resulting in the loss of two historic resources within the Park's Wilderness.

Olympic National Park is located on the Olympic peninsula of Washington State. It was added to the National Park system in 1938 for both the benefit and enjoyment of the public, and in recognition of its outstanding primitive and wilderness quality. Previously, the U.S. Forest Service administered the area. In the 1910s a devastating fire spurred the Forest Service to create a series of fire towers and shelters. Unlike Yosemite, Yellowstone, and the Grand Canyon, Olympic National Park was not developed for tourism. Instead, it was promoted as a wilderness park, and a general policy of limited roads but extensive trail access was implemented, essentially making it a trail park with hundreds of trails but few permanent roads anywhere within the interior. Some structures were built in the 1930s to promote tourism to the historic trail system, but overall, the park retained its wilderness character of which it was first established.⁸⁷ Included in the historic trail system were trailside shelters that were used by visitors for their protection and safety in periods of inclement weather common to the area. The trail system and shelters are significant for their association with the Park's early history under Forest Service administration, as a representation of the Park's limited infrastructure, and of the history of backcountry use in the 1930s and 1940s.

In 1988, Congress designated over ninety-five percent of Olympic National Park as

Wilderness, making it the wilderness park it was intended to be. *A Backcountry Management*

⁸⁷ Federal Defendants' Cross Motion for Summary Judgment and Opposition to Plaintiff's Motion for Summary Judgment, *Olympic Park Associates, Wilderness Watch, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility v. Fran Mainella, Jonathan B. Jarvis, and William Laitner*, No. C04-5732FDB, (W.D. Wash filed May 31, 2005).

Plan and an Environmental Impact Survey were developed in the 1970s and designated shelters to be retained either for their historic significance or their necessity to the health and safety of park visitors. Because Olympic National Park was not designated wilderness at the time, provisions under the Wilderness Act did not apply.⁸⁸ The subjects of the 2005 lawsuit, the Home Sweet Home and Low Divide shelters, were slated for retention in the 1970s planning documents. They were selected based on their need for visitor health and safety and not deemed historically significant because they were less than fifty years-old at the time.⁸⁹ Issues with managing the few, but significant, extant cultural resources within the Wilderness area was compounded with Wilderness designated.⁹⁰

The Home Sweet Home and Low Divide shelters were added to the Park's List of Classified Structures database in 1984 as ineligible for listing on the National Register based on their age. In 1996 a cultural resource survey evaluating the Park's historic infrastructure cited them as eligible for listing, but the shelters were not listed until 2001, years after they had been destroyed.⁹¹ The National Park Service argued that, "in spite of collapse, the shelters prior to collapse contributed to the important historic pattern of shelter construction and recreational use. This location, the setting, association, and feeling are significant aspects of historic use within the park..."⁹² The proposed reconstructions were to preserve the historic feeling and appearance of the historic trail system of which the

88 Plaintiff's Motion for Summary Judgment on Claims under the Wilderness Act and National Environmental Policy Act, *Olympic Park Associates v. Fran Mainella* (filed May 10, 2005).

89 Olympic National Park, "Shelter Repair Environmental Assessment," Olympic National Park, WA: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2004).

90 Most of the shelters were built by the National Park Service by 1935. In 1988 when the Park was designated as Wilderness, the structures were reaching the fifty year eligibility mark for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

91 Federal Defendants' Cross Motion.

92 Order Granting Plaintiff's Motion for Summary Judgment and Denying Defendants' Cross-Motion for Summary Judgment, *Olympic Park Associates v. Fran Mainella* (dated July 29, 2005).

shelters were historically associated. (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2)

After the failure of the original shelters, in 2002, the National Park Service decided to prefabricate the reconstructions off-site and fly them via heavy-lift helicopters to their original locations. An Environmental Assessment in 2004 evaluated the environmental impact of the structures and concluded the finding of no significant impact (FONSI). Several construction alternatives were considered, including no action, off-site reconstruction and transport, on-site reconstruction using new materials, and on-site construction using original materials. The National Park Service decided to rebuild the shelters off-site and use helicopters to transport them to their original locations. This option would limit the amount of time spent reconstructing the structures in Wilderness, which would have required the use of mechanized equipment during animal breeding season and violate the Wilderness Act.⁹³

In the ensuing lawsuit, the Plaintiffs—Olympic Park Associates, Wilderness Watch, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility—argued that the National Park Service acted “arbitrary, capricious, an [in] abuse of discretion or otherwise not in accordance with law.”⁹⁴ The Plaintiffs argued that the National Park Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Wilderness Act because alternatives were never actually considered. The National Park Service rebuilt the shelters in 2002 and planning documents were allegedly written to confirm decisions that had already been made. Olympic National Park did not have the required General Management Plan or Wilderness Management Plan at the time to guide their decisions.⁹⁵ Yet if the National Park Service did have the appropriate supporting documentation prior to the reconstructions, including an

93 Federal Defendants’ Cross-Motion; Order Granting Plaintiffs’ Motion.

94 Order Granting Plaintiff’s Motion.

95 Plaintiffs’ Motion for Summary Judgment.



Photo Courtesy of Olympic National Park

Fig. 2.1 Low Divide Shelter, n.d. Source: University of Washington Libraries, Olympic National Park Slide Collection. Courtesy of Olympic National Park.



Fig. 2.2 Home Sweet Home Shelter, 1991 Source: Don Abbot on NWHikers.net

Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS), it is likely that they still would have decided to rebuild the shelters. More planning would have provided additional alternatives for how to proceed in a way that better preserved the wilderness values and character of the area and conformed to the provisions of the Wilderness Act. While the plaintiffs eventually withdrew their claim that the National Park Service did not prepare proper planning documents to justify their decision to reconstruct the structures, the Park Service would have had a more legitimate preservation argument if they had chosen the alternative to rebuild the shelters on-site using original, recycled materials.

The shelters were significant for their location within the Park's backcountry, built as a part of the historic trail system that provided emergency shelter for early backcountry users and employees. More recently, they had become significant in their own right as a goal destination for backpackers. While similar shelters would not be built today, the Plaintiffs argued that there was no empirical data indicating that the shelters actually saved lives beyond anecdotal evidence. Instead, they argued, there were examples of the shelters actually causing harm to hikers who made it their goal to reach the shelters during inclement weather.⁹⁶

Created for the health and safety of the visiting public, the shelters' became obsolete with modern developments in backpacking technology. However, the Park Service claimed the shelters needed to be preserved as examples of how people hiked in the backcountry in the first half of the twentieth century—perhaps as ruins, or through some means of rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction in accordance with the *Secretary of Interior's*

⁹⁶ Ibid; There is no empirical data beyond anecdotal on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the shelters to public safety. Therefore, the argument is irrelevant.

*Standards.*⁹⁷ By contrast, the Plaintiffs argued that the shelters' popularity as destination points was damaging to the environment. Overuse deteriorated trail conditions, caused increased trampling of areas surrounding the shelters, and increased the number of illegal campsites and fire rings.⁹⁸ But with the rise of outdoor and backcountry recreation in the twentieth century, overuse has become a problem in most National Parks. Alternative solutions for mitigating negative environmental impacts, such as education and enforcement of visitor compliance on proper outdoor ethics and minimum impact camping principles, is a preferred option to eliminating significant historic resources. These strategies have been applied widely at Yosemite and are now the official policy of the National Park Service.⁹⁹

The Plaintiffs opposed the National Park Service's reconstruction proposal as a nonconforming treatment option. The shelters were built with predominantly new materials and were a different design from the originals.¹⁰⁰ The National Park Service maintained that, because of the shelters' designation as historically significant and eligible for listing on the National Register, the shelters were protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and were not deprived of their historical value when they were destroyed.¹⁰¹ Despite the new materials used in their reconstruction, the shelters were still historic because they retained integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association.

Finally, the Plaintiffs claimed that the shelters' reconstruction and helicopter transport violated the Wilderness Act for three reasons: it was illegal to construct new

⁹⁷ Federal Defendants' Cross-Motion.

⁹⁸ Plaintiffs' Motion for Summary Judgment.

⁹⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "Wilderness Stewardship," *Director's Order #41* (Draft, January 2011), 11; Yosemite's education programs including Leave No Trace principles are discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁰ Plaintiffs' Motion for Summary Judgment.

¹⁰¹ Federal Defendants' Cross-Motion. They used an example of Independence Hall, saying that if Independence Hall was destroyed its destruction would not void it of its historical significance and it would more than likely be reconstructed.

structures in Wilderness, to use mechanized transport, and to do either when it impaired Wilderness character.¹⁰² This is a very limited reading of the Wilderness Act as it does not take into account the National Park Service clause which qualifies the statutory mandates of the Organic Act, Antiquities Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. The Plaintiffs argued that the structures were not allowed in Wilderness because Congress never explicitly created an exception for them to exist there. But the creation of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 abrogated the need for special exemption. Through the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Park Service had the authority to manage cultural resources. Nothing in the language of the Wilderness Act suggested that there needed to be supplemental authorization from Congress to activate either the Organic Act or the National Historic Preservation Act. The Acts in themselves were the exceptions.¹⁰³

Understood holistically, the Wilderness Act does not prohibit cultural resources in Wilderness. The manner in which they are managed was the Plaintiffs' only valid claim in the lawsuit. The National Park Service *Director's Order #41* states that Wilderness contains a high degree of human influence and use and contains contributing resources that are applicable and conforming to wilderness character. The Wilderness Act only requires that cultural resource management must be applied in concert with the Wilderness Act and comply with provisions on access, the use of the minimum requirements concept, and not adversely affect a Wilderness area's character and values.¹⁰⁴ The Wilderness Act in no way lowers preservation standards. The Olympic National Park proceedings stipulated that

102 Plaintiffs' Motion for Summary Judgment; Federal Defendants' Cross-Motion; The National Park Service claimed that the shelters were not actually reconstructions because they were not "missing," just damaged, and there was sufficient information left for their accurate restoration.

103 Plaintiffs' Motion for Summary Judgment; Reply to Plaintiffs' Opposition to Defendants' Cross-Motion for Summary Judgment, *Olympic Park Associates v. Fran Mainella* (filed June 30, 2005).

104 *Director's Order #41*, 10.

the National Park Service “retained its authority to consider the full range of options for the shelters under NHPA, including reconstruction...Olympic National Park’s choice of reconstruction was squarely within its discretion.”¹⁰⁵ Yet the National Park Service should have considered alternatives to reconstructing the shelters that did not involve helicopter transport which—the determinant factor in the lawsuit.¹⁰⁶

Like other legislation and planning documents, the Wilderness Act only provides guidance for informed decision-making, not a technical methodology. Every National Park and Wilderness area was created under specific mandates and for different values beholden to them. No two parks are the same and no single management strategy applies to the same two. Individual Parks are left to decide what cultural resource and Wilderness management policies are best, based on the Park’s own characteristics. Olympic National Park was created for its wilderness qualities and as a wilderness park, devoid of the physical structures present at more developed parks such as Yosemite. Yosemite was created for its scenic qualities and values that people associated it with at the time, and was subsequently developed “based on formal and theoretical precedents of landscape parks.”¹⁰⁷

The creation of a new cultural resource management plan at Olympic National Park after it was designated Wilderness would have helped the Park Service to systematically incorporate the new provisions of the Wilderness Act into the Park’s overall management philosophy.¹⁰⁸ Yet the diversity of Wilderness and Parks provide insight to the different type

105 Reply to Plaintiffs’ Opposition to Defendants’ Cross-Motion.

106 Ideally, they should have considered spreading the project over a longer period of time, but at seasonal intervals that had the least impact, and rehabilitated the shelters on-site using as much of the original materials as possible rather than off site using new materials which only conveys a sense of newness.

107 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 29. The development of Yosemite will be discussed in the next chapter.

108 Plaintiffs’ Motion for Summary Judgment; Reply to Plaintiffs’ Opposition to Defendants’ Cross-Motion.

of management policies available for managing cultural resources and the Wilderness areas in which they exist. Cultural landscape concepts mitigate the challenge created when a static set of policies are applied to multiple situations. Even though designated Wilderness areas are supposed to be pristine wilderness, they are cultural landscapes and sites of living history. This history is expressed through their establishment as National Parks and Wilderness areas.¹⁰⁹ The Plaintiffs in the Olympic National Park lawsuit argued that “historical” as understood in the Wilderness Act referred only to nature.¹¹⁰ This disregards the fundamental premise that nature and culture are interrelated. While neither party involved in the lawsuit necessarily misread the Wilderness Act, each side interpreted it to meet their own specific goals and objectives. Significance is evaluated through historical context. Wilderness is a cultural landscape and the shelters within it are included. In order to preserve the wholeness of the cultural landscape as an ensemble of nature and culture, neither should be taken out of context to one another in.

Progress has been made to streamline the variability of how the Wilderness Act is interpreted to mitigate the issues that have resulted. A 2011 revision of *Director's Order #41* explains that a cultural resource management program must exist in Wilderness areas, and must comply with the Wilderness Act's provisions. It also recommends an interdisciplinary approach to creating Wilderness Management Plans, and invites cultural resource managers to participate in the process.¹¹¹ Efforts to offer better guidance and tools for managing Wilderness areas demonstrate the progression of attitudes and values of Wilderness over time. The Wilderness Act was created as a product of the concerns that wilderness was

109 Federal Defendants' Cross-Motion.

110 Plaintiffs' Motion for Summary Judgment.

111 *Director's Order #41*, 10.

becoming increasingly scarce. Current policy is a reflection of these concerns. The lawsuit at Olympic National Park represents the tensions that have ensued from the creation of Wilderness areas, and current mitigation strategies are in response to these tensions.

Olympic National Park is a special case, due to its undeveloped and seemingly pristine quality. Developed natural Parks offer a different example of cultural and wilderness management in a setting where resources are equally valuable, symbolic, and intertwined on a larger scale. Yosemite National Park is an example of this.

CHAPTER 3
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK:
HISTORY AND MANAGEMENT OF YOSEMITE WILDERNESS

Yosemite National Park is a cultural landscape that has been continuously used and shaped by humans for thousands of years. The interaction between humans and the environment has become a vital component in the ecological processes, or “land ethic,” of the area. Yosemite is an exceptional case for this study because of its historical development as an icon of the National Park Service, and its combination of symbolic cultural resources and natural qualities. Management issues there touch directly on the major themes of American environmental history discussed in Chapter One. The Park’s rich past and iconic resources reveal how the site is a cultural landscape that exemplifies the variety of historical episodes, good and bad, that still influence how the park is seen and experienced by visitors, employees, and managers.

Yosemite is located across 747,956 acres of the western slope of the Sierra Nevada mountain range in central California. It has an elevation range from 2,127 to 13,114 feet above sea level. In 1984, Congress designated 704,624 acres of Yosemite National Park as Wilderness and 927 acres as potential wilderness.¹¹² (Fig. A2) Before the passage of the Wilderness Act and the designation of Yosemite Wilderness, managers acknowledged the Park’s wilderness quality. They stressed that the purpose of wilderness management was to correct and neutralize the influence of man, not control the natural forces or improve the environment. They explained,

112 Potential wilderness areas are enclaves of developed land within wilderness that are accepted and managed as wilderness, but their non-conforming use prevent them from becoming officially designated. These areas include the High Sierra Camps, the Hetch Hetchy Valley, and Miguel Meadows, among others. The man-made resources in these potential wilderness areas are managed in a way that does not degrade the surrounding wilderness so that if the resources were removed, the area could be rewilded in the future.

A wilderness is an area whose predominant character is the result of the interplay of natural processes, and large enough and so situated as to be unaffected, except in minor ways, by what takes place in the non-wilderness around it. Eliminate the qualifying words from this statement, and you have defined pure wilderness, but we would have to conclude that, excepting perhaps the Brooks Range of Alaska, there is no wilderness left in America today. We have to recognize the reality of today in applying this or any other definition.¹¹³

Managers acknowledged the relationship between nature and culture in Yosemite from the beginning. The understanding of human presence provides significant insight regarding the minimal impact management strategy that the Park employs today. Yosemite contains a vast amount of both natural and cultural resources that yields important information on the natural processes that have occurred over time, how humans used the area in the past, and how past use impacts the area and influences its current use.

Yosemite is significant primarily for its natural features, for which the Park was first created. In recognizing these features as something to be protected, Americans attributed Yosemite with intangible cultural value, underscoring the interconnectedness between nature and culture in the Park. In doing so, Yosemite became a cultural landscape.

Popular destinations, including Yosemite Valley, Glacier Point, and Tuolumne Meadows have cultural significance based on their historical association with people and events which have helped shape their use, development, and how they are perceived today. Yosemite Falls, the tallest waterfall in North America at 2,425 feet, has been attributed cultural value based on being the tallest of its kind. Half Dome and El Capitan are well-known resources that have been ascribed cultural significance for their association with the advancement of modern day rock climbing. Therefore, while each of these is naturally

¹¹³ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "Preservation of Natural and Wilderness Areas in National Parks 1957" (Washington D.C.: 1957), Yosemite Archives, Yosemite National Park, El Portal, CA, Resource Management Collection, Box 34, Series 1 L48, Folder L48 "Wilderness Areas 1955-1956."

occurring, they have been ascribed significance based purely on the cultural values placed on them over time.

Yosemite contains a vast amount of historical resources dating from pre-history and early European settlement in the region, evidenced by archaeological and oral traditions within the historical record. These resources show to what extent Yosemite's landscape has been occupied, altered, exploited, and essentially conquered by humans for thousands of years. While only a fraction of the park has undergone professional archaeological surveys, most of which have been in developed areas such as Yosemite Valley, Wawona, Tuolumne Meadows, Hetch Hetchy, El Portal, and along road corridors, over eight-hundred cultural resource sites have been discovered and inventoried. More recent surveys of Yosemite Wilderness uncovered forty-six new archaeological sites, which only suggest the extent of unknown cultural resources and potential wealth of information that is available in Yosemite's backcountry. Pre-historic sites have been discovered on the bed of the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, as well as artifacts associated with its construction in the 1910s and 1920s. Additionally, twelve pre-historic archaeological districts have been found eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Native Americans are believed to have used and occupied the land in some capacity as long as eight to nine-thousand years ago.¹¹⁴

Native American interaction with the landscape is significant as an example of

the long-standing presence of humans; how humans have shaped the landscape, what we

¹¹⁴ U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, "Statement for Management, April 1994," 17-19. Yosemite Archives, RMC, Box 7, Series 3, D18-D1815, Folder D18 "Planning Program 1994;" and Yosemite National Park, "Section E—Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park," *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form*, (Draft, HAL, RMS, Yosemite National Park, 2009), 3. In digital possession of the author. These numbers refer to archaeological studies from 1994. Kathleen L. Hull and Michael J. Moratto, *Archeological Synthesis and Research Design, Yosemite National Park, California*, Yosemite Research Center Publications in Anthropology No. 21, Submitted to USDO, National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, 1999; More recent archaeological inventories of the park have been conducted and it can be assumed that additional archaeological sites have been discovered.

now have officially designated pristine and untrammeled; and how this use has affected the ecology and subsequent patterns of use and development. Native Americans inhabited the Yosemite region for thousands of years and developed cultures that were uniquely suited to life in the area. They imposed their own visions on the land, invested it with their own cultural values, and altered the land to suit their needs. This established a precedent followed by all who would subsequently come to the region.¹¹⁵ Pre-history is significant in understanding the region as a cultural landscape that has continued to change and evolve from the intertwining of humans and nature. This is especially true in Wilderness areas where information is less known, but the potential to yield information about the history and pre-history of the area is high. This is why a more comprehensive archaeological assessment of the park must be completed and interpreted.

Historic resources in Yosemite have provided substantial information on post-settlement land use beginning in the nineteenth century. Surveys of Yosemite Wilderness provided information on the mining, logging, livestock grazing, and later tourism and entrepreneurial activities in Wilderness areas. Such activities led to the creation of roads and trails, which followed Native American land use patterns and pre-historic trade routes. These patterns further influenced the systematic construction of trails, roads, and park development in the twentieth century.¹¹⁶ Mining took place predominately at the edges of the Park's current boundary in the nineteenth century. Logging, a more visible use, helped spur the creation of the Yosemite Grant in 1864 to protect the area's sequoia groves. Yet logging operations continued well after the Park's establishment. Much of the Park's

115 National Park Service, "Section E—Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park," 6-7.

116 Yosemite National Park, "Statement for Management," 18-19.

holdings contained private land that the federal government was not willing to purchasing.¹¹⁷ Additionally, unrestricted grazing took place in much of the backcountry. Sheep herders in Tuolumne Meadows set fires to encourage re-growth at the end of the seasons which increased the rate of snow melt and destroyed other nearby vegetation. These land uses had a significant ecological impact, yet much of their visual traces cannot be seen today because Yosemite's Wilderness is the product of over one-hundred years of "rewilding" efforts through restricted use.¹¹⁸ These activities demonstrate how Yosemite Wilderness is not the pristine and untrammelled specimen that its designation suggests. It is a unique landscape, but it is in no way outside the confines of human intervention and interactions.

Yosemite also contributed to the development of the nineteenth century American art movement whose aesthetic was influenced by romanticism and theories of the Picturesque as cultivated by Andrew Jackson Downing and Transcendentalist thinkers such as Emerson and Thoreau. Much of how Yosemite developed as a cultural and natural icon was an expression of the cultural values placed on it in the nineteenth century as an untouched scenic landscape. Many of the romantic and artistic notions attributed to Yosemite grew from the Hudson River School as manifested through paintings and literature that depicted Yosemite through romantic visions of the picturesque and the sublime. This suggests the profound influence that the "broad cultural basis and aesthetic tradition for understanding places as pictures and land as a landscape" had on Yosemite's development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹¹⁹ The romantic notions associated with

117 Section E—Historic Resources of Yosemite National Park," 14-15.

118 Linda Wedel Greene, *Yosemite: The Park and its Resources—A History of the Discovery, Management, and Physical Development of Yosemite National Park, California* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1987), 299.

119 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 11.

Yosemite contributed to its early tourism development in the mid-nineteenth century and its emergence as a national icon.

Romanticism and nationalism influenced how Yosemite was physically developed. Early expeditions through the area, such as writer and publisher James Mason Hutchings' 1855 expedition, uncovered Yosemite's potential as a tourist destination. Art and literature provided a means of promoting Yosemite as a place exhibiting unfathomable beauty, often compared to the cathedrals of Europe. Subsequently, Yosemite emerged as a symbolic icon of American national identity and cultural achievements. Beginning in 1856, despite the arduous journey and few accommodations at the time, tourists regularly visited the area after hearing about the scenic wonders it possessed.¹²⁰

Frederick Law Olmsted was chosen as one of the first commissioners of Yosemite and was put in charge of planning its development for visitors, although his plan never came to fruition. Olmsted's vision exemplified the romantic underpinnings of nineteenth century landscape park design and management. In many respects, it mirrored aspects of his Central Park design in New York City. "He proposed a circular carriageway which would take in all the best views in the valley, feature frequent turnouts, and like the circuit roads in Central Park, allow for leisurely contemplation of the scenery."¹²¹ Olmsted's plan influenced much of how the park was developed and managed, which as landscape historian Ether Carr suggests, was essentially a landscape park where land, "could be set aside and managed specifically for the preservation and appreciation of scenic qualities conducive to interpretation according to certain aesthetic rules."¹²² Olmsted proscribed any buildings that

120 Sears, 123-133.

121 Ibid., 133; and Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 29.

122 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 27.

would “detract from the dignity of the scenery.”¹²³ This idea foreshadowed the emergence of the National Park Service Rustic architectural style first developed in the Adirondacks of New York State, and later became the policy design for the National Park Service, first showcased in Yosemite. The style is reminiscent of Downing’s residential designs in the nineteenth century that focused on the harmonization of architecture with the surrounding landscape. Through romantic and nationalistic notions that influenced architects and planners at the time, Yosemite developed into a park that was intended to provide the amenities of a regional park in a wilderness setting.¹²⁴

At the same time that Yosemite was promoted as a scenic tourist attraction, efforts to protect it from private claims were being undertaken to prevent Yosemite from meeting the same fate as Niagara Falls, the scenic beauty of which was being destroyed by private entrepreneurs. On June 30, 1864, President Lincoln signed the Yosemite Grant, which set aside Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Trees to the State of California. This established Yosemite as the first natural area set aside for the people’s benefit and appreciation by a national government, as well as created the first vestiges of the National Park idea. The grant set precedent for future legislative action that eventually led to the creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, its own establishment as a National Park in 1890, and the creation of the National Park Service in 1916.¹²⁵ Most importantly, the Yosemite Grant is significant as the product of and departure from nineteenth century attitudes concerning unrestricted land use. It was at this point that the colonial desire to conquer the land evolved into the belief that it should be protected and preserved for

123 Ibid., 29

124 Ibid.

125 Runte, 5-9; Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 27; Nash, 106; and Huth, 148.

something beyond its utilitarian use.

Yosemite National Park was established on October 1, 1890 to preserve its outstanding scenic beauty by preventing future private development. Rather than for environmental protection or for the potential to yield valuable scientific information, values which emerged later in the twentieth century by the conservation and preservation movements, the creation of Yosemite National Park was an early acknowledgment of the presence and value of cultural resources that existed as early as 1890. Its creation was a significant precedent and would be an important factor in the creation of the National Park system.

The National Park Service was established as a result of nineteenth century values to preserve resources that were seen as significant to the nation. The Park Service's creation on August 25, 1916, marked another era of human influence on the landscape and the beginning of the future development of Yosemite as it is seen today. Prior to the establishment of the Park Service, the United States Army managed the Park while the State of California oversaw Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove until they were transferred back to the federal government in 1906. Civilian rangers managed the Park from 1914 until 1916. The United States Army's management from 1864 to 1914 made a significant impact on the landscape by influencing land use patterns through the management of homesteaders and sheep herders who had previously managed themselves. The unrestrained and unsystematic policies administered by the Army when it came to wilderness preservation at this time irreversibly altered the landscape, even if such impacts are not obvious to visitors today.¹²⁶

126 Snyder, "Summary Report on 1995 Season."

Yosemite's landscape was changed by Native Americans, homesteaders, miners, loggers, herdsman, tourism, and early concession buildings. With the advent of the National Park Service a new generation of cultural resources emerged. These resources, in conjunction with the newly formed administration, are now significant in their own right for their association with the history of the National Park Service and Park development in the twentieth century. The creation of the National Park Service Rustic architectural style permeated throughout the park, eventually becoming the standard architectural mode for National Park Service buildings across the country. The Park Service Rustic style is characterized by the harmonization of building design with the natural surroundings. The design uses native materials and vernacular construction techniques in a way that highlights the scenic beauty of the parks and enhances the visitors' experience while preserving the natural features.¹²⁷ Historian Bonnie Stepenoff explained, "In setting the national standard for park infrastructure, the Park Service helped ensure a widespread reverence for the natural landscape."¹²⁸ The Rustic style is a contributing element to the character of Yosemite, in addition to other parks, because of the intent of its design. Architects and park planners specifically designed these park buildings to harmonize with Yosemite's natural resources in a way that specifically focused on the natural. Rustic style structures were never intended to be the dominant resource, but rather as secondary to the natural environment when viewed together as a landscape. (Fig. 3.1) Therefore, such resources that are located in Yosemite's wilderness areas, such as backcountry patrol cabins designed in the Rustic style, should not be considered non-conforming resources. It is already established and accepted that

127 McClelland, 18.

128 Stepenoff, 99.

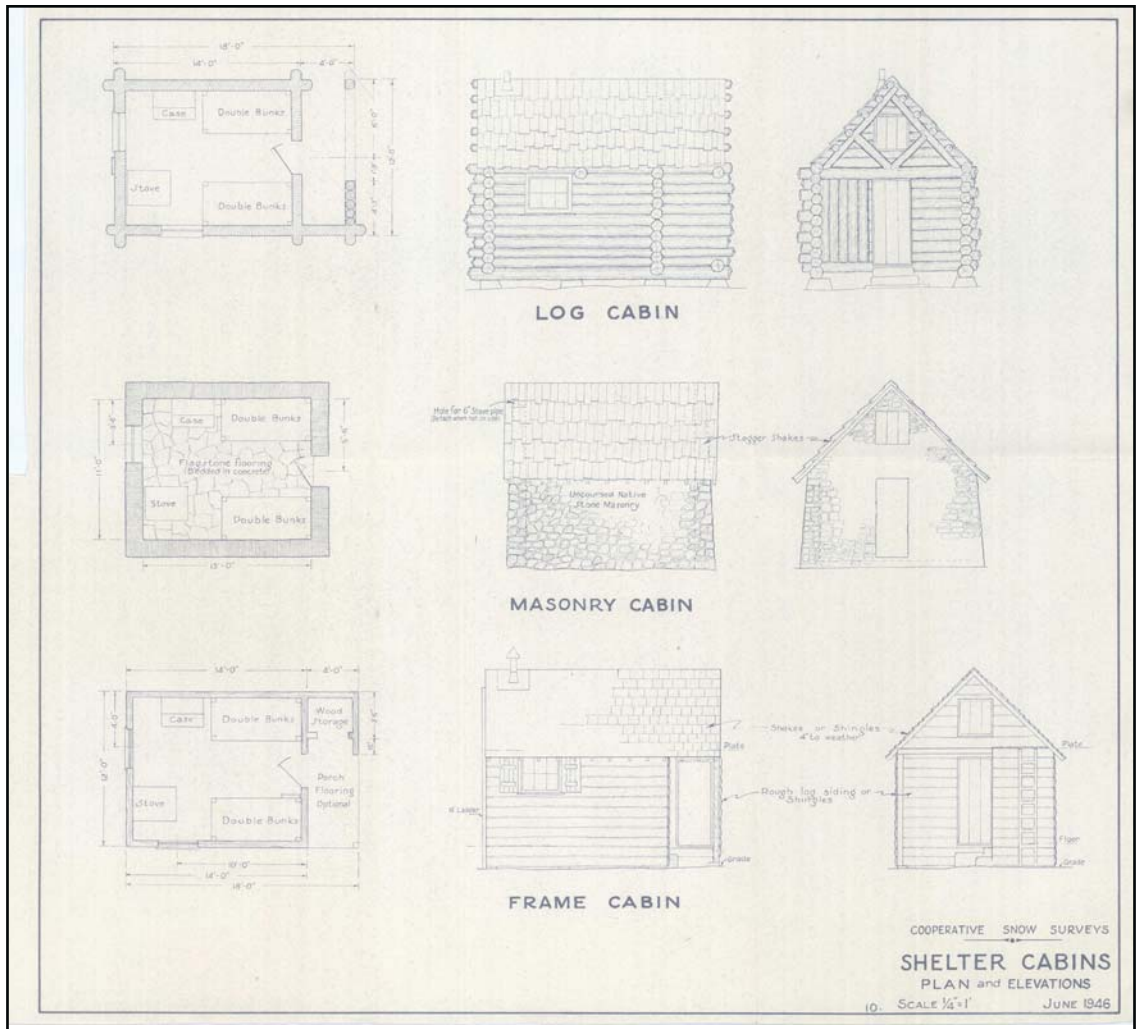


Fig 3.1 Shelter cabin plans and elevations, 1946. Source: History, Architecture, and Landscapes Branch, Resources Management and Science Division, Yosemite National Park, El Portal, C.A.

Yosemite's Wilderness is not pristine and untrammled because of its rich and long history of human intervention. As a cultural landscape, these resources contribute to its rich history rather than detract from it, especially considering their design intent.

Included in the Park Service's mandate was the promotion of the parks and their resources. For Yosemite, this involved developing the Park to accommodate visitors and to provide access to its valuable natural and cultural resources. Much of the development

of Yosemite's built environment took place in the 1920s and 1930s during the heyday of National Park Service park planning and development.¹²⁹ A large number of these Park Service buildings were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and are significant for their contribution to the construction and development of natural and cultural resource management, and for their association with Depression-era public work programs administered as a part of the New Deal. Depression-era building programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corp and Work Progress Administration (WPA) reflect an important period of American cultural and political history and should be protected and interpreted.¹³⁰

Yosemite National Park's *Statement for Management* stated that cultural resources in Yosemite, "explain the relationship of humankind with the central Sierra Nevada and document the establishment and administration of Yosemite...[They] also increased in importance over time by being mileposts in regional and National Park Service history."¹³¹ In the Yosemite Wilderness, cultural resources that were created and administered by the National Park Service signified a new use indicative of the newly established dual mandate required of the National Park Service. These resources included backcountry snow survey, patrol, and fire guard cabins, many of which are still in use today by the National Park Service as outposts for backcountry rangers, and are acknowledged as contributing cultural resources to the Park's history.

129 While less visible in Wilderness areas than in Yosemite Valley, the National Parks' second main development phase was Mission 66. For many Wilderness advocates, Mission 66 came to symbolize "a willingness to sacrifice the integrity of park ecosystems for the sake of enhancing the merely superficial appreciation of scenery by crowds of people in automobiles." Carr, *Mission 66*, 14. For information on Mission 66, see Carr, *Mission 66*.

130 National Park Service, "Cultural Resource Study, Chapter 12," Yosemite Archives, RMC, Box 2, Series 5 H22, Folder H22 "Cultural Resources 1986," 5.

131 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, *Statement for Management*, (April 1994) Yosemite Archives, RMC, Box 7, Series 3, D18-D1815, Folder D18 "Planning Program 1994," 3.

In the twentieth century, systematic road construction was the first significant change in how people traveled in and around the park, first in stage coaches, then in automobiles after 1913.¹³² For much of Yosemite's early history after white settlement, railroads were the primary mode of transportation. In order to promote their own economic interest, railroads were avid supporters of the Park.¹³³ The increasing amount of automobile traffic quickly necessitated road improvements, leading to greater advancements in road and scenic byway engineering in the National Parks. Carr explains, "The creation of scenic highways and promotional route destinations of various types became powerful tools for scenic preservation."¹³⁴ How Yosemite developed in the twentieth century and how it is experienced today is a direct product of the recreational use of automobiles.

For the National Parks in general, the proliferation of the automobile was the most significant tool for the promotion of the National Parks and the National Park idea. "It was the mass production of automobiles, above all, that allowed this expansion of the American park movement to take place," Carr explains.¹³⁵ Access and accommodation of automobiles was necessary in order to promote the National Parks, and therefore get Congressional funding. Stephen T. Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, was a leading proponent of road building and providing public accessibility.¹³⁶ In the end, his efforts

132 C.P. Russell, "A Short History of Yosemite National Park," (1951), Yosemite Archives, Old Central Files, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 7.

133 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 41-42, 56; and Huth, 146.

134 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 85.

135 *Ibid.*, 86.

136 McClelland, 124. The extent of Mather's support of road building is seen in his plans for a park-to-park highway that would connect the western scenic National Parks in order to facilitate inter-park travel by automobile and promote the National Park system as a whole. The highway would connect Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, Grand Canyon, Sequoia, Yosemite, Lassen, Crater Lake, Mount Rainier, and Glacier National Parks. Carr explained, "Connecting the parks, as well as managing them all according to consistent policies, were essential steps in transforming the federal scenic reservation into a modern park system," Carr, 147; See also, McClelland, 131.

paid off. Automobiles and the road building that their use generated is seen by many as the primary cause for the deterioration of traditional wilderness values.¹³⁷ Many roads in Yosemite, such as the Old Tioga Road, are historically significant for their association with the Park's development by the National Park Service and for their association with advances in twentieth century road engineering and transportation. However, the overpopulation of parks by automobile traffic eventually lead to the creation of the Wilderness Act as an attempt to offset the negative impact of automobiles and roads on visitor experience and wilderness character. This paradox is an example of the multiple dynamic values that exist at Yosemite. Transportation systems contributed to the Park's physical alteration and how it is experienced.

Glacier Point is a prime example of how the increasing need to accommodate automobiles fundamentally changed how the park is seen and experienced by visitors. Located on the southern rim of the Yosemite Valley at 7,214 feet elevation, Glacier Point is an iconic overlook of Yosemite Valley with a panoramic view of Half Dome, Yosemite Falls and the Yosemite backcountry. It is also a point of access to Sentinel Dome and Taft Point, along the Pohono Trail. The overlook also has cultural value and is historically significant for its association with naturalist and wilderness champion, John Muir, as one of his favorite spots in Yosemite. It is at this lookout that John Muir and President Theodore Roosevelt took their famous photograph.¹³⁸ (Figs. 3.2 and 3.3)

Historically, visitors accessed Glacier Point on foot. Today, the viewpoint can be accessed by hiking the 3,200 vertical feet from Yosemite Valley via the Four Mile Trail

¹³⁷ Sutter, 19-41.

¹³⁸ For information on John Muir and his contributions to Yosemite, see Muir; and Worster.

or by hiking the southern rim of the valley along the Panorama Trail. But most visitors drive to Glacier Point using the Glacier Point Road which is accessed off Wawona Road-Hwy 41. The increased accessibility to Glacier Point has fundamentally altered how the place is experienced. Visitors who drive to Glacier Point do not have the same sense of accomplishment as those who make the journey by foot as did John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt. Glacier Point is now one of the most widely visited locations in the park. Increased automobile use has enabled visitors to experience parts of Yosemite in a matter of a few hours. This conforms to the car culture of American society, and the mentality of seeing as much as possible in the least amount of time. More of Yosemite can be seen in less time, but possibly at the detriment of obtaining other cultural experiences and knowledge.¹³⁹ (Figs. 3.4 and 3.5)

As Sutter suggested, current management policies are the product of past interventions.¹⁴⁰ Automobiles were once considered to be the biggest threat to wilderness values. This belief eventually led to the creation of the Wilderness Act, which in turn proscribed the construction of new roads in Wilderness. Now, recreation is considered the biggest threat to Yosemite's Wilderness.¹⁴¹ Ironically, when the National Park Service was first established, the park attempted to promote backcountry use through the creation of the High Sierra Camp system.

The High Sierra Camp idea was the product of National Park Service Director Stephen Mather's vision to ease congestion and encourage park visitation out of Yosemite

¹³⁹ For information on Glacier Point, see U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, "Glacier Point," accessed April 24, 2011, <http://www.nps.gov/yose/planyourvisit/glacierpoint.htm>.

¹⁴⁰ Sutter, 20.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 262.



Fig. 3.2 Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir on Glacier Point, Yosemite Valley, California, ca. 1906. Source: Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.



Fig. 3.3 Yosemite Falls from Glacier Point., July 2010. Source: Photograph by Alison Swing

Valley and into the high country. The High Sierra Camp system combines Merced Lake, Vogelsang, Glen Aulin, May Lake, Sunrise, and Tuolumne Meadows. The Loop trail begins at Tuolumne Meadows, off Tioga Road. Five camps, excluding Tuolumne Meadows and White Wolf Lodge, are accessible only by foot or mule train and are located five-ten miles apart along a trail loop. (Fig. A3) Each camp is purposefully set in a unique location situated around a specific natural feature including alpine meadows, lakes, and cascades and focus on outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, fishing, and general relaxation. Located in Yosemite's backcountry, they were designed to provide visitors with a high country experience while at the same time exposing them to wilderness values and the supporting role of the National Park Service. The camps provide food and overnight accommodations in a primitive setting. The park concessionaire operates the camps and offer a resort-like atmosphere, located within the wilderness, forming enclaves of civilization that retain a wilderness feel within indistinct boundaries. They are currently managed as potential wilderness because of their non-conforming use and the system is one of the most popular and sought out attractions in Yosemite.¹⁴² (Figs. 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8)

There are multiple options that are considered when determining how to preserve historic structures because every building is different.¹⁴³ Similarly, every cultural landscape

¹⁴² There is currently a Cultural Landscape Inventory and a National Register Multiple Property Documentation Nomination of the High Sierra Camp system being conducted by Yosemite's History, Architecture, and Landscape Branch of the Division of Resource Management and Science. Such documentation will contribute to the understanding of these historic resources as contributing elements in the cultural landscape as well as document them for their historical significant and association with early backcountry use.

¹⁴³ These preservation approaches are outlined in the *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The four treatment approaches are Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction, and provide the theoretical framework and general guidelines for the treatment of historic properties. Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties: with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Heritage Preservation Services 1995).



Fig: 3.6 Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, n.d. Source: Yosemite Park & Curry Company Collection, Yosemite Archives, Yosemite National Park, El Portal, CA.



Fig: 3.7 Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, August 2010. Source: Photograph by Alison Swing.



Fig: 3.8 *Vogelsang High Sierra Camp overlooking Booth Lake, n.d.* Source: *Yosemite Park & Curry Company Collection, Yosemite Archives, Yosemite National Park, El Portal, CA.*

and Wilderness area is different. The definition of wilderness has changed over time, and wilderness in itself is an evolving natural process. While a systematic theoretical framework must be established towards Wilderness management that focuses on a set system of principles and guidelines, management strategies must be flexible enough to adapt to the specific needs of the area.¹⁴⁴ Wilderness management policies have been established by the National Park Service as seen in *Director's Order #41* and Chapter 6 of the 2006 National Park Service *Management Policies*. These documents provide a theoretical framework for the management

¹⁴⁴ "Preservation of Natural and Wilderness Areas in National Parks" (1957), Yosemite Archives, RMC, Box 34, Series 1 L48, Folder L48 "Wilderness Areas 1955-1956."

of wilderness as conforming to the wilderness character of each area. Yet each designated Wilderness area is different and therefore the actual management approach is dependent on the individual parks as stipulated in their individual General Management Plan.

Yosemite played a predominant role in the evolution of the preservation and conservation movements in the early twentieth century, and the later Wilderness and environmental movements which resulted. Conversely, these movements also played a significant role in the development of Yosemite's Wilderness practices. The popularity of Yosemite's Wilderness areas for recreational use resulted in the establishment of a minimum impact management strategy. This strategy emphasizes public education and outreach through the promotion of Leave no Trace principles and a trailhead quota and backcountry permit system to reduce the impact of visitor use in the backcountry by limiting access. Established in 1970, this policy represents the final evolutionary theme in American environmental history. It is the product of the successful promotion of the National Parks idea and of the environmental movement which placed natural resource protection based on ecological and scientific significance at the forefront of management strategies. Much of Yosemite's wilderness management approach focuses on educating visitors about Wilderness values.¹⁴⁵

Yosemite's Wilderness contains over eight hundred miles of trails. Trails are maintained at standards depending on the quantity and type of use, and their distance from access roads. Bridges are provided where visitor safety is necessitated. A carrying capacity

¹⁴⁵ The Leave no Trace program is an educational and ethical system developed in the 1970s and 1980s intended to educate visitors on their recreational impacts and to provide techniques for minimizing and mitigating their impact on the natural environment through a system of seven principles. The seven principles are: plan ahead and prepare, travel and camp on durable surfaces, dispose of waste properly, leave what you find, minimize campfire impacts, respect wildlife, and be considerate of other visitors. For more information on Leave no Trace, see <http://lnt.org/> (accessed April 24, 2011).

for each established Wilderness zone, “based on physical, ecological, and psychological factors, is established to limit use and preserve the resource integrity. A permit system helps control use and the effects of visitation on the resource by setting limits on the number of people entering each trailhead daily.”¹⁴⁶ Areas that have signs of historical human presence are generally left alone, but managed in a way that minimizes further impact and does not interfere with natural processes or the Wilderness character of the landscape. Therefore, trails, fire pits, fire lookouts, and other cultural resources, as well as other visitors, are accepted in Wilderness areas as long as the predominant character of the Wilderness remains undisturbed and is generally unnoticeable.¹⁴⁷

Yosemite National Park is important because of its role in the evolutionary development of American environmentalism and wilderness thought, and for the establishment of the National Park idea. But the evolution of wilderness throughout American environmental history has also shaped Yosemite’s development through the various social, cultural, and environmental values that have been attributed to it over time. Yosemite’s Wilderness contains a variety of resource types and their presence exemplifies the managerial dynamics that are at the crux of the issues discussed in this thesis.

146 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, *General Management Plan*, 1980, 77.

147 Campfires are only permitted in elevations below 9,600 feet and only in existing fire rings.

CHAPTER 4
YOSEMITE CASE STUDY: HALF DOME CABLES AND TRAIL

Half Dome is the iconic symbol of Yosemite National Park. The Half Dome Cable and Trail corridor is the Park's most popular attraction with thousands of visitors attempting to reach its summit per year. Located in Yosemite's Wilderness, Half Dome was chosen for this case study because of its role as the most widely recognized cultural symbol of Yosemite National Park; because of its association with each of the four themes of American environmental history highlighted in this thesis; and because the issues concerning its use are currently at the forefront of management concerns in the Park.

Half Dome is located at the eastern end of Yosemite Valley. The granite dome is at an elevation of 8,842 feet above sea level and it is characterized by the sheer appearance of its northwestern face. Half Dome is most widely accessed from the Valley floor beginning at the Happy Isles trailhead.¹⁴⁸ Depending on the trail used, the trek ranges from seven to eight miles with an elevation change of 4,737 vertical feet to the summit. The Mist Trail passes along Vernal Falls and the Emerald Pool to Nevada Falls, where it connects with the John Muir trail to Little Yosemite Valley. Alternatively, hikers can start at Happy Isles and use the John Muir Trail the whole way to Little Yosemite Valley. Little Yosemite Valley is located at an elevation of 6,100 feet and is used as a base camp for those who obtain an overnight Wilderness Permit, and who do not want to make the fifteen to sixteen mile round trip hike in one day.¹⁴⁹

148 Half Dome can also be reached via Little Yosemite Valley from several other locations in the Park, including Cloud's Rest, 4.3 miles to the Northeast, and east from the John Muir Trail, which runs 211 miles through the Sierra Nevada between Happy Isles and the summit of Mount Whitney.

149 Little Yosemite Valley is located in Yosemite Wilderness and backpackers are required to have a Wilderness permit starting at the Happy Isles or Glacier Point trailhead for overnight use. It is one of the

From Little Yosemite Valley, hikers proceed north and reach the Half Dome Trail corridor, which consists of three sections. The first section is a series of granite steps comprising twenty-three steep switchbacks leading up from the sub-dome to the Quarter Dome. The steps and retaining walls are of locally quarried granite, and the trail is two-to-four feet wide and covered in decomposed granite. (Fig. 4.1) A level granite section known as the “saddle,” connects the Quarter Dome to the base of Half Dome. Finally, a system of two, 7/8” thick steel cable handrails are fixed along a series of galvanized steel stanchions raised along holes drilled into the granite of the northeast face of the dome. These cables aid users the last eight-hundred feet to the summit. (Fig. 4.2) The cables are situated at arm’s length apart and are intended to be used by visitors as a non-technical and safer alternative for ascending the dome. The stanchions are placed in pairs at ten-foot intervals with a two-by-four wood plank secured at the base as a foothold. (Fig. 4.3) The cables are operational from the end of May to early October, weather permitting. The cable system is removed from the dome from October until Memorial Day to protect it from winter damage, and to prevent visitors from attempting to climb Half Dome during the off-season. (Fig. A4)

Half Dome is the cultural icon of Yosemite National Park and represents a cluster of American cultural values that have been attributed to it over time. The historical ascent of Half Dome, a feat once considered impossible, represents the American desire to conquer the landscape and is possible through the advent of modern day technical rock climbing. George Anderson is documented as the first person to successfully ascend Half

most popular areas in Yosemite because of its proximity to Yosemite Valley, Half Dome, and Cloud’s Rest. The primitive campground contains a Ranger station, food lockers, and a composting toilet. There are two communal campfire rings and potable water must be brought in or treated.



Fig. 4.1 Granite retaining wall on Half Dome Trail, July 2010. Source: Photograph by Alison Swing.



Fig. 4.2 Cable system on northeastern slope of Half Dome, July 2010. Source: Photograph by Alison Swing.



Fig. 4.3 Half Dome cable system looking down, July 2010. Source: Photograph by Alison Swing.

Dome in 1875. Anderson's climb laid the precedent for the cable system that is used today. The dome was previously declared to be unclimbable because of its extreme steepness which varies from forty-five to sixty degrees, and the slipperiness of the polished granite slope. Following the longstanding American desire to conquer the landscape, Anderson invented a system to climb the eastern slope of the dome. One at a time, Anderson hand-drilled hand-made eyebolts into the granite slope. He then fastened rope to the eyebolt for safety, and used the head of each as a foothold to pull himself up the back of the dome. Anderson's ascent is significant as the first documented instance of anyone climbing Half Dome unaided except by his rope system until 1919. (Figs. 4.4 and 4.5) It is also the precedent for the design and location of the current cable system. Anderson's cable system is significant for its introduction of bolt placement in modern American rock climbing. As a result, many rock climbers consider Yosemite to be the birthplace of technical rock climbing in America, and there are now over a dozen routes to the summit of Half Dome.¹⁵⁰

In 1919, the Sierra Club installed a new trail corridor in the approximate location of Anderson's original route. This system included granite stone steps that switchback up the sub-dome to the Quarter Dome, and a double handrail of steel cables supported by iron stanchions crossed with wooden footholds thirty feet apart leading up the eastern slope of Half Dome. The posts were set into sockets drilled into the granite at ten-foot intervals. The Sierra Club created a memorial plaque and wooden arch to celebrate Anderson's historic ascent at the base of the sub-dome. It has since been removed, but evidence of it remains.

150 Daniel Schaible, "Half Dome Cables and Trail," *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Draft, HAL, RMS, Yosemite National Park, December 2010), 3-8. There are few existing remnants from Anderson's original descent. Several 5/8" drill holes are visible, one with a sawn off bolt still in it. Two of Anderson's eyebolts are located in the Yosemite National Park Museum Collection and one by the Yosemite Climbing Association.

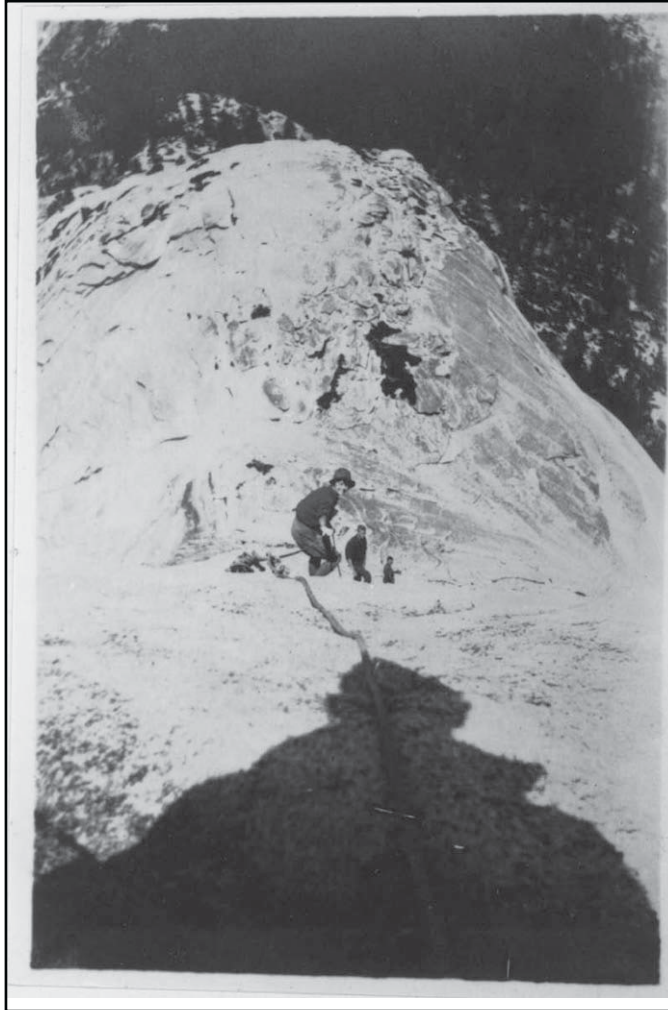


Fig: 4.4 George Anderson's rope system pre-cables, c. 1915-1919, photographer unknown. Source: Yosemite Research Library, Yosemite National Park, CA.



Fig: 4.5 George Anderson on Half Dome, photo by S.C. Walker, 1877. Source: "George Anderson, First up the Dome," Yosemite Nature Notes 46 (2), 1977. Yosemite Online Library.



Fig. 4.6 George Anderson Memorial Arch, 1919. Photograph by Francois Matthes. Source: Yosemite Research Library, Yosemite National Park, CA



Fig. 4.7 Ruin of George Anderson Memorial Arch, July 2010. Source: Photograph by Alison Swing.

(Figs. 4.6 and 4.7) The stairway retains the same character and historic alignment as the original trail from 1919, except for some repairs on the granite steps and re-grading done in 1972. Together, the granite steps and cable system comprise the Half Dome Cables and Trail corridor. Overtime, the cables, stanchions, and new holes in the granite have been replaced as needed, and the current system is essentially identical in design, alignment, and location as the Sierra Club's 1919 route. National Park Service replaced the cable system partially in 1920, entirely in 1934 by the CCC, and again in 1984 by the National Park Service Trail Crews.¹⁵¹ (Figs. 4.8, 4.9, 4.10)

Nineteenth century romanticism, expressed through art and literature of Yosemite, contributed to the appreciation of Half Dome as an example of the picturesque and the sublime. The most iconic viewsheds of Half Dome are from Glacier Point, the Wawona Tunnel lookout at the western end of the Valley, and from the Valley floor. These views have been consistently reproduced over time, and are essentially representative of Yosemite National Park as a whole.

Half Dome has become a national and international icon associated first and foremost with Yosemite National Park, which in return, represents the model that spearheaded the National Park idea. Half Dome is featured on the logos of many of Yosemite's partners including the Delaware North Company (DNC), the park's concessionaire, and the environmental group, The Sierra Club. Half Dome is also the inspiration behind the outdoor outfitting company, The North Face, Inc.'s name and logo.

Finally, Half Dome is associated with the various protection movements in the twentieth century which helped lead to the proliferation of outdoor recreation

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 3-5.



Fig. 4.8 Half Dome Cable system, 1919, photographer unknown. Source: Yosemite Research Library, Yosemite National Park, CA.



Fig. 4.9 Half Dome cables, July 2010. Source: Photograph by Alison Swing.

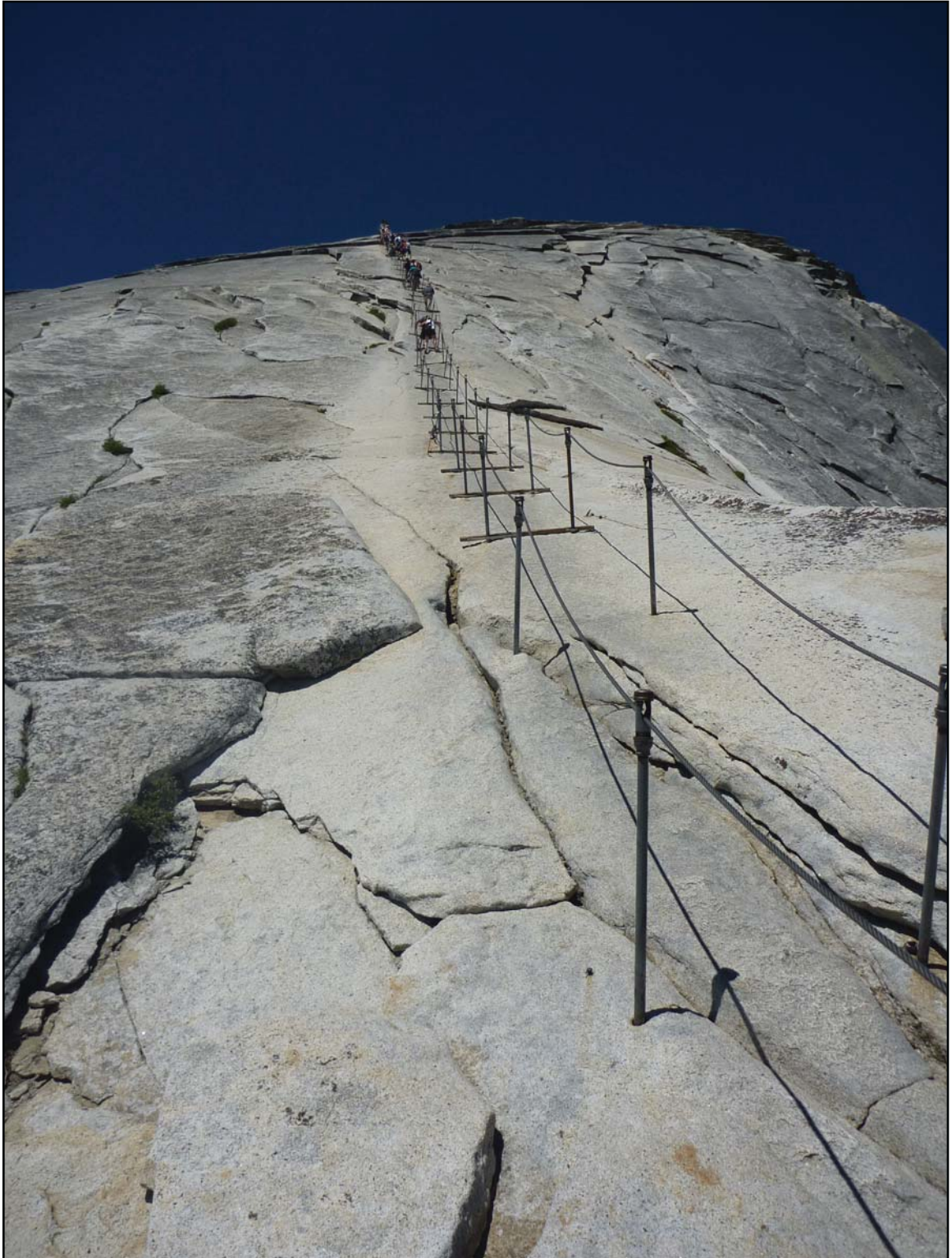


Fig. 4.10 Half Dome Cables, July 2010. Source: Photograph by Alison Swing.

and wilderness appreciation in the United States. As a natural feature, Half Dome is demonstrative of the geological evolution and ecology of the Park's landscape which should be protected and appreciated. This concept is the cornerstone of the National Park idea as it evolved throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. American environmentalism, as well as the preservation and wilderness movements, played a large role in this evolutionary process. Half Dome exemplifies the popularity of outdoor recreation that exploded during the second-half of the twentieth century, evidenced by the thousands of visitors who attempt to see and climb the famous dome each year. The combination of Half Dome's cultural and natural values, make it perhaps the most important contributing element of Yosemite's cultural landscape.

The History, Architecture, and Landscapes branch of the Resources Management and Science Division at Yosemite National Park is currently finalizing a National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the Half Dome Cables and Trail corridor. It is being nominated as a district with three contributing resources: the trail alignment, the ruins of the George Anderson memorial arch, and the granite steps and retaining walls. The resource is eligible based on its integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling and association. The replacement of the cables over time, has been compatible with the historic character of the original design, but because the materials are not historic they are being nominated as a non-contributing, but compatible resource.¹⁵² The resource is being designated for local significance under National Register Criterion A for its association with Entertainment/Recreation and Transportation, as one of the first trails to a mountain

¹⁵² Daniel Schaible, Historic Landscape Architect, Yosemite National Park, telephone conversation with Alison Swing, April 26, 2011. Additional documentation of the retaining walls is scheduled for the 2011 season.

summit at Yosemite, and as a one of the most difficult trail building projects in the Park; and for Invention, for the introduction of new climbing techniques engineered by Anderson.

It is also being designated for local significance under Criterion B for its association with Anderson as the first documented person to climb Half Dome.¹⁵³ The nomination explains,

The historic feelings of adventure, exploration, and triumph are still experienced by those who ascend the Half Dome cables... This route conveys a direct and tangible association to the site's significance in recreation, transportation and invention and to its association with George Anderson. This popular hike has captured the imagination of Yosemite visitors since George Anderson first ascended the granite monolith in 1875 and it remains a definitive experience for park visitors today.¹⁵⁴

The National Park Service has successfully "branded" Half Dome as a symbol of Yosemite, as a challenging adventure and experience for visitors, and as a significance scenic component of the landscape which is available for public enjoyment in perpetuity. Half Dome is considered an important and rewarding experience for visitors. The challenging journey to the dome and up the cables is considered the ultimate milestone of a Yosemite experience and a goal for thousands of visitors a year. The cable system has enabled widespread access to Half Dome by almost anyone willing to attempt it. But like other promotional campaigns historically undertaken by the National Park Service, the popularity of Half Dome as a signature hiking and wilderness experience in Yosemite has resulted in various management issues over the last several decades.¹⁵⁵

153 Schaible, "Half Dome Cables and Trail," 6-7; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Nomination Form* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resource Division, 1997), 36-51. Properties listed under National Register Criterion A refers are significant for their association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of American history. Properties listed under Criterion B are significant for their association with the lives of significant persons from American history.

154 Ibid., 4.

155 Road and building development in the twentieth century resulted in the overpopulation of Yosemite by both automobiles and people. For information on National Park Service promotional and development projects, see Sutter, *Driven Wild*; Carr, *Wilderness by Design*; Carr, *Mission 66*; and McClelland, *Building the National Parks*.

The first management concern is for the potential environmental impact that the sheer number of visitors has on the resource and its surrounding environment. In 2008, over 70,000 visitors hiked the Half Dome Cables and Trail corridor, most completing it over one day.¹⁵⁶ As a result, environmental concerns have arisen over the impact that this dense usage has on the resource itself as well as the surrounding area that receives ancillary contact from users. Yet while the National Park Service officially voices both environmental and safety concerns, all the studies conducted so far relate exclusively to visitor safety and experience.

A second management concern involves the “psychological carrying capacity” of the site. The large number of visitors that hike to Half Dome degrades the quality of a visitor’s Wilderness experience. A *Half Dome Cable Monitoring and Visitor Use Estimate* study, conducted in 2008, explained, “Issues related to visitor use of the Half Dome Trail and cables route are salient within this study, not only with respect to visitor safety, but also in terms of the experiential wilderness values for which the NPS is mandated to manage the area.”¹⁵⁷ Yet there are limits to the psychological carrying capacity because every user has a different level of tolerance and awareness of other users. Roderick Nash explains,

Social scientists have discovered that for many wilderness users contact with other users does not prevent a place from being perceived as wilderness. There are limits, course. As visitation increases there is a point at which the wilderness quality of a place disappears. This impact of wilderness lovers upon other wilderness lovers is the main reason why wilderness can be loved to death. It also provides the philosophical basis for controlling the numbers of even highly sensitive, skilled backcountry campers allowed to enter a particular wilderness at given time.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Steve Lawson, et al., *Half Dome Cable Modeling and Visitor Use Estimation*, Yosemite National Park (White River Junction, VT: R.S.G. Inc. Transportation, 2009), 13.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Nash, 325.

This is the case for Half Dome. Use has increase so exponentially in the past several decades that many users do not even consider themselves to be in a wilderness setting at all.¹⁵⁹

A third management concern is for visitor safety. The large number of visitor on Half Dome has caused massive congestion problems along the cables. This has resulted in unsafe conditions and safety concerns by both managers and the public. Up to 1,200 people are known to climb the cables per day.¹⁶⁰ This has resulted in long lines and standstills both at the base of the cables and along the cable route. Standstills on the cable route pose a safety concern as visitors attempt to bypass slower users by moving to the outside of the cables. Long lines at the base of the cables result in frustrated users who then make unsafe decisions. Another concern is for the engineering capacity of the cables to accommodate the high number of users.¹⁶¹ The 2008 *Half Dome Cable Modeling and Visitor Use Estimation* study was conducted using computer modeling software and survey research to determine the effects of overuse on visitor use experiences. The purpose of the report was to understand the relationship between the number of people using the trail and the amount of time spent on the cables. These numbers were used to project how crowded the cables are at any one time in order to predict future use and propose solutions. The report focused a large part on visitor safety along the cable route using visitor counts, route surveys to log the number of users leaving each trailhead, photographic counts, and opinion surveys.¹⁶²

Solutions have been considered to aid in the reduction of congestion on the

¹⁵⁹ Yosemite National Park, "Draft Public Scoping Analysis Report," *Yosemite National Park Half Dome Trail Stewardship Plan*, National Park Service, Dec. 2010, 5-6, accessed April 25, 2011, <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&PageID=414791>.

¹⁶⁰ Larson, et al., 13.

¹⁶¹ "Draft Public Scoping Analysis Report," 7

¹⁶² Larson, et al., 2-10.

Half Dome Cables and Trail and to mitigate visitor safety concerns. Alternatives include removing the cables altogether, adding a third cable along the route, and limiting access through day-use permits.¹⁶³ Beginning in the 2010 season, an interim permit system was introduced which required hikers to attain a permit to ascend the cables for Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays. The purpose of the permit system was to attempt to regulate daily use to four hundred people per day.¹⁶⁴ At the end of the summer, the National Park Service created a *Half Dome Trail Visitor Use Monitoring Report* which concluded,

A large amount of temporal displacement occurred as a result of the three-day permit system where visitor use on Half Dome is lower on permit days than on non-permit days. Specifically, average daily visitors use in 2010 on permit days (i.e., 301 visitors/day) is similar to average daily visitor use on weekdays in 2008 (i.e., 416 visitors/day). Likewise, average daily visitor use in 2010 on non-permit days (i.e., 635 visitors/day) is similar to average daily visitor use on Saturdays and holidays in 2008 (i.e. 692 visitors/day). Thus it appears that an unintended consequence of the permit system was the interchange of use levels from weekend to weekdays.¹⁶⁵

On December 13, 2010, it was announced that the permits would be required to climb the Half Dome cables every day for the 2011 season. Another report will be conducted to disseminate the upcoming 2011 season's findings which will be combined with the results of the Park's long-term stewardship plan.¹⁶⁶

A long-term stewardship plan for Half Dome is currently being undertaken to provide a long-term management strategy that is consistent with upholding the mandates of

163 "Draft Public Scoping Analysis Report," 6-13.

164 David Pettebone, et al., *Half Dome Trail Visitor Use Monitoring Report*, Yosemite National Park, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, November 2010, 1, accessed April 25, 2011, <http://www.nps.gov/yose/naturescience/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&PageID=395017>; Larson, 51. The four hundred people limit was established to ensure "free flow" conditions.

165 Pettebone, et al, iii.

166 National Park Service, "Permits to Ascend Cables will be Required Seven Days Per Week," *Press Release, December 13, 2010*, accessed April 28, 2011, <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parknews/hdpermits3.htm>.

both the Organic Act and the Wilderness Act as they pertain to Half Dome. The plan has five main objectives. It will consider all alternatives for protecting the wilderness character of Half Dome including abstention; it will create management policies to protect all characteristics of the cultural landscape; it will establish management policies and parameters to maintain an appropriate carrying capacity of the Half Dome trail; it will provide unhindered travel along the trail; and it will continue to monitor conditions until the plan's objectives are fulfilled.¹⁶⁷ A scoping report was completed in December 2010 by holding three public meetings in May and June of 2010. These meeting followed the instillation of the Half Dome cables for the season and the implementation of the weekend permit system. Currently an alternative use concept is being developed for Half Dome. Future phases of the Half Dome Plan include an Environmental Assessment (EA) in the 2012 season.¹⁶⁸

While only the first phase of the stewardship plan, the scoping report disclosed a variety of concerns from participants regarding public access, wilderness experience, cable modification, other infrastructure improvement including sanitation, public awareness, the permit system, safety, and the planning process and policies of the stewardship plan.¹⁶⁹ The participants of the scoping report also furnished a variety of solutions to these concerns. The range of concerns and proposed solutions demonstrates the diversity of users and values that exist. This is important because it suggests the impossibility of making everyone happy in values-based preservation, especially where multiple values are attributed to a resource.

Half Dome, like most cultural resources has multiple stakeholders, each of whom

167 "Draft Public Scoping Analysis Report," 1.

168 Yosemite National Park, "Half Dome Plan," accessed April 25, 2011, <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/hdp.htm>; and "Draft Public Scoping Analysis Report," 1-3.

169 "Draft Public Scoping Analysis Report," 3-19.

have a different set of values that are not always in union. Half Dome has many different types of users including the average visitor, ardent rock climbers, National Park Service employees of diverse backgrounds and agendas, and Wilderness advocates of varying degree of devotion. The biggest problem facing cultural resource management is the attempt to accommodate the needs and objectives of each type of user, because it simply cannot be done. This is especially the case with resources that possess multiple types of values. Because Half Dome is located in designated Wilderness, it must be managed in a manner that adheres to both the objectives of the Organic Act and the Wilderness Act. The long-standing historic use and significance of the cable system from a historic preservation standpoint prevents it from being destroyed without consideration of the adverse affects this would have on the resource.¹⁷⁰ Additionally, as underscored by the 2005 lawsuit at Olympic National Park, cultural resources are allowed to exist in Wilderness Areas because the Wilderness Act does not lower the standards “evolved for the use and preservation of such park, monument, or other unit of the national park system in accordance with the [Organic Act], the statutory authority under which the area was created, or any other Act of Congress which might pertain to or affect such area,” as long as the management of the cultural resources is administered in a way that preserves the Wilderness character of the area.¹⁷¹

This is the fundamental contradiction in the management of cultural resources in designated Wilderness areas and is at the crux of the management issues concerning Half Dome. Removing the cables would adversely affect the historical design, use, and association of the cable system by limiting access to the resource to all but skilled technical

¹⁷⁰ The Half Dome Cable and Trail is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, any federal undertaking must undergoes the Section 106 review process.

¹⁷¹ The Wilderness Act, Section 4(a)(3).

climbers. Yet retention of the cable system has negatively affected the Wilderness experience of visitors through overcrowding. Environmental concerns will be addressed with the implementation of the Environmental Assessment in 2012. Furthermore, a proposal to create a third cable along the route is prohibited by the Wilderness Act, which proscribes any new installation in Wilderness areas.

Wilderness and cultural values in American environmental history produced the Organic Act and the Wilderness Act. The implementation of these laws has, in effect, created another layer of values incorporated into the landscape which managers must consider. Half Dome has become a vital component of Yosemite's cultural landscape. The issues presented here are significant because they demonstrate how past values have adversely impacted the resource and created the need for a new system of management strategies and policies to mitigate these impacts.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

As Wilderness evolved with changing American attitudes and values, a rift formed which suggests that wilderness and culture are inherently different and incompatible, when in reality, they are historically intertwined. This rift has shaped decisions concerning cultural and Wilderness management in the National Park System. “Cultural landscapes” have emerged as a concept for integrating natural and cultural elements that share the same context and cultural values. Yet policies over how cultural resources and Wilderness areas can be included as cultural landscapes have not yet emerged as a workable methodology due to limits in cultural landscape terminology and the omission of Wilderness as a type of cultural landscape.

The Wilderness Act was created in 1964 as a product of the different wilderness values that emerged in the twentieth century. The Wilderness Act qualified wilderness values by defining and reinforcing the qualities of the cultural perception of wilderness as significant and worthy of protection. Designating land as Wilderness is an intervention in itself and there are few, if any areas in the United States that have been physically unaltered by human presence at some point in time. Recognizing this offers a more realistic and deeper understanding, and experience of the land. It also broadens and expands the awareness of what wilderness really means to Americans. Americans seek an idealized experience in which they stand outside the realm of civilization, and for many this is an attractive departure from the everyday. The idealization of wilderness is projected through a set of values that have been derived from the scarcity of the resource. Wilderness values

emanate from the lack of wilderness in reality. The evolution of American cultural values and attitudes over time has formulated current views. The four comprehensive themes presented in this study: conquest, romanticism, nationalism, and protection, have all culminated in the projection of the American values onto resources that are perceived as rare and therefore significant.

The Wilderness Act is a good thing. It is important to have areas that are set aside and acknowledged as another type of resource which hold significance apart from traditional values focusing on the physical manifestations of American culture. Yet there are some Wilderness areas that contain significant cultural associations as well. Ignoring this is an insult to the place as a whole and to the stories that it can tell. Cultural resources, many of which are historically significant, exist in designated Wilderness areas. William Cronon explains that the “rewilding” of nature is appropriate in some areas where the perceived value of the land is greater than what may have once existed there. But in other areas, what once existed should not be forgotten. In these areas, nature and culture are so intermingled that they have become an important part of the landscape’s significance.¹⁷² Nature and culture are compatible; but because humans attach value to everything, nature and culture merely have different cultural values attributed to them. This makes it difficult to merge the two types of resources. Yet in some areas, this merger needs happen in order to not lose sight of the greater picture; that many Wilderness areas also have provocative stories to tell. People need to understand the impact of humans on the environment as culture-bound and time-specific. Even though there may not be explicit evidence of human inhabitation or use, the knowledge that humans have still impacted the landscape and that there is a

172 Cronon, “The Riddle of the Apostle Islands,” 36-38.

story to tell is important in achieving a full understanding and authentic experience of a place. Authenticity does not mean that Wilderness areas must be pristine and untrammelled. Rather, authenticity is the acknowledgement of other priorities and uses of perceived greater value that have been attributed to the area and resulted in its designation as Wilderness. The progression of cultural landscape studies in academia and on the organization level at the National Park Service is beginning to bridge the dualistic nature of between wilderness and cultural values which exist in the same setting, and of which are historically linked.

National Park Service policy dictates that natural systems should not be preserved as if they are static, because they are not. Cultural landscape methods enable managers to work with the changing nature of ecosystems for land management rather than attempting to manage land as preservationists would attempt to manage a house museum as a static, unchanging red velvet rope environment. Contemporary Wilderness advocates might suggest “rewilding,” the act of letting everything grow and making no attempt to artificially alter the landscape. But Wilderness areas are already artificial by definition, so rather than reinforcing a “cultural myth,” management practices should focus on making this inherent contradiction more visible to visitors to provide a more authentic understanding of the landscape.

The National Park Service is beginning to critically examine the divide between cultural and wilderness resource management, showing concern for providing an authentic visitor experience that visitors expect, and focusing on the need to bring both management objectives together. One of their goals for the next century as the one-hundred year anniversary of the National Park Service approaches is to “overcome the organizational

and attitudinal barriers that prevent effective cooperation.”¹⁷³ The National Park Service, academics, Wilderness organizations, and various other stakeholders are coming to terms with the inherent contradiction that exist in Wilderness management: that wilderness is a cultural construction; that there are extremely few places that have been untouched by human intervention; and there are significant cultural resources in Wilderness areas that provide important information about the landscape and how it has come to exist today.

Stephanie Toothman suggests that the goal of the Park Service today is to bring everyone to together with the same goals for preservation, especially in larger, Western parks where there still seems be disconnect between natural and cultural resource management. Cultural landscapes are a large component of this dialog because humans are a part of every dimension of everything. Toothman explains that the way to bring together natural and cultural management objectives lies in bringing *the* story into the treatment of the landscape and showing how it connects to the place.¹⁷⁴

The Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, has established *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* which provide professional standards and guidelines for preserving cultural landscapes and applying treatment options that follow the terminology created in the 1992 revision of the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The *Secretary of Interior's Standards* expanded the historic resource types to include cultural landscapes, and outlined four types of treatment options: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Additionally, *Preservation Brief #36: Protecting*

¹⁷³ National Park Second Century Committee, *Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation Committee Report* (National Park Conservation Association, 2009), 4.

¹⁷⁴ Paraphrased. Stephanie Toothman, “Conversations in Heritage Leadership,” lecture Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, November 22, 2011. (emphasis added).

Cultural Landscapes outlines the preservation process for preserving cultural landscapes that focuses on research, inventory, and documentation to inform treatment options. The National Park Service has identified four different types of cultural landscapes which are not mutually exclusive: historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, ethnographic landscapes, and historic sites.¹⁷⁵

All of these tools have contributed to a wider appreciation of the relationship between nature and culture, and have assisted in closing the gap between cultural and natural resource protection in the past several decades. Yet none of these approaches fully incorporate the treatment of Wilderness areas as cultural landscapes. Therefore, I recommend that Wilderness areas that are equally valued both culturally and for their wilderness qualities as contributing to the full understanding of the area should be considered Cultural Wilderness Landscapes. Beyond recent progress that has acknowledged Wilderness' inherent contradictions and in determining that historic resources within its boundaries are not necessarily nonconforming, Cultural Wilderness should be considered an additional cultural landscape type whose treatment has not yet been addressed.

From an academic perspective, any interaction between nature and culture can be considered a cultural landscape. By itself, this concept is too broad to be applicable and to have any purposeful value in resource protection. In order to give cultural landscapes scope and perspective and to make them a viable management concept, the National Park Service, defines cultural landscapes as those deemed historically significant. Yet cultural landscapes are not a property type on the National Register of Historic Places. This omission makes

¹⁷⁵ Charles A. Birnbaum, ed., *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties: with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Heritage Preservation Services, Historic Landscape Initiative, 1996); and Weeks.

it difficult to fully apply National Register criteria to a landscape, although they can be a type of significance. Currently under National Register terminology, cultural landscapes exist only in name and mean little beyond an incidental title and infer little beyond what the resource really is significant for. At Yosemite, for example, if the Half Dome Cables and Trail was nominated as a cultural landscape it would not change or infer anything beyond calling it the Half Dome Cables and Trail Cultural Landscape.¹⁷⁶

One solution may be to establish cultural landscapes as a separate property type. Landscapes can be listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a Multiple Property listing entitled, “Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks,” which was added to the National Register system in 1995.¹⁷⁷ But these parks are essentially listed as districts, as the Half Dome Cables and Trail will be. The addition of “sites” as a property type, and National Register Criterion D fulfilled the need to include archaeology as significant cultural resources.¹⁷⁸ Historic park landscapes essentially meet the definitions of Designed and Rural Landscapes, but nothing takes into account Cultural Wilderness Landscapes.

Currently, Cultural Landscape Inventories (CLI) and Cultural Landscape Reports (CLR) are the only tools available to evaluate cultural landscapes for eligibility and listing on the National Register. Therefore, standardized terminology in the National Register that incorporates historic cultural landscapes is needed. A re-organization of National Register terminology that incorporates Cultural Wilderness Landscapes is necessary at the highest organizational level to achieve a standardize system of identification, evaluation,

¹⁷⁶ Personal telephone conversation with Daniel Schaible, Historic Landscape Architect, Yosemite National Park, National Park Service, April 26, 2011.

¹⁷⁷ McClelland, 487.

¹⁷⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 36-51. A property is significant under National Register Criterion D if a property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

and documentation of potential Cultural Wilderness Landscapes that will encompass their significance.

National Register Bulletins carry a lot of weight in the preservation world. A Cultural Wilderness Landscape Bulletin should be created to provide standardization similar to other bulletins about cultural landscapes, such as those addressing the nomination of rural and “designed” landscapes.¹⁷⁹ The document would define and describe their characteristics, and suggest practical methods for identifying, evaluating and documenting them. This would include evaluating their significance and integrity in a way that underscores the relationship between wilderness qualities and cultural values. Ideally, it would provide guidance on how National Register criteria could be applied to Wilderness, but changes must first be made to better incorporate landscapes into the National Register as a property type. Additionally, this document would help Wilderness and cultural resource managers formulate a practical approach for managing both resources in a way that does not adversely affect the integrity of either and which upholds both the Wilderness Act and the Organic Act. This is the inherent tension that exists in managing culture in a wilderness setting and why guidelines are needed to ensure that cultural resources are managed in a way that conforms to the Wilderness Act, while providing that Wilderness is managed in a way that does not cover up or lessen the value and significance of historic resources. The bulletin would provide guidelines specific to Wilderness areas which does not currently exist in this form.

Overall, the knowledge of cultural resources in Wilderness areas is integral in understanding the past historic and prehistoric uses of the parks such as Yosemite, and

¹⁷⁹ J. Timothy Keller and Genevieve P. Keller, *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Historic Designed Landscapes* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resource Division, 2003); and Linda Flint McClelland, et al., *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999).

how these uses have affected ecological and cultural trends. Wilderness areas should be preserved as wilderness, but in some areas, attempts should be made to interpret the cultural aspects to realize the full scale and impact of humans on the environment. This can be done through historic resource surveys, which contribute to the current information known about Parks' history and provide an opportunity to educate visitors on the human impacts that are present in the National Parks. Education will help prevent a "cultural myth" from occurring in which visitors believe that Wilderness areas like Yosemite are less impacted by humans than they really are. Changing wilderness values over time has taught us that as time passes new significances and values arise and must be accommodated and incorporated into the living history that Americans call "wilderness."

This study has attempted to provide a framework for the evolution of current wilderness thought to demonstrate that changing trends in American environmental history have shaped current policy at the National Park Service level. Yosemite National Park is currently at the crux of these issues and has served here as a case study for its outstanding cultural and natural qualities. New perspectives within academia and at the National Park Service suggest the divide between cultural and natural resource management may be bridged in both theory and practice. Using history as a precedent, managers must evaluate both the best and the worst ideas that have emerged from American environmental history to formulate the best way to close this divide. Doing so is crucial for the future preservation of historic resources that exist within Wilderness areas in National Parks, and without of which the significant stories and histories that these areas offer cannot be fully appreciated as significant components of today's Cultural Wilderness Landscape.

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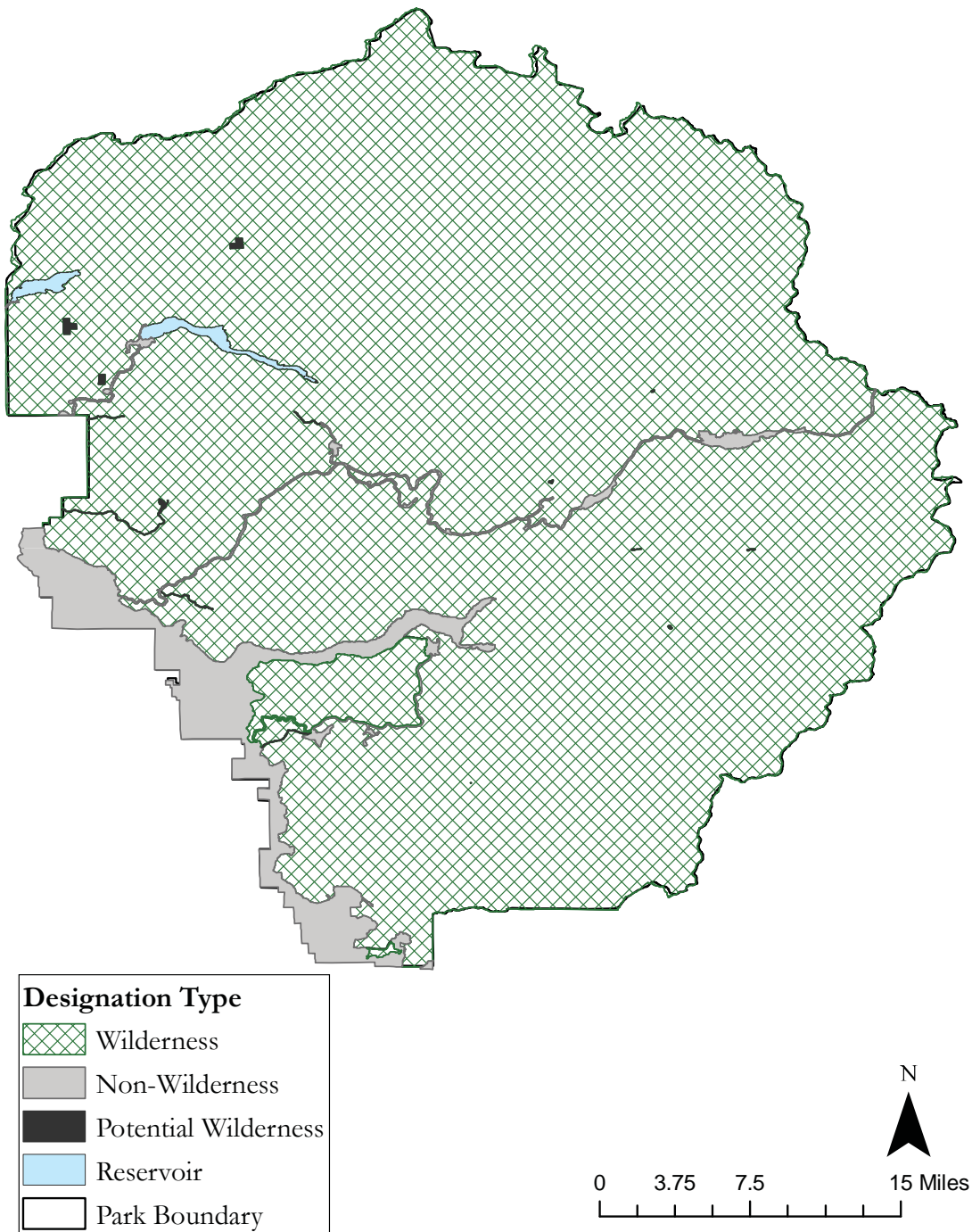
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APPENDIX



Fig. A1 National Park Service holdings in California. Source: National Park Service.

Yosemite National Park Wilderness Area Boundaries



Data Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Natural Resource Program Center.

Fig. A2 Yosemite Wilderness area boundaries.

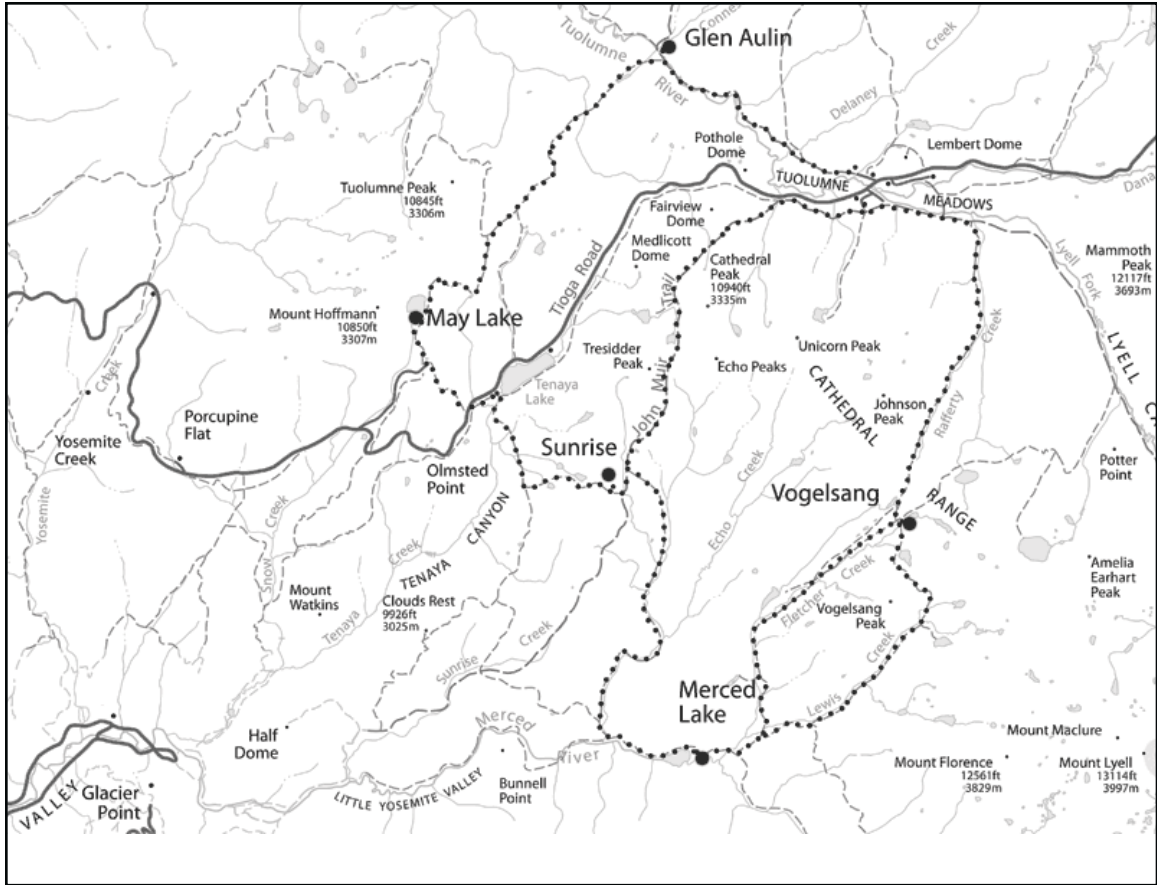
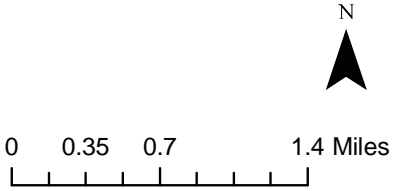
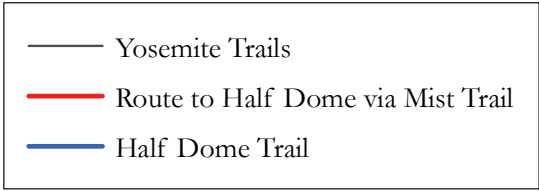
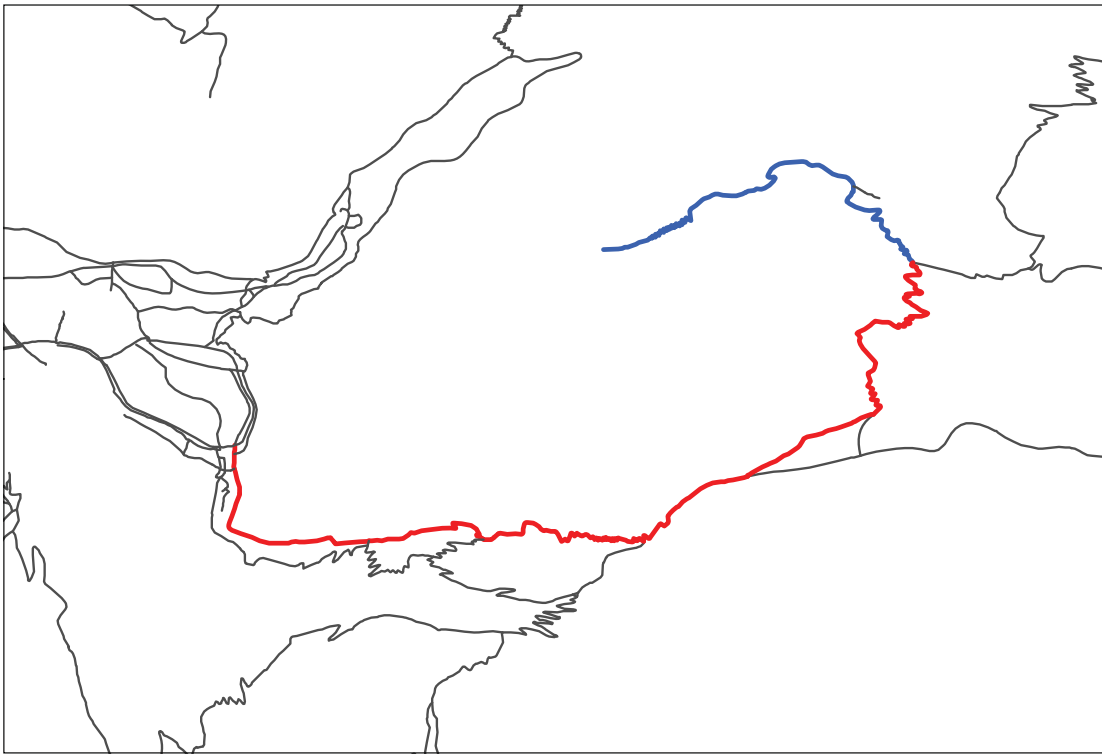


Fig A3 High Sierra Camp Loop, n.d. Source: DeLaware North Company brochure.

Yosemite National Park Trail to Half Dome



Data Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Natural Resource Program Center.

Fig. A4 Trail to Half Dome

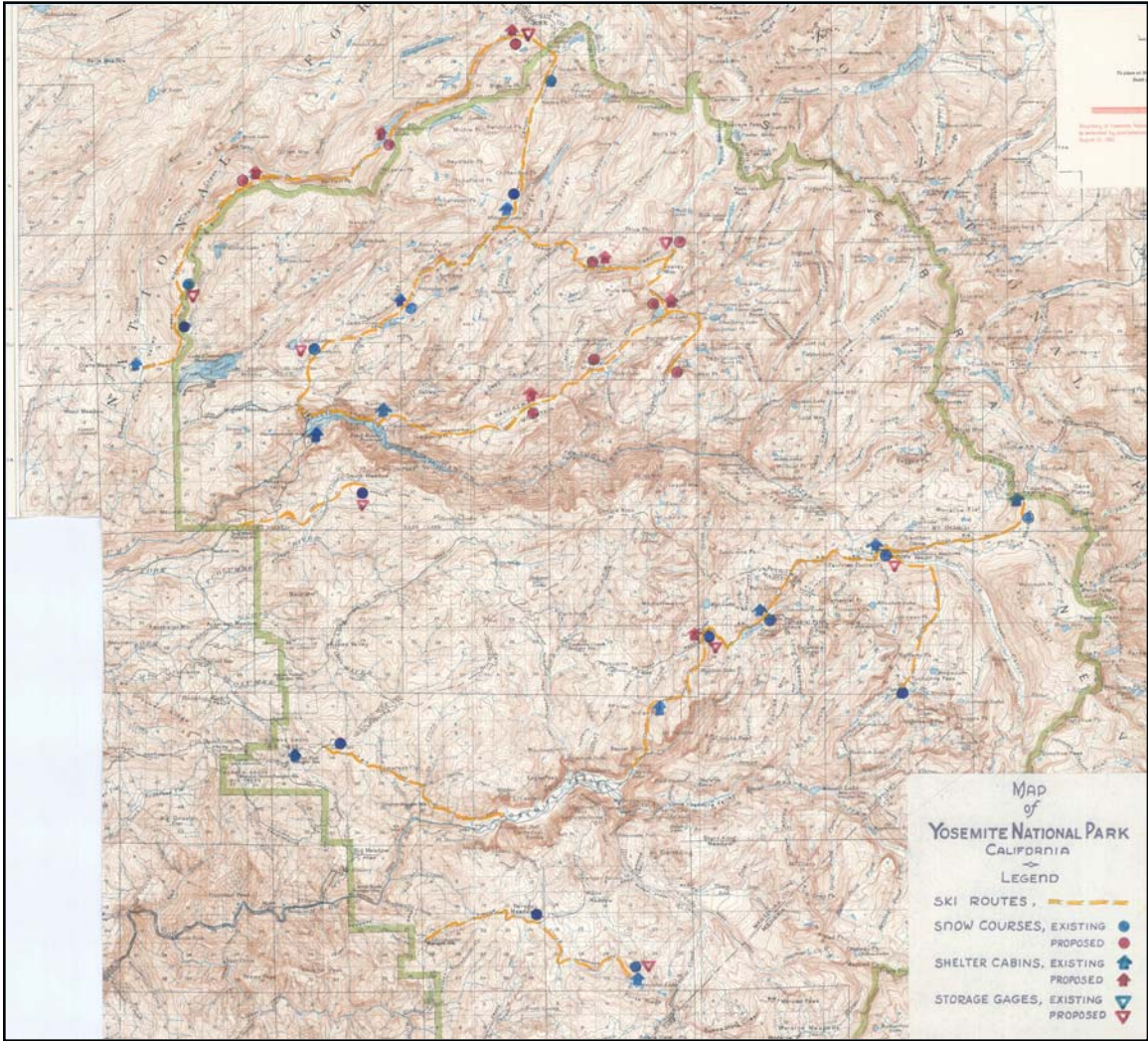


Fig. A6 Backcountry resources map, n.d. Source: History, Architecture, and Landscapes branch, Resources Management and Science Division, Yosemite National Park, El Portal, CA



Fig. A7 "Half Dome, Yosemite National Park, California," c. 1922. Source: Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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