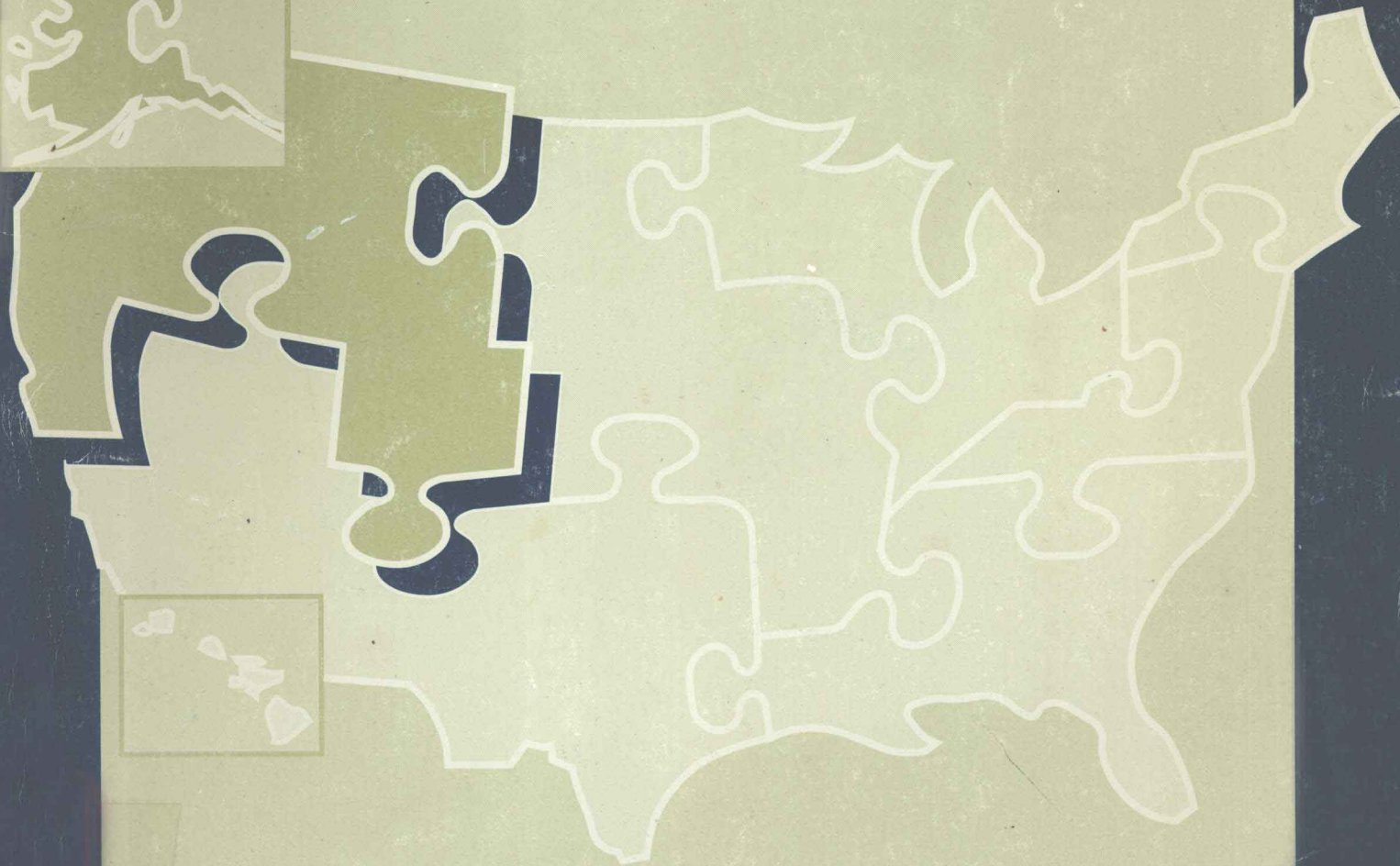


NORTHWEST

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES MANUAL

*Bringing Environmental Issues
Closer to Home*



BARRY THOMAS

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California State University at Fullerton



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Regional Environmental Issues Manuals are unique supplements designed to accompany Saunders College Publishing environmental textbooks including *Environment*, by Raven, Berg, Johnson, and *Environmental Science* by Arms. Each *Regional Environmental Issues Manual* is designed to promote grassroots awareness of local environmental issues, problem-solving analysis, and verbal and written discussion of topics that pertain to specific regions of the United States.

Regional Environmental Issues Manuals attempt to present a range of views on select environmental issues in a non-biased

approach within limited space constraints. The goal of the manuals is to encourage student individual analysis of complex issues which go beyond the scope of the publication. Thought-provoking questions, commentary, and readings have been included to stimulate students to investigate the issue in further detail beyond the manual's presentation.

We invite your comments, ideas, and feedback. After reading the manual, please complete and return the Professor and Student Comments Form located in the back of the manual.

Acknowledgments

The project has been made possible with the help of my students; Susan Richards, Cheryl Solomon, George Wirtes, James Wilson, Michele Garden, Matt Atwood, and Amy Fields.

Credit must be given for their help in finding those interesting articles and preparation of the text.

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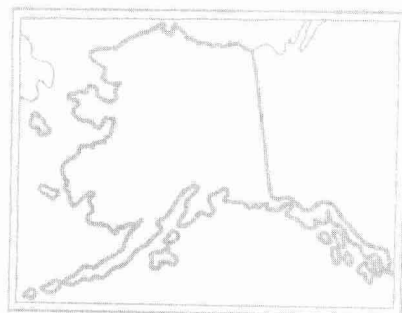
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ALASKA
WASHINGTON
IDAHO
OREGON
MONTANA
WYOMING
COLORADO
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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1. Life in the Fast Lane of Our National Parks

by Susan Richards

This exercise investigates the National Park design controversy and the problem of getting rid of the developments and yet accommodate the crowds. Consider whether we should accommodate the tourist or do we maintain the primitive state of our National Parks? Two National Parks are highlighted, Yosemite National Park in California, and Denali National Park in Alaska. Our second concern is what happens to our wildlife in these situations? Wildlife concerns versus visitor demands. The problem: How can we limit the human-bear conflicts in Yellowstone National Park and how can we reintroduce the wolf to Yellowstone National Park in Montana?

2. Endangered in the Northwest

by Cheryl Solomon

This exercise examines the issues surrounding the controversy of the spotted owl, black footed ferrets and our amphibian populations of the Northwest. What is happening to them? Why are they having trouble and what can be done to remedy the situation?

3. Marine Mammals...Cute But With a Price

by George Wirtes and James Wilson

This exercise investigates the problems with two of our well known marine mammals, the sea otter and the sea lion. One is cuddly with a public image that is hard to beat and the other relies more upon the scientific data for its protection rationale. Both are fully protected but the conflict between them and people are putting strain upon the protected species laws. The sea otter is not just a small adorable animal, it is a feeding machine that consumes greater than 20% of its body weight in food each day. Favorite foods include bivalves, sea urchins, abalone, and crustaceans. The sea otter (*Enhydra lutris*), once had a range from the tip of Baja California to the Aleutian Islands in Alaska. Unfortunately, their pelt has been such a valued commodity that they were almost trapped into extinction by American and Russian fur traders. By 1914 the total otter population was estimated to be approximately 100 animals. Action was taken in 1911 in the form of an international treaty prohibiting the trade of otter pelts and in 1973 the effort was further supported by the U.S. Marine Protection Act. Today, the otter population in Alaska ranges from 100,000 to 200,000 animals and 1,600 animals in California. It is evident that the populations are recovering very well. They continue to slowly push their way south invading the territory they once occupied. With their expansion they bring several concerns to government, special interest groups, and private industry.

4. Logging and the New Deal

by Michele Garden

In this study the logging practices of the U.S. Forest Service comes under scrutiny. Sometimes the deals arranged by Government services are not in our best interest. In this case you be the judge. Should we stimulate the local economy at a high subsidy or should we protect the resource?

5. The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

by Matt Atwood

On Good Friday, March 24, 1989, the fully loaded oil tanker, Exxon Valdez, ran aground on Bligh Reef spilling 232,000 barrels (11 million gallons) of crude oil into the pristine beauty of Prince William Sound, Alaska. The oil spread in a Southwesterly direction into the gulf of Alaska covering over 25,000 kilometers of coastal and offshore waters occupied by various species of plants and animals. The Exxon Valdez spill was not the largest spill in the world, but because of the dense population of animals inhabiting the sound, it quickly became one of the most devastating man made disasters in the history of the United States.

6. Hazardous Waste: Not in Our Backyard!

by Barry Thomas

This exercise examines the impending grid lock that is about to fall upon the researchers, medical laboratories, and energy producers of California. Your well being may depend upon the outcome of this environmental (or is it hysterical?) confrontation.

7. The Fight To Save Our Wetlands

Amy Fields

This is a study of what several of the western states are doing with their wetlands. Are they doing a conscientious job in protecting them and how are they dealing with such problems as maintenance, protection of seasonal wetlands, governmental cooperation, restoration of degraded areas and mitigation measures?

8. Gillnet Fishing on the West Coast

by Barry Thomas

This issue examines the attempt to protect our marine resources. The sports fishing industry has been vocal in trying to get attention to the fact that our fish are disappearing. Tuna cannot be found where they were once plentiful. The Gillnet initiative is a controversial means of solving this problem...or will it?

9. Rivers, Rivers, Rivers, and Not a Drop to Drink

by Barry Thomas

This exercise looks at the problems facing rivers of the Northwest. The conflicts between those who want to use this resource are a major problem pitting the economy against the environment and the need for power against the fisherman.

Life in the Fast Lane of Our National Parks

This exercise investigates the National Park design controversy and the problem of getting rid of the developments and yet accommodate the crowds. Consider whether we should accommodate the tourist or do we maintain the primitive state of our National Parks? Two National Parks are highlighted, Yosemite National Park in California, and Denali National Park in Alaska. Our second concern is what happens to our wildlife in these situations? Wildlife concerns versus visitor demands. The problem: How can we limit the human-bear conflicts in Yellowstone National Park and how can we reintroduce the wolf to Yellowstone National Park in Montana?

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Yosemite Valley is congested with more than a thousand buildings, stores, homes, garages, apartments, lodging facilities, and restaurants. The Valley floor is bisected by approximately 30 miles of roads which accommodate over 1 million cars, trucks, and buses a year. The intent of the National Park Service is to remove all automobiles from the Valley and to redirect development to the periphery of the park and beyond. There is a serious traffic problem, as many as 60,000 people a day at peak (6-7,000 cars a day), and the pollution is above all state and federal air quality standards.

The General Management Plan was devised from a workbook developed by the Park Service which was distributed to over 60,000 groups and the result was a mandate from the U.S. Congress. First, to protect and preserve the resource. Second, to make the resource available for public amusement and education. Thirdly, though not directly spelled out, to know when to draw the line between the two.

The Plan was designed to cut down congestion by removal of valley campsites and increasing park-wide sites; removal of park headquarters to periphery; to relocate employee housing; removal of over 1,000 parking spaces; lowering of day-use capacity; a shuttle bus service from periphery to interior; and eventual removal of all cars and obtrusive vehicles. Congress enacted a measure to acquire land in El Portal to help with the Plan, although little was done with it. The obstacles stated by the Park Services for using El Portal were not a serious constraint on development of El Portal according to Yosemite's chief scientist, Jan van Wagtenonk. Not only that, but Curry Co. has built or expanded more than a dozen "profit centers" since the enactment of the Plan. Moving NPS buildings from Yosemite

Valley will partially fulfill General Management Plan (GMP). It is estimated to be complete in 1996 based on the availability of funds. But it still leaves one of the biggest problems, automobiles in the park. Inappropriate development has plagued Yosemite Valley for most of this century. Heavy auto traffic, motels, gift shops, liquor shops, and a video outlet just to name a few. Also, visitor numbers have increased by 37% in the last ten years. Some of the improvements made by the Curry Co. include a recycling program, removal of some houses and a golf course in Yosemite Valley, and support of the return of the peregrine falcon and big-horned sheep to the backcountry.

Last year, Manuel Lujan, Secretary of Interior, went public with his doubts about the appropriateness of foreign ownerships of National Parks concessions after Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. bought Curry's parent co, MCA. Lujan has accelerated concession reforms. In January, the firm agreed to sell Curry Co. to NPFund for \$49.5 million. Lujan also wants franchise fees to be raised to 22% of gross receipts with 5% going back to general treasury, and 17% going back to the park. Instead of the 3/4 of 1% gross receipts they pay now.

DENALI

After seven years of debate, in 1980 protection of 100 million plus acres in Alaska was finally settled. This doubled the size of the National Park System. For years Alaska was being torn apart between the claims of those who want to protect the natural splendor and those who are pursuing the possibility of profit. The park wants to prevent overcrowding, excessive development and air pollution. The Management plans are outlined as follows:

1. Limiting the development of lodging and other visitor services to areas outside the park.
2. Open Alaskan park land to trophy hunters and trappers (bill was defeated).
3. Preexisting right of ways to the park roadways, rail lines, and certain undeveloped areas will remain intact.
4. All mining operations in Alaskan parks must cease on October 15, 1985 until the mine operator submits its plans to the NPS, which will produce environmental assessments for each plan and enforce these regulations;

In 1990 a private landowner, Dan Ashbrook, proposed a plan to build an RV park within Denali National Park. This would pose long term threat to the wilderness appearance. This would also mean that the visitors would have to drive through the park (right now they have a bus and shuttle system). This would also seriously disrupt the wildlife habitat and sightings. The way the park is now it has 5 private lodges with small scale development and the guests all travel by

bus. The addition of the RV park would be very detrimental to the beauty of the park but would be welcomed by many tourists, particularly old folk and mobility handicapped.

In 1992, a task force agreed that the current access into the park combines wilderness protection and visitor access better than the proposed alternative. The task force suggested improvements but was against any major new road construction. Denali is the most visited park in Alaska due to Mount McKinley (which is the highest mountain in North America) and its unparalleled wildlife (high abundance and ready visibility). The winding 90 mile gravel road is on a system of shuttle buses that provide safety and excellent wildlife viewing, by limiting traffic and disturbing the animals as little as possible. Last year it was proposed to add a second road (paved concrete) to expand tourism, but the task force advised against the proposal.

YELLOWSTONE

Human-Grizzly bear conflicts are a problem at Yellowstone National Park and in March 1993 a grizzly attacked and ate a tourist in Jasper National Park, Canada. One of the major reasons for this problem is the Grizzly's loss of habitat due to development and tourist pressures. The Grizzly now inhabits less than two percent of its original range in the lower 48 states. The numbers have decreased from 50,000 to 1,000 animals. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says that not enough is being done to protect bears and this will push them closer to extinction. It is feared that as their habitat decreases they will split into smaller isolated populations without the genetic diversity needed to survive.

Decreasing their habitat also results in decreasing their foraging area. This leads to the bears trying to obtain food from visitor campsites and poses a serious threat to visitor safety. The Interagency Guidelines for Management of Grizzlies in the Greater Yellowstone Area sets forth specific criteria on what constitutes a "nuisance bear" and on how to deal with them if the bear is seen repeatedly near developed park areas:

1. Aversive conditioning – scare them away with rubber bullets, projectiles and noisemakers.
2. Next, trap and relocate the bear to back-country.
3. Finally, remove the bear from the park permanently by placing it in a zoo or shooting the bear.

One of the many incidents Yellowstone has recorded the most since 1967, occurred on October 4, 1986 when William John Tesinsky (aged 38) was killed by a bear sow (aged 8) labeled Griz number 59. This bear had been exiled from the park twice and returned both

times (once from over 25 miles away). Griz number 59 was destroyed upon being found with a human carcass. The facts and circumstances indicated that Tesinsky had approached the bear too closely and possibly provoked the bear, and therefore, was attacked and killed. The reason given for killing the otherwise non-aggressive bear was the theory that once a grizzly has attacked and killed a person, or even seriously injured one, once it has tasted manmeat – it is likely to attack again. Due to this prevailing theory in the lower 48 parks, the errant bear is more often destroyed than it is spared.

There have been several different proposed ways to handle this problem without having to kill the bears. The Interagency Guidelines for Management of Grizzlies in the Greater Yellowstone Area is just one. Yellowstone officials advise visitors to use extreme caution when they observe or encounter wildlife. They also advise to wear loud bells on their shoes when hiking, and to secure their food out of the reach of the bear. The park crews also clear away the underbrush around trails or put up electric fences (not very effective) to prevent attacks. Their main concern is for the safety of park visitors and the protection of Yellowstone's wildlife and the habitat which supports it. Some biologists believe that we can recondition the trouble causing bears so that they can remain in their natural ecosystems and no longer threaten people and property. Every Grizzly removed from the Yellowstone ecosystem represents a serious loss to a threatened species (protected by the Endangered Species Act since 1973). And removal of a reproducing female is even worse.

Wolves are yet another concern. Many biologists and concerned citizens wish to re-introduce the wolf to its original range. Supporters of restoring wolves to Yellowstone greatly outnumbered opponents at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife hearings held in August 1992. Some 1500 people attended the meetings held in six western cities. Some objections to this new round of hearings were voiced by the U.S. and Wildlife Service because of the cost and the fact that these hearings tend to polarize the issue. Proposed re-introduction should take place in 1994. It is estimated that increased tourism in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming would be in the \$43 million range . . . all because of a few wolves! Now that is a financial impact that interests many people.

READING 1

When reading this article consider the following:

1. Where is this park?
2. Who goes there and why?
3. Consider the old folk and handicapped persons, should they not be able to see the sights in some comfort? Is a yellow school bus adequate transportation?

The Taming of Denali

With tourism growing, Alaska's premier national park faces development pressures.

Story by Kim Heacox

AMONG THE RIDDLES of the ancient Chinese is one about a man who discovers the most beautiful place in the world. The riddle is a conundrum—a puzzle without a solution—because the man shares his discovery, and people flock there in such great numbers that the place is changed forever and is beautiful no more.

It is the pioneer's paradox, the process of people destroying, or at least eroding, the very thing they love—usually the natural environment—and it exists not just in ancient China but throughout the entire modern world.

National parks should be exempt from this paradox, but unfortunately they are not.

This is the story of a great national park teetering on the edge of that

dangerous precipice. Will the same mistakes made elsewhere be made here? Or will people learn that to truly save a place they must close doors in front of them rather than behind them?

The park is Denali—the most popular, visible, and accessible national park in Alaska. Decisions made here may likely set the course for parks in the rest of the state for a long time to come. One hopes that Alaska can avoid the Manifest Destiny mentality that fenced and tamed the lower 48 states; that we who can alter any landscape in the world will have the wisdom to leave this one alone. So far, the prognosis is uncertain.

It is vital that people come here; that lives are touched and inspired, that wilderness values are affirmed and anxieties washed away. Yet it is

equally important that visitors not be herded into overcrowded parks because of arrogance and greed.

At 6 million acres, Denali National Park and Preserve is about the same size as Massachusetts, nearly three times as large as Yellowstone. Running through it are icy mountains that break their backs in the Alaska Range, their summits reaching to 14,000 feet, 17,000 feet, and finally to 20,320-foot Mt. McKinley, more properly called Denali—the Native name meaning The High One—the highest mountain in North America. From the mountains, the land sweeps to every horizon in striking patterns of tundra and spruce forest, kettle ponds and braided rivers, wildflowers and willow thickets. More than 450 species of trees, shrubs, and herbs live here, some growing profusely in

protected valleys, others hugging the earth in button, mat, and rosette shapes atop windswept ridges.

From around western North America and the Pacific Rim—Siberia, Japan, Hawaii, California, Central America, South America, and Antarctica—birds come here to raise their young. Shorebirds nest on the tundra, raptors on the cliffs: more than 150 species occur here. But the most visible and sought-after residents are the mammals: the grizzlies, wolves, caribou, moose, Dall sheep, red foxes, beavers, arctic ground squirrels, lynx, showshoe hares, pikas, and many others: 37 species in all. Nothing stimulates the heart more than the sudden appearance of a bear, a wolf, or a herd of caribou moving like poetry across open ground. Like the birds and plants, they fit into the landscape as an integral part of a greater whole, manifesting laws of survival and diversity, helping to create what has been called “the greatest subarctic sanctuary in the world.”

This, then, is what Charles Sheldon found when he came to Interior Alaska in the summer of 1906. A member of the influential Boone & Crockett Club, he was cut from the same conservation cloth as Teddy Roosevelt. A hunter, yes, but also a competent and caring naturalist who traveled widely throughout Denali by foot, showshoe, and sled dog team.

Camped on a moraine above the Peters Glacier in January 1908, with the land and the silence all to himself, he wrote: “When Denali Park shall be made easy of access with accommodations and facilities for travel...it is not difficult to anticipate the enjoyment and inspiration visitors will receive.”

Eighty-four years later, Sheldon’s prediction has come true. Enjoyment and inspiration are commonplace among visitors to Denali. But for those who feel the nascence of exponential growth; who hear the whines of an insatiable tourism industry always hungry for another hotel; who

deplore the pro-development Alaska congressional delegation and respect the fragility of the subarctic web of life, Sheldon’s crystal ball looks more like Pandora’s box.

In 1971, the year before the highway was completed between Anchorage and Fairbanks, connecting Denali to Alaska’s two largest cities, annual park visitation was 30,000. Today it is 600,000. A single dirt road, built in the 1920s and ’30s, winds 90 miles through the park, cutting into mountainsides, crossing rivers, traversing open expanses of tundra and spruce forest. An average of 35 shuttle buses and 25 tour buses rumble over that road every day of summer, each carrying about 40 people who admire the scenery and watch for wildlife.

The bus system works on two premises: by reducing private vehicle traffic along the road, it minimizes the risk of accidents and maximizes the opportunities to view wildlife that otherwise might be displaced by more traffic.

The road ends at Kantishna, a mining district in the heart of Denali that has been a burr under the saddle of more than one park superintendent. Back in 1903, three years before Charles Sheldon arrived, gold was discovered here by a mountaineering party led by Territorial Judge James Wickersham. Within two years the Kantishna Hills were swarming with prospectors.

When Mt. McKinley National Park was created in 1917 (largely through the efforts of Charles Sheldon, who feared prospectors would overhunt Dall sheep and other wildlife), Kantishna bordered its northern flank. In 1980, with passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), 2-million-acre Mt. McKinley National Park became 6-million-acre Denali National Park and Preserve. And Kantishna became an enclave.

At the time, John Cook, regional director of the National Park Service in Alaska, said, “There are two things

you never want to see being made: sausages and boundaries.” His comment was aimed at the political process more than the product, and applied to every new park and preserve created by ANILCA. Certainly ANILCA was a great accomplishment—the Louisiana Purchase of the American conservation movement—for it more than doubled the size of the U.S. National Park System. But there were compromises. Buried in the convoluted vernacular were the terms “reasonable access” and “traditional use,” put there by the Alaska congressional delegation to protect the rights of people they called “honest, hard-working Alaskans who have nothing to gain with a land lock-up.” Among those Alaskans: the miners of Kantishna.

In Denali, reasonable access and traditional use meant Kantishnans had the right to drive the park road. As the mines became less profitable and tourism more so, a few Kantishnans opened roadhouses, restaurants, and lodges. And though ANILCA did not require it, they nevertheless agreed with the National Park Service to minimize traffic and shuttle their clients in buses. A relative peace reigned until the spring of 1990, when a Kantishnan plowed off a gravel clearing, called it a motorhome park, and invited the public at large.

From a legal standpoint, it was permissible. But from a safety standpoint, mixing motorhomes with buses on a narrow, winding road was insane. Superintendent Russ Berry, having arrived in the park less than a year before, countered with a chess move. He reasoned that if one Kantishnan could have his clients driving their private vehicles on the park road, then so could the others. All the clients needed was a reason to go the Kantishna: a night’s lodging, a meal, a cup of coffee. But to mitigate the dangers from increased traffic—and this is where Berry played his king—the National Park Service threatened to turn around every tour

bus and shuttle bus at Teklanika Campground, only one-third the way out the road, long before the best views of wildlife and Mt. McKinley. Suddenly Kantishna had the entire Alaska tourism industry on its back.

When the wit and wind finally died down, the motorhome park was forestalled and schedules returned to normal. Yet pockets of Kantishna remained defiant, as they always have, peppered with the likes of Tom Anthony, who threatened to shoot anyone who crossed his property on the road, and the Wheeler brothers, arch-anarchists and Alaska's self-described "foremost authorities on recreational bulldozing," who more than once have threatened to cut a giant "W" on a mountainside in the park.

And what of the fruits of their labors, and of the nearly nine decades of miners in general in the Kantishna area? They pulled out a lot of gold. They also fouled a dozen drainages. Heavy metals—iron, arsenic, and lead—were oxidized and released at accelerated rates. Mercury, used as an amalgam, was dumped indiscriminantly. Barrels of petroleum products were left lying around. High-pressure hoses, the tools of the modern hydraulic miner, blasted hillsides. Erosion and siltation destroyed aquatic primary productivity. Streams balanced over the millennia, poetic in their finely balanced gradients and ratios of pools to riffles, were raped.

Some of the most serious damage happened in the early 1980s when gold prices rocketed. Since then, a few claims have voided, most have gone idle but are still valid. To purchase these lands, Russ Berry estimates he needs \$60 million. So far, he's received one-tenth of that amount. "If the money arrives a little at a time, which it probably will," he says, "then ten years from now the remaining lands in Kantishna will probably still cost \$60 million."

Meanwhile, the pressure grows to increase tourism and improve access

into Kantishna. On July 13, 1991, U.S. Senator Frank H. Murkowski wrote a sophomoric newspaper editorial that began, "Question: Why does the Anchorage Zoo get more visitors each year than the entire interior portion of Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska's premier visitor destination?"

"(a) The popcorn is better at the zoo. (b) Denali doesn't have an elephant. (c) The zoo doesn't have an armed ranger to keep visitors out.

"The correct answer is the old standby, 'none of the above,' but answer (c) comes too close for comfort.

"It is becoming fashionable to say Denali National Park is being damaged by overvisitation and is losing its luster as a result. But is Denali National Park a victim of its own success, or has something gone awry in how it is managed?" Murkowski pointed out that Yellowstone receives a vastly greater number of visitors each year and is doing fine, then ended his sophistry by suggesting that an "elevated-rail transport system" be built "along the old Stampede Trail that runs east from Kantishna to the Healy area."

Here, then, is a way of thinking that believes Denali National Park should be accessible to as many people as possible; that tourism, like cattle ranching, is a volume-driven meat market; that scenery is, more than anything else, a commodity.

"It is not the job of Denali National Park to be the No. 1 visitor destination in our state," countered Mary Grisco, NPCA's Alaska regional director. "[We need] to educate people about what our national parks in Alaska offer and to let people know that [all] national park units do not provide the same experiences and amenities."

If the finest hotels can have "no vacancy," if the greatest concert halls can have limited seating, then why not our national parks? "The theater is full," says Russ Berry. "You are invited to the next performance." Or,

as Aldo Leopold wrote in *A Sand Country Almanac*, "It is the expansion of transport without a corresponding growth of perception that threatens us with qualitative bankruptcy of the recreational process. Recreational development is a job not of building roads into lovely country, but of building receptivity into the still unlovely human mind."

Seventy years ago, the only thing that ran through the Nenana River Canyon, next to the entrance of the park, was the Nenana River. Then came the Alaska Railroad. Then a major highway. Then a lodge, a motel, a cluster of chalets, restaurants, pizza parlors, a salmon bake, a beauty shop, river rafting offices, and helicopter pads. Last summer, four helicopters arrived, each carrying tourists into the park 12 times a day.

Soon the quality of the air and water goes down, wildlife movements are impeded, all-terrain vehicles rip in and out of the park, and moose are shot only 200 feet outside the boundary. It happened this fall. Denali is beginning to look like parks everywhere else: beleaguered.

Addicted to growth, tour companies add rooms and beds to chalets and hotels, then whine for more buses to accommodate their expanding clientele. Bus seats are oversold every summer, backcountry units fill up, and long lines form in Denali's visitor access center. "The truth is," says one ranger, "that in every major visitor survey the public has strongly supported the existing policies and level of development. More is not better."

Yet the incrementalism marches on. The tour operators and concessionaires make more money—their prime objective—while the visitors themselves are herded into mediocrity, onto tour buses at 5:30 in the morning that whisk them into the park and back out in time to catch the afternoon train north and make room for the next wave.

It is not another Yellowstone, but Denali is not what Charles Sheldon

found in 1906, either. A new hotel is planned inside the park to replace the existing one at the same capacity, but at a price (approximately \$25 million, paid by the federal government) and style that has stirred up stiff opposition. Does Denali need a grand, opulent hotel? Wouldn't the money be better spent elsewhere, such as purchasing inholdings in Kantishna?

South of the park, Native corporation land near Talkeetna is under consideration for a major hotel and National Park Service visitor center. Again, there is opposition, this time from Talkeetna residents who like their peace and quiet. And yet another visitor center is planned for High Lake, in Denali State Park, just south of the national park.

There have been victories: the establishment of a bus system to limit traffic and improve viewing on the park road, the creation of management units to control backcountry impact and protect sensitive wildlife

zones, the beginnings of land acquisitions in Kantishna, and an overall enlightenment amid a growing environmental movement. But is it enough?

In a sweeping, grandiose state where the words "Last Frontier" carry the old, false assumptions of limitless resources and opportunities; where a congressional delegation and state government embrace economic growth as though it were a religion; where the National Park Service must answer to these same politicians; and where industrial tourism advances slowly and inexorably, like the tide; if this is the way it is, and shall be, then Denali is doomed.

Something has to change. A growing audience advocates removal of the National Park Service from the Department of the Interior and the creation of an autonomous governing body with a director who answers to a rotating board of distinguished American scientists, teachers, managers, writers, and artists. Lines must

be drawn and defended, for only then will landscapes beat to the rhythms of something more ancient than us all. Here, they will say to themselves, is a piece of the earth as it once was and should forever remain: absolutely wild.

Kim Heacox writes and photographs frequently for national publications from his home in Alaska. He has authored several books and is completing two more, Iditarod Spirit and In Denali.

To express your concern about development of Denali, please write to Alaska's congressional delegation: Senators Frank Murkowski and Ted Stevens (U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510) and Rep. Don Young (U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515). Send copies of your letters to Mary Grisco, NPCA's Alaska director (P.O. Box 202045, Anchorage, AK 99520).

READINGS 2 & 3

When reading these articles consider the following:

What is a wolf, is it a killing machine or an animal bent on surviving?

Activists Cry "Pro-Wolf"

Endangered Species Act supporters flex muscle at public hearings held to consider the reintroduction of the gray wolf to Yellowstone

Like countless other endangered species, the gray wolf's plight reminds conservationists of the uphill battle we face to save endangered animals. Almost two decades of inaction have passed since the wolf was placed on the Endangered Species List in 1973. In the interim, the gray wolf's stealthy lope has nearly disappeared from the landscape of the lower 48 states.

While there has been modest success in Minnesota, efforts to restore gray wolf populations elsewhere have languished in red tape. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service took 14 years simply to finalize a recovery plan only to have the politically powerful western livestock lobby prevent the plan's implementation.

Now, fortunately, a large group of conservationists have formed a powerful contingent favoring the prompt reintroduction of gray wolves. The territory stalked for this battle is Yellowstone National Park.

Federation members and other conservationists appeared in full force at six August public hearings held in Wyoming, Montana, Washington, Utah, Idaho, and Washington, D.C. The hearings were held prior to the drafting of an environmental impact statement considering wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone. Of the more than 400 individual who testified for the record, more than 75 percent proclaimed themselves pro-wolf.

"The turnout proves the tremendous support that exists not only for wolves but for the Endangered Species Act as well," said Tom Dougherty, the Federation's Western Region Staff Director. "It is heartening to see the number of people who showed up to combat the so-called wise-use movement."

Tim Stevens, an Endangered Species Western Region Organizer for the Federation, attended hearings and rallies in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Salt Lake City, Utah. Contrary to his expectations, the opposition produced only a paltry showing.

"This was an incredible victory for conser-

vationists," Stevens reported. "The hearing record was overwhelmingly ten to one pro-wolf."

The western livestock industry and other anti-environment interests lead opposition forces. They are pushing for a "no Wolf Alternative" that would remove wolves from the Endangered Species List. This would allow the unregulated killing of wolves by the public and silence the animal's sonorous howl.

Wildlife biologists and other experts believe gray wolves can serve a vital function in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem. By culling sick and weak animals, these predators keep elk, deer and moose herds healthy and strong. Without wolves, prey populations unnaturally balloon—unbalancing the ecosystem and taxing wildlife management resources.

After a 60-year absence of the gray wolf, Yellowstone can only benefit from its return. As conservationists know:

- Gray wolves are not rogue killing machines. They prefer natural prey and rarely attack husbanded livestock. In Minnesota where 1,500 wolves live in proximity to 325,000 cows and sheep, only 170 (0.05 percent) are claimed to be wolf-killed annually.
- A private fund exists to reimburse ranchers for all verified losses to wolves.
- Wolves maintain a balanced ecosystem.
- Wolves are shy and avoid contact with humans whenever possible. There has never been a documented death caused by a wild non-rabid wolf in North America. In contrast 11 North Americans were killed by domestic dogs between May 1985 and September 1986.

"Those fighting against wolf reintroduction are working on a much broader agenda. They are just anti-Endangered Species Act," Stevens said. "This is a political issue. The multiple abuse groups are trying to use the wolves as scapegoats."

While conservationists have won this round, the influence that opposition groups wield should not be underestimated. Continuous pressure is essential to save endangered species languishing on the brink of extinction.

— Jeff Burdick

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can help by writing to be placed on a federal mailing list to receive information about the Yellowstone National Park and the up-coming central Idaho Gray Wolf Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The draft EIS is due by May 13, 1993, by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

***Yellowstone National Park and
Central Idaho Gray Wolf EIS
P.O. Box 8017
Helena, MT 59601***

WILDLIFE

Wolf Reintroduction on Track

Fish and Wildlife Service takes first step

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has finally taken the first important step toward reintroducing the endangered grey wolf into Yellowstone National Park.

Because the grey wolf is listed as endangered in forty-seven states and threatened in Minnesota, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires the FWS to work toward the wolf's recovery. In the 1987 Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Plan, the FWS identified Yellowstone National Park as one of three key wolf-recovery areas and outlined the steps required to bring wolves back to Yellowstone. Little was done, however, until Congress acted last year.

In October 1991 Congress provided the FWS with \$498,000 for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will identify and analyze alternative plans for wolf recovery at Yellowstone and in central Idaho, another area earmarked for wolf recovery.

Before the arrival of European settlers, the grey wolf ranged over most of North America. Persecuted by settlers and ranchers, slowly starved as its prey—elk, deer, and bison—

disappeared, the wolf all but vanished from the United States by the early twentieth century. Today's wolf population in the lower forty-eight states consists of only about 1,500 wolves in Minnesota and a total of perhaps five or six dozen individuals spread across Montana, Idaho, and other northwestern states.

The HSUS strongly supports the reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone. We believe it is critical to both wolf conservation and restoration of a complete, healthy Yellowstone ecosystem. We immediately joined the EIS process, participating in April 1992 meetings intended to help identify the range of issues to be addressed in the EIS.

But reintroduction will not suffice to guarantee recovery. The ESA strictly prohibits killing, harassing, or otherwise harming members of endangered species. The FWS, however, will be pressured to relax the restrictions, for example, by designating wolves a "nonessential experimental population." Such a designation (permitted, under some circumstances, by the ESA) would allow the FWS to write special regulations that could weaken ESA protection for

individual wolves.

For the sake of the recovery effort and the wolves' own safety, The HSUS believes that wolves reintroduced into Yellowstone must receive the full protection of their endangered status under the ESA. This need is underscored by the recent tragic history of the small wolf population occupying Glacier National Park and nearby regions of Montana. In the last two years, at least nine wolves have been killed—either deliberately and illegally or accidentally (in automobile collisions or other human-related accidents). To thrive, Yellowstone's wolves will need the strongest protection the law can give.

Wolves belong in Yellowstone National Park. The HSUS will do everything possible to help them get there and stay there. — Allen T. Rutberg, Ph.D., HSUS senior scientist, Wildlife and Habitat Protection.

Discussion for Life in the Fast Lane of Our National Parks

1. If you were a park ranger at Yellowstone how would you protect the bears and the visitors against possible threats?

2. Do you think that the rehabilitation of the bears will work? Why or why not?

3. Do you think it is fair that the bears lose their lives after a provoked attack?

4. Do you agree that a new paved road should not be built at Denali?

5. Devise a way to satisfy Dan Ashbrook (RV Park proposer) and the park officials and natural habitat. Can it be done?

6. Who would support the claim that the only good wolf is a dead one?

7. Should all National Parks have the original complement of animals? Or can we have specialized Parks?

8. Draw up a plan for specialized parks where different animals and dangers are presented.

In which of our current National Parks would you put Wolves, Grizzly Bear and Elk?

Endangered in the Northwest

This exercise examines the issues surrounding the controversy of the spotted owl, black footed ferrets and our amphibian populations of the Northwest. What is happening to them? Why are they having trouble and what can be done to remedy the situation?

The Pacific Northwest is a diverse ecosystem of mountains, deserts, marine shores and forests. The latter providing a major revenue source and an employer of thousands. Recently, because of the spotted owl controversy, the old growth forests have received a lot of media attention. Conservationists are trying to preserve much of the remaining habitat and the logging industry is bent on maximizing their investment. Workers and investors are adamant in their opposition to the preservation of old growth forests to protect an owl.

The spotted owl is not the only species being impacted by the clear cutting of the forests. At least five threatened or endangered animals cohabit the spotted owl range. These are the gray wolf, grizzly bear, Columbian white-tailed deer, bald eagle and peregrine falcon. The lynx, wolverine, mountain beaver, white footed vole, Pacific western big eared bat, marbled murrelet, bull trout, inland red-band trout, Olympic mudminnow, northwestern pond turtle, tailed and California red legged frogs and Del Norte, Larch Mountain and Siskiyou salamanders are other species whose numbers are diminishing due to the massive deforestation.

In 1990 it was estimated that 90% of the Northwest's old growth forests had been consumed by the timber industry. Smaller habitats mean smaller gene pools and an increase in survival risks. The spotted owl is seen as an indicator species. That means if the forests are managed to ensure the survival of that species then the other species will benefit. Is this sound reasoning? Can we make such a generalized statement or is this just a practical way of attacking the problem? Other animals that can be considered indicator species are the pileated woodpecker and the marten. Like the owl the pileated woodpecker nests in big trees and forages for insects in rotting logs. However, the pileated woodpecker can be found in the urban area and is no stranger to the suburbs of Vancouver. It is perhaps a little more resilient than is the owl. The marten dens in cavities of big trees and generally avoids clear cut areas. It requires a larger home range than the owl and therefore may be even more sensitive to clear cutting. But it is hard to see and does not have the same public relation image as does the owl.

Amphibians are disappearing in this region. Biologists have documented a dramatic decline in the frog population of the Cascade Range. In one study done at Lost Lake it was noted that nearly all frog eggs never hatched. While no distinct cause has been identified it is obviously a cause for alarm. Frogs may be a good indicator of environmental quality since they live both on land and in water. Their permeable skin makes them vulnerable to many pollutants and pathogens in the environment. Some possible theories of the poor egg success mention acid rains, ultraviolet radiation, and global warming.

Although the Northwest has its share of species survival problems it does have one success story, the Black Footed Ferret. Once only 18 individuals survived, today, thanks to a captive breeding program in Wyoming, more than 300 are alive and well. Reintroduction has begun!

The following articles provide a more in depth look at these problems. Legislation concerning these animals is fairly recent and changes often. The Fish and Wildlife Services in each state can provide current lists, and the status of the endangered and threatened species in their jurisdiction.