

# The LIVING WILDERNESS

ROBERT STERLING YARD, *Editor*

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## Wilderness Society Creed

TODAY'S progressive view of nature conceives the American people using and enjoying it for the needs of everyday living, for pleasuring, and as an inspiration for happiness and achievement; but it specially conceives it necessary to save those parts of our slender remaining roadless areas which are worth more for study, relaxation and the wilderness type of recreation than for picnicking, motoring and commercial activities; also it believes that remaining primeval areas which are museums of creation, often also remarkable for scenic grandeur and extraordinary natural beauty, should be carefully protected, undisturbed, for observation, scientific study, and appropriate types only of enjoyment.

Every type of human use should be assigned its ample quota of appropriate area while there is area still available for all uses, and no areas should be seized for the irrevocable benefit of any one type of use, no matter how popular such use may be at the time, until all types have been fully and fairly considered for it with all the evidence presented. And before final decision is made, consideration should be given the fact that primitive areas are easily destroyed; but, while primitive conditions may develop again in from six hundred to a thousand years, the broken continuity will never be restored.

The inherent rights of succeeding generations to study, enjoy and use fine examples of primeval America is a responsibility of this generation.

ROBERT STERLING YARD.



# Women Members Protest Against Elaborate National Park Trails

LAST January, within a period of one week, it chanced that letters were received by members of the executive committee of the Wilderness Society from three of our most active members. Mable Abercrombie is a member of the Forestry Division of the Tennessee Valley Authority and is one of the most widely experienced climbers in the Southern Appalachian Region. Helen Howell Moorhead is an officer of the Foreign Policy Association and an outstanding authority on the international narcotic trade. Georgia Engelhard is not only frequently referred to as the Country's leading woman mountaineer, but is also generally rated as one of the half dozen outstanding mountain climbers in the United States, with numerous difficult first ascents to her credit.

The letters from these three women were submitted to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Oscar L. Chapman, who turned them over to the Park Service for comment. The Park Service trail policy was defended by Thomas C. Vint, Chief of the Branch of Plans and Designs, and his defense was then criticized by Robert Marshall, at that time Director of Forestry and Grazing in the Indian Service.

This whole correspondence and commentary expresses so splendidly the objection of many wilderness lovers to the over-elaborate trails now frequently being constructed in National Parks that it seems worthy of printing and is herewith presented to our readers.

## FROM MISS ABERCROMBIE

January 24, 1937.

DEAR MR. YARD:

While walking on a smelly-oiled trail in Glacier Park this past summer, I met a girl from the northeast who had also abandoned her steed for a walk. She said that she was quite anxious to get back to the cool forested trails of the Great Smoky Mountains. So confident was she of finding the Smokies as she left them five years ago that I hesitated to subdue her enthusiasm by warning her of the things of late going on in the Park.

A report issued last April to observe the third birthday of the CCC boys in the Park by reviewing the "splendid record of achievement" states that: 491 miles of foot and hoof trail, 172 miles of truck-trails and fire breaks, and seven miles of minor roads have been sprinkled across this 308,000 acres of unique forested area. All of this is in addition to the skyline drive and road over Newfound Gap. For lack of funds only fifty-nine miles of trail has been added by the "boys" since April; one wonders what will happen if and when funds are supplied.

Ah, but the misuse of these trails. Not only do horses trek up the lofty Smokies but on Labor Day two motor-

cyclists were tempted to travel the exhilarating crest-trail of the Boulevard from Newfound Gap to LeConte. Several months ago a "carpet-bagger" native of Knoxville (TVA employee), who once drove to Newfound Gap, saw snow, and returned to Knoxville with the colossal idea of ski-trails in the forested Smokies. The idea is so fantastic, so idiotic and impractical that we live in holy fear of the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce or the Park Service adopting it.

The CCC boys, no doubt, equal the Egyptians in masonry; patient hours have been spent in selecting the exact size of stone for the grade to keep the "masonry line." Steps for "my lady too" bedeck each precipitous climb. Although there has been no paving of the trail yet, it is the Park Service's last resort for the ten months of mud-trail season—imagine a "sidewalk from Georgia to Maine." A true lack of efficiency on the part of the P.S. has been exhibited in many places where trees were cleared for a leisurely view without exercising the neck, and now, because of the opening, forces of nature have cleared many more traces.

A touch of pathos, which arouses an "arborophile," is to see a tall fully-developed tree with embedded roots exposed by a fifteen-per cent graded trail and cut for convenience of some city slicker who will never inconvenience himself to walk the ten miles from his automobile. If he left the metropolitan area he would probably be found admiring the four-span bridge across the Little River at Elkmont with openings large enough to accommodate the flow of the Tennessee. Recently Bob Howes and Harvey Broome were climbing in that vicinity, and were so conspicuous that two Park Service men followed them all day!

And within a few years, I told my new acquaintance, if she came to the Smokies, she probably could camp in the new tourist-camp of 1,000-automobile capacity in the Greenbrier. The camp must be built there according to the "master plan" even though the skyline drive has been rerouted through North Carolina.

All of these things just seem to happen in the Smokies.  
MABLE ABERCROMBIE.

## FROM MRS. MOORHEAD

January 25, 1937.

MY DEAR MR. MARSHALL:

Knowing your interest in conservation and the preservation of the natural wild beauties of this country, I venture to write you my impressions regarding the two sections of the west where I passed some time last summer.

In one part—Gallatin Canyon, Montana—we rode along the trails laid out and made by the Forestry Service. These

trails were entirely adequate, well marked by distinctive blazing on the trees and to anyone with the slightest knowledge of finding his way in wild areas there was no difficulty in arriving at a given destination. However, I should like to see a larger appropriation given to the part over which we rode where the Forest Service has not yet been able to make trails so that the extraordinary beauties of this section of the Rockies could be wisely and prudently opened.

I say wisely and prudently opened, because of the contrast of my experience in Montana with the experience in the Jackson Hole country of Wyoming. The trails which have been built by the National Park Service in the Grand Teton National Park destroy completely any illusion of natural wild beauty. They are so wide that one's mind is continually tempted with the idea that a motorcycle could be ridden to the Grand Teton Glacier over this road. The shrubbery and trees are so cut away from the side of these trails that one gets an impression of an artificially created approach. The marking on the sides of these trails remind one of all the tourist spots in Europe, with their carefully pointed "schöner aussicht." These signs are too large and too numerous.

The effect of going up the trails on the Grand Teton destroys the sense of contact with unspoiled beauty and injects into this region, so superb in itself, a continuous reminder of the artificiality of man-made civilization.

HELEN HOWELL MOORHEAD.

### FROM MISS ENGELHARD

January 31, 1937.

DEAR BOB MARSHALL:

Here goes on my great gripe against trails built for tenton hikers. Knowing that you share my love for wilderness areas and the belief that even when appropriated as Park land they should be kept as nearly as possible in their original state, I want to make a few observations on conditions which I noticed on my trip through the northwest last summer.

I saw with alarm the growing tendency to make magnificent mountain country, whose very aloofness from civilization is one of its greatest charms, extremely accessible to hordes of tourists not only by the construction of trans-mountain motor roads but also by the construction of well-groomed trails, whose equal might only be found in Rock Creek Park, and whose presence utterly destroys the virgin wilderness which makes our western mountains in so many ways preferable to the Alps to the true lover of nature.

My first trip to the West was in 1926, when I visited Glacier National Park, Rainier Park and Yellowstone—all of them pretty well developed for the benefit of the tourist who wished to see the most with the least expenditure of energy. Of the three, Glacier was the least exploited—you could still walk on rough trails winding their narrow way along precipitous walls while several of them, obviously little used, required some scrambling over easy ledges. It was really very exciting to me to be so closely in touch with this magnificent and rugged landscape—and to have it to myself—a great contrast to the previous summer in Switzerland where every upland path was crowded with perspiring pedestrians and you often found an inn on top of an 11,000

foot mountain. I did not care for Yellowstone—but someone advised me to go south to the Teton Mountains.

It is impossible to convey the impression which that country made on me—those tremendous jagged peaks soaring 7,000 feet in the air from the plain of Jackson's Hole—the wild lakes and lonely canyons, penetrated only by the roughest of trails—and often only by game trails which led you deeper and higher into the wilderness. It was really here that my love of mountain climbing was born—the desire to explore the unknown—to see what is on the other side of the mountain, and to stand above the lowlands.

For years I have climbed in the Canadian Rockies, but last year I returned to our west. Imagine my horror at finding the Tetons penetrated and encircled by an elaborate system of trails wide enough for the most timid tourist—so easily graded that it would be impossible to get out of breath on them, and so carefully weeded of any impediments to walking that they were literally boulevards. It was all spoiled—there was no mystery—no lure—just the weary certainty that if you plodded patiently up endless switch-backs you were *sure* to reach Amphitheatre Lake. The same is true of Glacier Park. Not only has it been defaced by a new motor road, but the trails have been widened, graded and even oiled and are daily travelled by hundreds of tourists who really are no more thrilled by the magnificent scenery than by seeing the Empire State Building.

I decided that if I must meet civilization at every turn I might just as well go to Switzerland. For years I had adored the West because it symbolized raw, elemental nature—because it was lonely and vast—and now the government was doing its best to spoil it all.

Is there nothing we can do about keeping some wilderness areas for those who truly appreciate them? After all, the tourist hordes who know nothing of the joy that is gained through struggle and contact with natural forces, have plenty of places to go: Pik's Peak, Yellowstone, Yosemite—where they may be whisked over the landscape in the comfort of big busses. They are quite satisfied with what they see—otherwise they would leave their busses and sign-posted paths. They really do not deserve to be so easily led into the secret, high places of nature, for truly they cannot appreciate them.

It is all very well to say that the exploring-minded should go to Alaska or the Himalayas—but after all, there are some who lack both time and money to do so, and who *can* get the same thrill in a way in nearer places, such as the Teton Park once was. If trails must be built, build them steep and narrow, and leave in the rocks and roots—and don't erect guard rails in narrow places, nor sign posts every half mile—let the walker get some of the feel of the land and leave to him some of the excitement of the unknown—let his recreation have the imaginative touch. In that respect the trails of the Adirondacks and White Mountains are far superior—not one of them savors of the side-walk quality.

This may sound selfish, but both you and I know many mountain lovers—not necessarily mountaineers either—who share this feeling and who bewail the opening of the West to the tourist, who, sitting in a car or on a lazy horse, cannot possibly get the same significance out of contacting nature, as he who achieves it through his own effort.

GEORGIA ENGELHARD.

# Origin and Ideals of Wilderness Areas

BY ALDO LEOPOLD

## (A) Chronology

I WILL here attempt to cover the history of the wilderness movement in the southwest prior to 1926. I suppose the subsequent events are too well known to require comment.

The earliest action I can find in my files is a letter dated September 21, 1922, notifying the District Forester that two local Game Protective Associations had endorsed the establishment of a wilderness area on the head of the Gila River, in the Gila National Forest. I suppose one may assume a prior "incubation period" of a year or two. I take it, then, that the movement in the Southwest must have started about 1920.

This assumption is further corroborated by the publication, in 1921, of my paper, "The Wilderness and Its Place in Forest Recreational Policy" (*Jour. Forestry*, Vol. 19, No. 7, November, 1921). In 1922 G. A. Pearson published in *Ecology* (Vol. 3, No. 4) a paper proposing the need for small wild reservations for ecological study. This later grew into "A Naturalist's Guide to the Americas."

In 1924 the action stage was reached. I have a map dated March 31 showing the Gila area boundaries as originally proposed by me and as approved by District Forester F. C. W. Pooler. I do not know when Washington finally added its approval.

How widely had the idea spread by 1924? I offer in evidence the resolutions passed by the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation (*Jour. Forestry*, October, 1924) which contain no mention of wilderness.

The publication of my paper, "The Last Stand of the Wilderness," was in 1925, in *American Forests* (October).

By 1925 I had left the Southwest, but I continued to write on the western problem. *Sunset Magazine* published my "Conserving the Covered Wagon" (March issue). The "Service Bulletin" of the Forest Service for June 8, 1925, contains a skit of mine (which I would not mind signing today) entitled, "The Pig in the Parlor." The *Journal of Public Utility Economics* for October, 1925, contains my "Wilderness as a Form of Land Use."

By 1926 the high-ups were beginning to wrestle with wilderness. (See W. B. Greeley, *Service Bulletin*, U. S. Forest Service, October 18, 1926.) I can appreciate their predicament now better than I could then. It was no light job to offer the first official resistance after a century of unresisted boosterism.

## (B) Perspective

In 1909, when I began work in the Southwest, there were six immense roadless areas in the Southwestern forests, each larger than half a million acres. New Mexico had the Jemez and the Datil-Gila area; Arizona had the White Mountains, the Blue Range, the Tonto Rim, the Kaibab. All are now gone

except the Gila. The Gila has been split down the middle and pared at the edges, but it is officially set aside. Part of the lost areas were justifiable sacrifices to timber values; part, I think, were the victims of poor brakes on the good roads movement. They are too rough ever to pay out on a timber transport system.

Outside the National Forests, there were large wild areas in many odd corners. They are all, by now, more or less broken up. The dismemberment of small bits of wilderness is, I fear, still going on.

I know of no serious attempts as yet, to enlarge and consolidate wild spots for the benefit of particular threatened species in the Southwest. Thus the grizzly bear in 1909 persisted in five of the six wilderness areas already mentioned. Today this species is said to be gone from all but one spot in the National Forests. The large facilities for land exchange which have recently been available have not yet been used to create even a single grizzly range.

It would appear, in general, that in the Southwest the wilderness movement has come too late to save much of what my generation called wilderness.

## (C) The Future

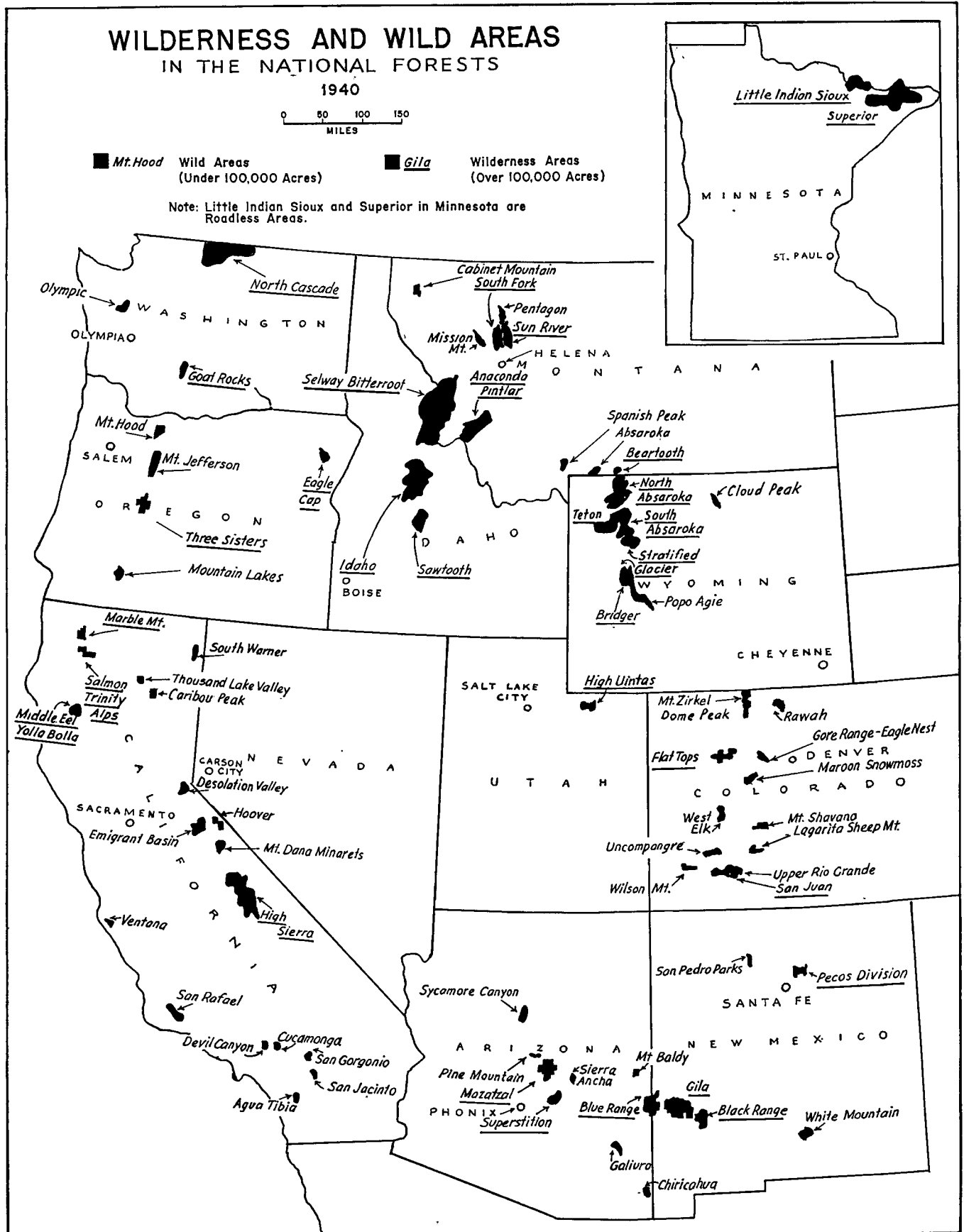
There are four jobs for the future now in sight.

The first is to make the system of wild areas mean something in terms of particular rare plants and animals (like the grizzly).

The second is to guard against the disruption of the areas still wild. Disruption may come from unexpected quarters. A deer herd deprived of wolves and lions is more dangerous to wilderness areas than the most piratical senator or the go-gettingest Chamber of Commerce.

The third is to secure the recognition, as wilderness areas, of the low-altitude desert tracts heretofore regarded as without value for "recreation" because they offer no pines, lakes, or other conventional scenery.

The fourth is to induce Mexico to save some samples of what we no longer have on our side of the border. Great scientific as well as recreational values are here at stake. It will some day be of the utmost importance to be able to study, just across the line, samples of unspoiled mountain country, to compare them with samples on our own side which have been subjected to the classical exploitation-conservation process. We have, in Arizona and New Mexico, hardly a stream still in normal condition; in the Mexican mountains such streams are still found. We have no faunas or floras which have not been abused, modified, or "improved"; in the Mexican mountains the whole biota is intact with the single exception of the Apache Indian, who is, I fear, extinct.



This map was drawn from information furnished by the U. S. Forest Service.

PROTECTED WILDERNESS AREAS UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN NATIONAL FORESTS

100,000 ACRES OR MORE		
NAME	STATE	ACREAGE
<i>Region 1</i>		
Anaconda-Pintlar.....	Montana.....	145,000
Beartooth.....	Montana.....	230,000
Pentagon.....	Montana.....	125,900
Selway-Bitterroot.....	Idaho-Montana.....	1,870,000
South Fork.....	Montana.....	625,000
Sun River.....	Montana.....	240,000
<i>Region 2</i>		
Flat Tops.....	Colorado.....	117,800
Glacier.....	Wyoming.....	177,000
North Absaroka.....	Wyoming.....	379,460
San Juan.....	Colorado.....	240,000
South Absaroka.....	Wyoming.....	614,216
Stratified.....	Wyoming.....	147,000
<i>Region 3</i>		
Black Range.....	New Mexico.....	169,984
Blue Range.....	Arizona.....	218,164
Gila.....	New Mexico.....	572,204
Mazatzal.....	Arizona.....	213,760
Pecos Division.....	New Mexico.....	137,820
Superstition.....	Arizona.....	131,820
<i>Region 4</i>		
Bridger.....	Wyoming.....	383,000
High Uintas.....	Utah.....	243,957
Idaho.....	Idaho.....	1,232,744
Sawtooth.....	Idaho.....	200,942
Teton.....	Wyoming.....	565,291
<i>Region 5</i>		
High Sierra.....	California.....	826,601
Marble Mountain.....	California.....	237,527
Middle Eel-Yolla Bolla.....	California.....	143,426
Salmon Trinity Alps.....	California.....	280,260
<i>Region 6</i>		
Eagle Cap.....	Oregon.....	222,360
North Cascade.....	Washington.....	801,000
Three Sisters.....	Oregon.....	246,726
<i>Region 1</i> Less Than 100,000 Acres		
Absaroka.....	Montana.....	64,000
Cabinet Mountains.....	Montana.....	90,000
Mission Mountains.....	Montana.....	75,500
Spanish Peaks.....	Montana.....	50,000
<i>Region 2</i>		
Cloud Peak.....	Wyoming.....	94,000
Gore Range-Eagle Nest.....	Colorado.....	79,700

NAME	STATE	ACREAGE
La Garita-Sheep Mountain.....	Colorado.....	38,030
Maroon-Snowmass.....	Colorado.....	64,600
Mt. Shavano.....	Colorado.....	32,100
Mt. Zirkel-Dome Peak.....	Colorado.....	43,120
Popo Agie.....	Wyoming.....	70,000
Rowah.....	Colorado.....	25,720
Uncompahgre.....	Colorado.....	69,253
Upper Rio Grande.....	Colorado.....	56,600
West Elk.....	Colorado.....	52,000
Wilson Mountains.....	Colorado.....	27,347
<i>Region 3</i>		
Chiricahua.....	Arizona.....	17,280
Galiuro.....	Arizona.....	50,200
Mount Baldy.....	Arizona.....	7,400
Pine Mountain.....	Arizona.....	17,500
San Pedro Parks.....	New Mexico.....	45,000
Sierra Ancha.....	Arizona.....	29,900
Sycamore Canyon.....	Arizona.....	47,230
White Mountain.....	New Mexico.....	24,000
<i>Region 4</i>		
None.		
<i>Region 5</i>		
Agua Tibia.....	California.....	35,116
Caribou Peak.....	California.....	16,443
Cucamonga.....	California.....	5,000
Desolation Valley.....	California.....	41,380
Devil Canyon-Bear Canyon.....	California.....	36,200
Emigrant Basin.....	California.....	98,043
Hoover.....	California.....	20,540
Mt. Dana-Minarets.....	California.....	82,376
San Gorgonio.....	California.....	20,000
San Jacinto.....	California.....	33,291
San Rafael.....	California.....	74,990
South Warner.....	California.....	70,682
Thousand Lake Valley.....	California.....	16,335
Ventana.....	California.....	55,884
<i>Region 6</i>		
Goat Rocks.....	Washington.....	72,440
Mt. Hood.....	Oregon.....	14,800
Mt. Jefferson.....	Oregon.....	86,700
Mount. Lakes-Rogue River.....	Oregon.....	13,445
ROADLESS AREAS		
<i>Region 9</i>		
Little Indian Sioux.....	Minnesota.....	109,392
Superior.....	Minnesota.....	927,158

# Origins of the Wilderness Society

BY HARVEY BROOME

A CONSIDERATION of the origins of the Wilderness Society is like a search for the source of a mountain stream. At the head of each hollow are moist clefts with their trembling drops which are garnered from seepages higher up. None can say which particular drop is the genesis of the stream. So, every individual who has had a feeling of exaltation amidst wilderness surroundings or who has expressed indignation at spoliation of the primitive, has contributed his mite to the now powerful current of wilderness sentiment.

However, just as there are well known tributaries and important confluences to every stream, there were vital personalities and significant meetings of personalities in the formative days of the Society. It is the purpose of this article to direct attention to these persons and meetings.

This has been difficult — the details and their chronology have become dimmed by the lapse of time. But by resorting to my rather casual files, supplemented by files and information supplied by others, and by filling in with incidents which have clung in my memory, I offer the following with assurance that it represents a reasonably accurate, if not a full-rounded, account of the origins of the Society.

Unquestionably, Aldo Leopold was the Jeremiah of wilderness thinking — see his article in this issue. In 1925, he wrote "The Last Stand of American Wilderness"<sup>1</sup> from which Robert Marshall quoted five years later in his spirited "The Problem of the Wilderness."<sup>2</sup>

But if Leopold was the prophet of the wilderness movement, Marshall was the first to suggest organization. This, in the last paragraph of his "The Problem of the Wilderness." This paragraph should be quoted, not only for its expression of the need for uniting wilderness adherents but for its clue to his extraordinarily dynamic outlook and personality.

"To carry out this program it is exigent that all friends of the wilderness ideal should unite. If they do not present the urgency of their viewpoint the other side will certainly capture popular support. Then it will only be a few years until the last escape from society will be barricaded. If that day arrives there will be countless souls born to live in strangulation, countless human beings who will be crushed under the artificial edifice raised by man. There is just one hope of repulsing the tyrannical ambition of civilization to conquer every niche on the whole earth. That hope is the organization of spirited people who will fight for the freedom of the wilderness."<sup>3</sup>

The seeds of organization were broadcast in 1930, but they

were not to mature for over four years. Perhaps there was delay because there was yet no strong body of wilderness sentiment in existence in any guise. At least it was not until Marshall's suggestion converged with a force of opinion developing from a different direction, that organization was effected.

To understand this influence we must return to the early '20's. In October of 1921, Benton MacKaye wrote "An Appalachian Trail—a Project in Regional Planning."<sup>4</sup> His article envisioned "a 'long trail' over the full length of the Appalachian skyline from the highest peak in the north to the highest peak in the south" — later extended to Katahdin in Maine and to Oglethorpe in Georgia. Few proposals in regional planning have fired the imagination as did this. Almost at once scattered groups began to work, and by 1925 the first Appalachian Trail Conference was held in Washington. In November 1927 the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club was organized to undertake clearing a section accessible to Washington.

The Shenandoah National Park was then in an embryonic stage; but within three years, the Skyland Drive was under construction in the central part of the Park, largely obliterating the Trail in that section. Leaders in the Potomac Club were dismayed. That which had been conceived, as a "walking trail . . . for recreation and recuperation" — and, as one man put it, "remote for detachment, narrow for chosen company, winding for leisure, lonely for contemplation" — was in deadly danger, not only of encroachment, but of conceptual annihilation. Obviously, if automobiles with their urbanizing influence were to follow the Trail, the purpose for which it was conceived, namely, to offer a medium for offsetting and balancing industrialized urban life, would be destroyed. The Skyland Drive was no isolated case. There was strong agitation for skyways in Vermont, in the South, and elsewhere.

Benton MacKaye went to Tennessee as an employee of the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1934. When he settled down in Knoxville, he and I resumed an acquaintance of several years and joined our efforts to curb or control needlessly destructive road-building projects. He had among other things recently written his article "Flankline vs. Skyline,"<sup>5</sup> and I had for a number of years battled with Park Service officials over road limitation in the Smokies. Three projects interested us particularly: the proposal for a skyline drive along the Green Mountains in Vermont; the Skyway in the Smokies which was already under construction; and the huge Shenandoah to Smokies Parkway. Each of these, as did the Skyland Drive in the Shenandoah, affected the Appalachian Trail.

By this date several leaders in the Trail movement believed that the opposition to skyway encroachment upon foot

<sup>1</sup>LEOPOLD, ALDO, *American Forests and Forest Life*, Vol. 31, p. 599-604, Oct. 1925.

<sup>2</sup>MARSHALL, ROBERT, *The Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 30, p. 141-148, Feb. 1930.

<sup>3</sup>MARSHALL, ROBERT, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup>*The Journal of the American Institute of Architects.*

<sup>5</sup>*Appalachia*, March 20, 1934.