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# The LIVING WILDERNESS

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PUBLISHED BY THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

VOLUME I

SEPTEMBER, 1935

NUMBER 1

## A Summons to Save the Wilderness

THE Wilderness Society is born of an emergency in conservation which admits of no delay. It consists of persons distressed by the exceedingly swift passing of wilderness in a country which recently abounded in the richest and noblest of wilderness forms, the primitive, and who purpose to do all they can to safeguard what is left of it. This for transmission, a sacred charge, to its preservers of the future.

It is true that every conservation organization realizes the tragedy that is enacting in the mountains and plains and would help if it could, and that every conservationist is sick at heart of what he sees on every hand, but is helpless. Furthermore, we believe that the great majority of careless and casual enjoyers of out-of-doors (and what American does not enjoy his out-of-doors?) would join heartily in preservation if only he realized the exquisiteness of primeval nature, the majesty of much of it, and that, once destroyed, it can never be returned to its thrilling sequence from the infinite.

The reason for prevailing helplessness is failure in leadership. Each organization in federal lands has its own other major objective, for which it was created and financed, and, to achieve which in times like these, it has not sufficient men and money. Each sees the wilderness crashing around it, but is powerless against the pressure of its own specialties to more than cry aloud with pointed finger. All could help a little, but none could plan and lead without tragic sacrifice of its own responsibilities. This is true in the federal land field, which contains a fifth of the forest. The remaining four-fifths are in state and private lands with no protecting organiza-

tions except local groups of limited vision whose activities are necessarily affected by local interests.

Of this dire situation was born last January the Wilderness Society.

The group that started it on January 21 never for a moment dreamed of itself saving the wilderness, but of transmuting, perhaps, a nation's yearning into power, as the cheer-leader tunes the inchoate vocalism of a multitude into one great voice that makes for victory. The Wilderness Society does not plan a large membership or a fine establishment. A few hundred or thousand picked workers will suffice, represented in states where there is wilderness to save. We are picking our members now, studying the field, planning methods, mapping opportunities, meantime spreading abroad, through every member, the intense need of wilderness salvation. This work will be backed, in time, by an ocean-to-ocean public opinion.

Among our members are already men widely known. This is, in a very special sense, an organization of youth. There is not a man in it who is not young in spirit, and few not young in years. They include executives of the most influential national conservation organizations.

Ten years of warfare in Congress saved the National Parks System from water power and irrigation, but left the primitive decimated elsewhere. What little of it is left is passing before a popular craze and an administrative fashion. The craze is to build all the highways possible everywhere while billions may yet be borrowed from the unlucky future. The fashion is to barber and manicure wild America as smartly as the modern girl. Our duty is clear.

## THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY PLATFORM

1. That the wilderness (the environment of solitude) is a natural mental resource having the same basic relation to man's ultimate thought and culture as coal, timber, and other physical resources have to his material needs.
2. That the use of this resource should be considered a public utility and therefore its commercialization should not be tolerated.
3. That the time has come, with the brutalizing pressure of a spreading metropolitan civilization, to recognize wilderness environment as a human need rather than a luxury and plaything.
4. That this need is being sacrificed to the mechanical invasion in its various killing forms.
5. That scenery and solitude are intrinsically separate things, that the motorist is entitled to his full share of scenery, but that motorway and solitude together constitute a contradiction.
6. That outing areas in which people may enjoy the non-primitive forest are highly desirable for many pent-up city people who have no desire for solitude, but that such areas should not be confused in mental conception or administration with those reserved for the wilderness.
7. That, since primeval succession can never return once continuity has been severed, it is manifestly the duty of this generation to preserve under scientific care, for the observation, study, and appreciation of generations to come, as many, as large, and as varied examples of the remaining primitive as possible.
8. That the wilderness remaining in America has shrunk to such a small remnant of the country's total territory, that what area does remain is all-precious and its preservation a vital need.
9. That encroachment upon our remnant American wilderness in any one locality is an attack upon the whole and creates an issue of national moment and not for local action alone.
10. That since the invasion of wilderness areas is generally boosted by powerful, country-wide organizations, it is essential that individuals and groups who desire to preserve the wilderness must unite in a country-wide defense.
11. That the means of achieving our objectives should be positive and creative as well as merely defensive, and hence that a long-range plan should be evolved toward bringing forth its mental and ultimate human uses.

## THE TYPES OF WILDERNESS RECOGNIZED

In order to define more specifically what we want to preserve, it seems desirable to divide what might broadly be termed the wilderness into five types.

Extensive Wilderness Areas are regions which possess no means of mechanical conveyance and which are sufficiently spacious that a person may spend at least a week of travel in them without crossing his own tracks. They may include timber, range lands, bare rocks, snowfields, marshes, deserts, or water. The dominant attributes of such areas are: first, that visitors to them must depend largely on their own efforts and their own competence for survival; and second, that they be free from all mechanical disturbances.

Primeval Areas are virgin tracts in which human activities have never modified the normal processes of nature. They thus preserve the native vegetative and physiographic conditions which have existed for an inestimable period. They present the culmination of an unbroken series of natural events stretching infinitely into the past, and a richness of beauty beyond description or compare. Consequently, primeval areas not only are of surpassing value from the standpoint of scenery, but of great scientific value.

Superlatively Scenic Areas are localities with scenic values so surpassing and stupendous in their beauty as to affect almost everyone who sees them. They may also include natural features of unique scientific interest, such as the geysers of Yellowstone.

Restricted Wild Areas are tracts of land in regions of concentrated population which, even though not having great size, virgin conditions, or superlative scenery, are at least free from the sights and sounds of mechanization. They are the closest approximation to wilderness conditions available to millions of people.

Wilderness Zones are strips along the backbone of mountain ranges or rivers which, although they may be crossed here and there by railroads and highways, nevertheless maintain primitive travel conditions along their major axes. Such zones not only are primarily free from man-made sights and sounds, but also permit long journeys under the impetus of one's own energies instead of those of a machine.

# Truck Trails in the Adirondacks

BY RAYMOND H. TORREY

*Secretary Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks*

CONSIDERABLE discussion and some objections have occurred among conservationists in New York State, in recent months, in respect to so-called "truck trails," proposed to be constructed by Civilian Conservation Corps camps in the State Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks. About fifty miles of such trails, which would be narrow dirt roads passable to trucks, were proposed by Conservation Commissioner Lithgow Osborne as projects under the present enlistments for CCC Camps.

Upon previous inquiry by conservationists, Commissioner Osborne gave assurances that the truck trails, when completed, would be restricted to the employes of his department, for fire protection, fish planting and similar conservation purposes; that they would never be opened to the public, and that, if it appeared the public could not be excluded, they would be abandoned.

As inquiries and objections continued, Commissioner Osborne sought an opinion of Attorney General John J. Bennett, Jr., asking if he could build these roads and prohibit their use by the public; if he could exclude automobiles but permit traffic by horse-drawn vehicles; if any difference in the answers would be made if such roads, before CCC work should be begun on them, were already passable by automobiles or horse-drawn vehicles.

The Attorney General replied that the construction of these roads would be justified to safeguard the Forest Preserves from fire. The public, he said, would have no right to use them, unless in furtherance of the purpose for which they are built, and under the Commissioner's direction. "I can conceive no other right it could have there," said the Attorney General. "To hold otherwise would be tantamount to holding that the State under the guise of the exercise of the police power could open public roads through the forest preserve. The bar of the constitution (Art. VII, Sec. 7) effectually prohibits the use of the preserve for such public use. The fact that, once constructed, they are physically available for travel, does not extend the authority to use them." Use of these roads

by horse-drawn vehicles, said the Attorney General, would be no less an infraction than automobiles. He concluded:

"It is my opinion and it is my answer that you have authority, in the exercise of the police power, to make such roads or trails as are reasonably necessary and justified to protect the preserve from the hazards of fire. You also have the authority and it is your duty to prevent their use as public highways."

The statements of the Conservation Commissioner and the Attorney General seem to indicate clearly that these roads may not be used by the general public. But there is some scepticism as to whether, when they are completed, the public can be efficiently excluded, and whether these roads will not, in effect, constitute new thoroughfares in the preserve, built without approval of the people, as is required for new state highways, through amendments to Section 7 of Article VII of the State Constitution.

The first instance of an attempt to enter one of these truck trails occurred in July, when the driver of an automobile sought the key of the gate of the trail on Hayes Brook, near Onchiota, from the local ranger, and was refused it. He then drove around the end of the barrier, breaking down several small trees, and entered the trail. He was identified by his license number and is to be sued by the Attorney General, at the request of Commissioner Osborne, for \$100, for trespass and destroying the trees.

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## ARTICLE VII, SECTION 7

Conservation Commissioner Lithgow Osborne, in a recent radio broadcast, declared he believed in strict interpretation of the constitutional protection of the New York State Forest Preserve, by Section 7 of Article VII, which declares that "the lands of the state, now owned or hereafter acquired, constituting the forest preserve as now fixed by law, shall be forever kept as wild forest lands. They shall not be leased, sold or ex-

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# Fallacies in Osborne's Position

## An Open Letter to the Conservation Commissioner of New York

BY ROBERT MARSHALL

DEAR Mr. Osborne:

I have just received from Mr. Henry Goddard Leach a copy of your speech to the Jefferson County Sportsmen's Association. I appreciate the sincerity of your argument, but just as sincerely I want to explain why I think there are four important fallacies in your reasoning. First, you argue that the proposed truck trails in the Adirondacks are needed in order to provide enough CCC work to give the New York boys their fair share of the amount of Emergency Conservation funds being handed out. Second, you contend that they are necessary for the protection of the Adirondacks from fire. Third, you state it is your opinion that they can be kept closed to public vehicular traffic. Fourth, you neglect to consider whether, even if they are kept closed, they may not ruin some of the finest values of the Adirondack forests.

Your first contention, that these truck trails are important in order to make work, does not seem to be valid justification. The argument for these truck trails should rest on whether they are primarily desirable or undesirable. I cannot believe that if a project is undesirable or even of doubtful desirability that there is any excuse for commencing it just to make work. A lot of work could be made by dynamiting the capitol and building a new one, but I would not consider this desirable. Neither would I consider it as undesirable or irreparably damaging as the general truck trail program which the philosophy expressed in your speech would initiate. For obviously there is an exceptionally good chance that CCC work is likely to continue for at least five more years. If, as you say, you have virtually run out of definitely constructive projects already, what will you do to provide CCC work for five years? Will you put a truck trail up every drainage to eradicate completely every symptom of wilderness?

No one can deny that truck trails usually get men into fires more quickly than foot trails (I have known occasional cases where this was not

true), and other things being equal this is all to the good. However, under present Adirondack conditions, with no point more than 12 or 15 miles from a passable auto road, or a motor traveled waterway, with forests not of a highly inflammable character comparable to those of the northwest or California, with crown fires rare, and with a well planned and well manned protective organization, the necessity for truck trails in the Adirondacks is much less than in most forested regions. Furthermore, for the expense of building and maintaining a passable truck trail such as the one you propose from Wanakena to High Falls, you could station two or three men at the falls during the limited dangerous fire season for a good many years to come and have them ready to jump on a fire in that vicinity even more quickly than if they had to be gathered together in Wanakena and brought out on a slow wood road. Also, don't forget that it has been demonstrated that the dead leaves and the dead, woody material of the forest dry out more rapidly along the openings made by roads than in the unbroken forest, and thus the forest inflammability along rights-of-way is increased. I should think that if you spent the truck trail funds for disposing of some of the dead and down material along existing roads and foot trails through cut-over and burned areas, you would be doing fully as much for fire protection as by building truck trails. Fire protection is a lot more than merely getting to fires quickly.

In spite of the serious fires of 1934, the first bad ones since 1913, your record of protection is better than you are willing to take credit for. I dare say that your percentage of area burned over within the Forest Reserve for the past 20 years is not half of one percent annually. How much do you think even a complete truck trail system could reduce that half percent (assuming the figure really is that high, and if I have done the efficiency of Bill Howard's protective system an injustice, please set me right)? I don't be-

lieve it would be one-tenth of one percent annually, and it might be nothing at all. In the old growth forests I think you would increase the fire hazard even if you succeeded in keeping the truck trails closed to the public. I have known all sorts of disastrous forest fires in the west which started within half a mile of auto roads. In your own Adirondacks, I'll bet anything that if you calculate the areas within two miles of roads which are passable to autos, you will find a higher percentage of them burned during the past 20 years than you will of the more remote areas. You yourself admit that your bad fire of 1934 came in an area well developed for auto transportation.

You assume truck trails can be kept closed. You pledge that if it is impossible to exclude public vehicular traffic you will render the truck trails impassable to the public by blowing holes in them and taking out bridges. In spite of the unquestioned sincerity of that pledge, it means absolutely nothing unless you should be a far more permanent Conservation Commissioner than anyone has ever been in the past. Furthermore, even if you remain Conservation Commissioner for 30 years, you could not resist the public pressure to open up automobile roads already built. A constitutional amendment would take it clean out of your hands. A hard fight is always required to defeat constitutional amendments for new roads. It would be almost impossible to convince the public that an auto road which was already built anyway shouldn't be used by the public. An auto road is an auto road to most people, and the distinction between road A on which it is moral for the general public to drive and road B on which it is immoral for anyone but rangers and public officials to drive would be too subtle. I do not believe for a minute that once these truck trails are built you can keep them closed.

In your argument you have entirely neglected the most serious damage caused by the truck trails, their destruction of the wilderness. It is just as disconcerting for a person who wants to bury himself in another age and another world to break out of the primitive forests on the tire tracks of a ranger as it would be to stumble across the tire tracks of a chewing gum salesman from Brooklyn. It is almost the rarest thing a human being can do today to escape the signs of mechanization. It is of inestimable value to

make it possible for people to get where they know they must be on their own resources, where they must be competent to cope with nature without any possible help from the machine. Today in the Adirondacks there are still three separate areas of this nature, one in the Moose River country of 450,000 acres, one in the High Mountain section of 350,000 acres, and one between Cranberry Lake and Beaver River Flow of 300,000 acres. In these regions a person can be lost in a splendor of primitive living which to many people is unobtainable in any other sort of environment. The values which exist in such wilderness areas are very delicate. They depend not only on what one can see and hear, but also on what is in the back of one's mind. The mere knowledge that mechanization lies over the top of the hill is enough to destroy some of the finest inspirational values of the wilderness. The actual sight of truck trails and of rangers' cars along them would be ruinous to the wild environment and its emotional effect.

Your argument seems to boil down to the belief that because a more serious fire than has ever occurred in the Adirondacks since Bill Howard took over the fire protection in 1909 might occur in the future, and because this fire might be reduced in acreage if it could be reached more quickly through building truck trails, and because in a similar manner the difference between what all the fires which might burn if there were truck trails might be a small fraction of one percent less annually than what they might burn without truck trails (although there is also a chance it might be more if my guess is right that the truck trails can't be kept closed), that therefore the positive, known, irreplaceable value of the Adirondacks wilderness should be sacrificed. You are making a problematical, slight protective gain outweigh a certain, immense aesthetic value. It doesn't seem a particle reasonable.

Mobridge, S. D., June 29, 1935.

## TRUCK TRAILS

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changed, nor be taken by any corporation, public or private, nor shall the timber thereon be sold, removed or destroyed."

The Commissioner said that the forest preserve was acquired for the benefit and welfare of all the people of the state.

# Why the Wilderness Society?

By ALDO LEOPOLD

PERHAPS it is a truth, one day to be recognized, that no idea is significant except in the presence of its opposite.

This country has been swinging the hammer of development so long and so hard that it has forgotten the anvil of wilderness which gave value and significance to its labors. The momentum of our blows is so unprecedented that the remaining remnant of wilderness will be pounded into road-dust long before we find out its values.

Under these circumstances it is fitting that those who perceive one or more of these values should band together for purposes of mutual education and common defense.

I say mutual education because I doubt whether anyone who does not sense these values of his own accord can be genuinely convinced that they exist. The record of administrators who have adsorbed the custodianship of formally proclaimed "wilderness areas" bears out this doubt. The process of splitting seems often to go merrily on at almost the same rate as before. Possibly the Society can help retard this tendency toward demolition of existing wilderness areas, as well as push the establishment of new ones.

There is particular need for a Society now because of the pressure of public spending for work relief. Wilderness remnants are tempting fodder for those administrators who possess an infinite labor supply but a very finite ability to picture the real needs of his country.

The recreational value of wilderness has been set forth so ably by Marshall, Koch, and others that it hardly needs elaboration at this time. I suspect, however, that the scientific values are still scantily appreciated, even by members of the Society. These scientific values have been set forth in print, but only in the studiously "cold potato" language of the ecological scientist. Actually the scientific need is both urgent and dramatic.

The long and short of the matter is that all land-use technologies—agriculture, forestry, watersheds, erosion, game, and range management—are encountering unexpected and baffling obstacles which show clearly that despite the

superficial advances in technique, *we do not yet understand and cannot yet control* the long-time interrelations of animals, plants, and mother earth. Some of these problems, such as "soil sickness" in forestry, will merely retard a part of the technical advance in that field. Others, notably some of the deeper aspects of range management and erosion control, foreshadow the possible permanent loss of whole geographic regions.

Let me give just one example: Weaver at Nebraska finds that prairie soils lose their granulation and their water-equilibrium when too long occupied by exotic crops. Apparently native prairie plants are necessary to restore that biotic stability which we call conservation. It is possible that dust storms, erosion, floods, agricultural distress, and depletion of range in the plains region all hark back fundamentally to degranulation. Perhaps degranulation also plays a part in these same phenomena elsewhere.

Here then is a new discovery which may illuminate basic questions of national policy. On it may hinge the future habitability of a third of the continent. But how shall it be followed up if there be no prairie flora left to compare with cultivated flora? And who cares a hang about preserving prairie flora except those who see the values of the wilderness?

The Wilderness Society is, philosophically; a disclaimer of the biotic arrogance of *homo americanus*. It is one of the focal points of a new attitude—an intelligent humility toward man's place in nature.

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## PROTECTION OF BEAUTY A PRACTICAL USE

When Theodore Roosevelt saw California Coast Redwoods for the first time, in 1903, he was enchanted with their beauty.

"I appeal to you," he said in an address at Palo Alto, "to protect these mighty trees, these wonderful monuments of beauty. There is nothing more practical in the end than the preservation of beauty, than the preservation of anything that appeals to the higher emotions of mankind."