Constructing Wilderness

The Development, Perception and Promotion of the Lye Brook Wilderness Area, Manchester, Vermont

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for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors

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List of Illustrations

to my father

It will be much easier to keep wilderness areas than to create them. In fact, the latter alternative may be dismissed as impossible.

Aldo Leopold, 1921

What management activities are required to produce a feeling of solitude among users of the wilderness? Or how does management create the perception of primitive recreation in an intensively utilized recreation area? These and similar questions illustrate the difficulty of managing wilderness in such a way as to produce a specific effect on the minds of users.

Kent Adair, 1986

Introduction

In the winter of 1956 Chris Swezey climbed into his truck and drove out of Manchester, Vermont, the town where he had lived all his life. A few miles east of town he turned onto Rootville road, shifted down into a lower gear, and began climbing up the rough dirt track. Passing over the bridges he had built a few years before, Swezey wound his way up onto the Lye Brook plateau and headed for his logging camp.

Swezey's family had long depended on the timber which covered the plateau and other mountains that sandwiched Manchester into a narrow valley. When he was a young boy in the 1920s, Swezey had been carried up the mountain on his father's shoulders past Bourn Pond to their summer camp. There the younger Swezey lived in a tent with his mother and helped his father log the trees on the high knolls of the plateau. His father employed several men who also lived in the camp. They worked in teams, cutting the trees and loading them onto horse-drawn sleds. After he removed the valuable timber from the area, Swezey's father sold much of his acreage to the Federal Government, which had begun acquiring land in the 1930s for the new Green Mountain National Forest. The Forest Service, the land's new caretaker, then attempted to rehabilitate the logging stands to provide a sustained yield of timber for the future.

When Swezey stepped out of his truck three decades later he surveyed the job he had just completed and was proud. The Forest Service had let the timber on the plateau regrow and then marked it for sale, specifying that a certain number of seed trees be left on each acre to speed

regrowth of the forest, provide habitat for wildlife, and stabilize the soil. Swezey had won the contract for the sale and removed three and a half million board-feet of timber from the plateau by 1956. Swezey hired men to fell the trees in summer, and then he transported the logs off the mountain in winter, driving truckloads down the frozen road to his mill in Manchester. He had a certain affection for the area, hunting and fishing there in his spare time, and valued it as a natural resource that produced marketable timber.

In the fall of 1991, Caryn and Dan Burke, from Strasburg, Pennsylvania, came to the Lye Brook area for a quite different reason. Hiking up the same road Swezey had used for hauling timber, they were struck by the beauty of the area. As the road narrowed to a trail, they passed a sign informing them that they were entering the "Lye Brook Wilderness Area," administered by the U.S. Forest Service. The sign enjoined them to leave no trace of their visit to this special place. A few miles later they arrived at Bourn Pond. They walked into a trail shelter on the Pond's shore and jotted down a few thoughts in the register: "This is a beautiful place. Thank you Vermonters for keeping this wilderness. This is probably as close to heaven as we will ever get." A few months later another pair of hikers recorded their thoughts: "We're here for a couple days... starry night and cloud wisps over Bourn Pond - [we've] explored the Lye Brook Wilderness Area and then some - soaking up the rays and listening to the birds here by the pond - wonderful place."[1]

[1]Green Mountain Club. "Log Book: South Bourn Pond, 27 September 1991 - 8 October 1992" AMs. Green Mountain Club, Waterbury, Vermont.

But how, during the thirty-five years since Swezey logged it, did the Lye Brook plateau become a Wilderness Area?

Wilderness Areas represent the culmination of a movement to preserve wilderness that began in the late 1800s. Several scholars have traced the evolution of the idea of wilderness preservation from its origins in the writings of Thoreau, Muir and Leopold to its codification in the Wilderness Act of 1964.[2] The designation of the Lye Brook area and other pieces of cut-over Eastern land as wildernesses worthy of preservation, though, has been largely ignored. These pieces have been treated as anomalies in a national system intended to preserve the great wildernesses of the American West.

But the Eastern Wilderness Areas are more than an anomaly; they represent, in fact, a new stage in the development of a wilderness ideal. Their creation offers insight into both the contemporary desire for wilderness and the ways that public land management agencies have responded. The history of the Lye Brook area -- its passage from wilderness to a timber lot and back again to wilderness -- chronicles the complex process through which people inscribe ideas into a landscape and manage landscapes to produce perceptions of wilderness. The central characters in this process -- Manchester boosters, local loggers, hiking enthusiasts, and Forest Service personnel -- are not national figures, nor are they the kind of individuals usually associated with shaping a country's ideals. But their ideas and actions reveal how the national

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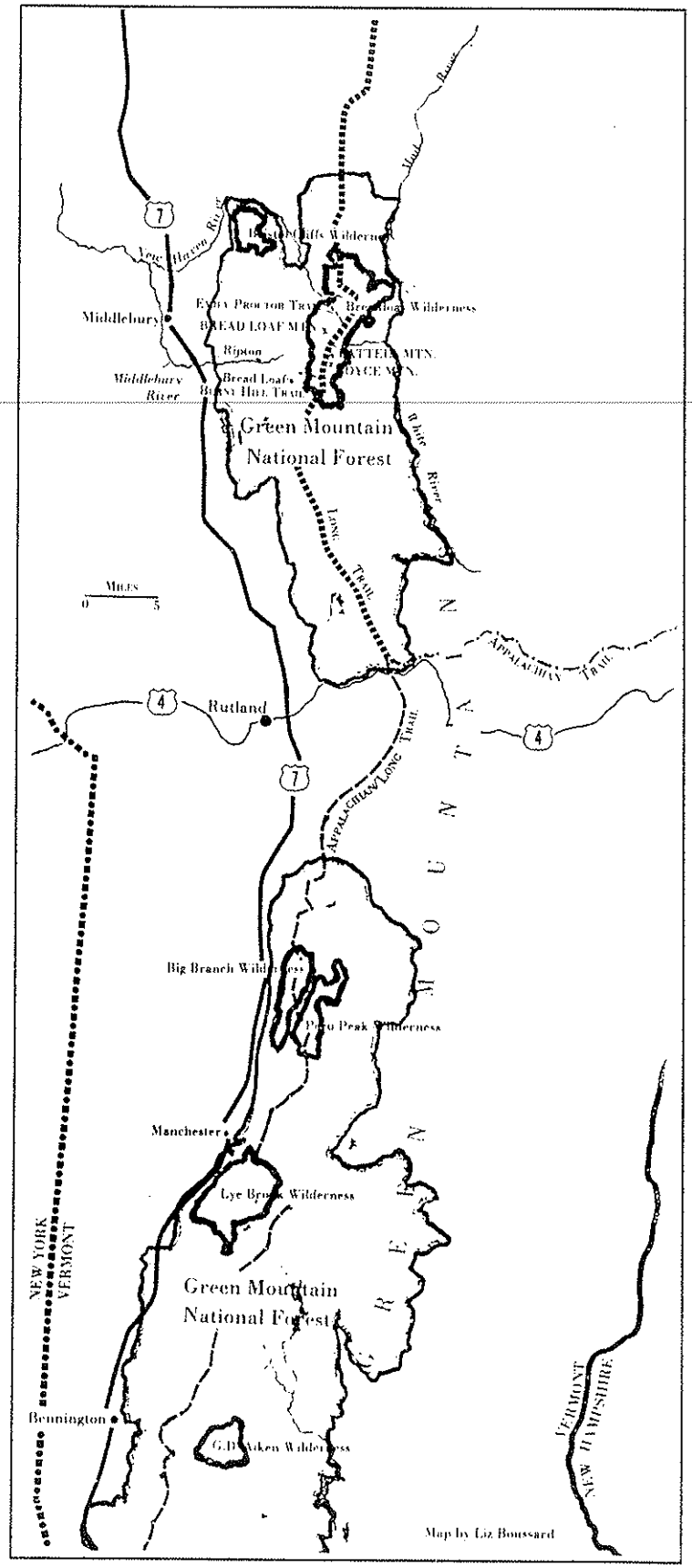
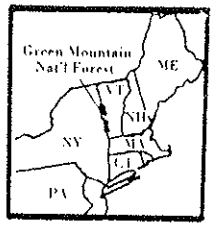
[2]See particularly Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 3rd ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982) and Max Oelschlaeger, The Idea of Wilderness, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

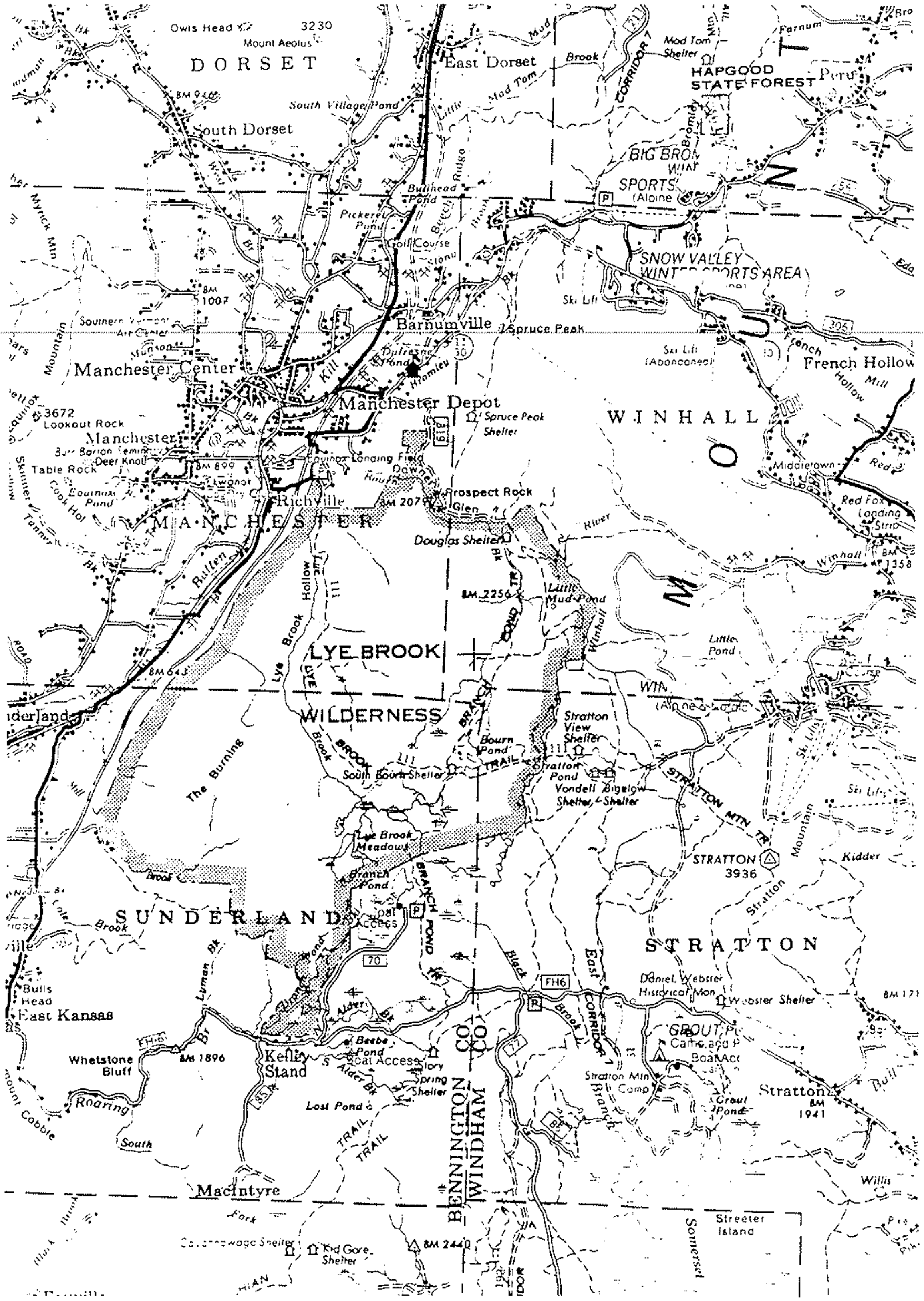
debate over wilderness has evolved from the conservation of timber, to the preservation of wilderness, to the construction of an idea of wilderness.

This evolving conception of wilderness and its impact on the Lye Brook plateau is, therefore, a local history that provides insight into the contemporary relationship between Americans and nature. It also explains how, in a mere thirty-five years, a timber lot can be transformed into a Wilderness Area.





1. A locator map for the Green Mountain National Forest. The Lye Brook Wilderness Area is at lower left.



2. An enlargement of the Manchester area. The town is northwest of the Lye Brook Wilderness Area.

Part 1 From Wilderness to Landscape

Perceiving Wilderness

In 1609, Samuel Champlain and his exploratory party paddled into a large lake and sighted the vast wilderness of what would one day become western Vermont. The first European to gaze upon the area, Champlain noted two things of particular interest to him:

> Many fine trees, of the same sorts that we have in France... [and] a great abundance of fish of a good many varieties...I saw some of them five feet long, as big as a man's thigh with a head as large as two fists, a snout two and a half feet long, and a double row of very sharp and dangerous teeth...it goes into the rushes or weeds which border the lake in several places, and puts its snout out of the water without moving at all, so that when birds come to light on its snout, which had been half open, it draws the birds under the water by the feet.[3]

Champlain considered this wild country with a mixture of enterprise and awestruck fear. The trees were potentially valuable to the French government, which had sponsored the expedition, but there were also dangerous and cunning creatures in the new world. Champlain's dichotomous perception of the wilderness as both an economic asset and an awe-inspiring unknown foreshadowed the later development of two distinct views of the American land.

Most early settlers sailed to America seeking the earthly paradise that Europeans believed lay somewhere to the West. What they found was often far less appealing. "A hideous and desolate wilderness" was William

[3]Samuel de Champlain, The Voyages and Explorations of Samuel de Champlain: 1604-1616 Narrated by Himself, (New York: Allerton Book Co., 1904, Volume I), 205-206.

Bradford's assessment as he stepped off the Mayflower.[4] For Bradford, the wilderness of America was an obstacle to be overcome, posing physical difficulty and moral temptation. Settlers often believed that wilderness appealed to the dark, uncivilized side of the human soul. The mission of civilized men, then, would be to conquer the wilderness and by so doing vanquish the evil within themselves.

Religious motivation often fortified settlers' desire to subdue and civilize wilderness. New England's Puritans dwelled upon the idea of the new land as a pagan continent, terming it a "waste and howling wilderness / Where non inhabited / But hellish fiends and brutish men / That Devils worshipped."[5] As instruments of God on earth, Puritan pioneers believed it was their mission to defeat the evil that surrounded them, both in the hearts of men and in the wilds of nature. They altered the land to such an extent that in 1653 historian Edward Johnson was able to state that "a remote, rocky, barren, bushy, wild-woody wilderness" had been transformed, in a generation, into "a second England for fertileness."[6]

By the early nineteenth century this "second England" stretched nearly the length of the Eastern seaboard and pushed Westward in fits and starts, leaving most Americans far from wild country. Living in increasingly dense settlements and cities, some Eastern Americans began

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[4]As quoted in Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 23-24.

[5]As quoted in Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 36.

[6]As quoted in William Cronon, Changes in the Land, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 5.

to view wilderness in a more positive light. Ralph Waldo Emerson and other Transcendentalists popularized the idea that nature was the symbol of the human spirit, but it was Henry David Thoreau who first clearly advocated wilderness preservation.

For Thoreau, nature itself was spiritual, not just the symbol of the human spirit, and wilderness was the highest state of nature. By announcing that "in wilderness is the preservation of the world,"[7] Thoreau created a new paradigm, casting wilderness as the positive force and civilization as the obstacle. Wilderness, in Thoreau's view, induced an inward journey and "symbolized the unexplored qualities and untapped capacities of every individual."[8] By building a cabin at Walden Pond in the 1840s, Thoreau attempted to put his ideas into practice. But Concord, Massachusetts was no longer a wilderness. It was a pastoral middle ground, one in which Thoreau sought "a combination of the good inherent in wilderness with the benefits of cultural refinement."[9] When Thoreau saw the truly wild country of Maine's North Woods several years later, he recoiled from it. Thoreau's shock revealed the distance between his idea of wilderness and the actuality of experiencing a primeval landscape, and he retreated to his middle ground. Still, Thoreau represented a revolutionary change in the consideration of wilderness, promoting wilderness as a positive, spiritual realm that countered the increasingly routinized and

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[7]As quoted in Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 84.

[8]Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 89.

[9]Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 92.

clock-bound society of nineteenth-century America.

The clearcut lands left behind by the country's march Westward inspired another easterner to reevaluate Americans' relationship with the land. Gazing upon Mt. Tom, located near his hometown of Woodstock, Vermont, George Perkins Marsh was struck by the damage caused by uncontrolled logging of the mountain. He noted in Man and Nature (1864) how heavy rain turned the steep, treeless slopes into,

> Bald mountain ridges, rocky declivities, and steep earth banks furrowed by deep ravines with beds now dry, now filled [with] torrents of fluid mud and gravel hurrying down to spread themselves over the plain, and dooming to everlasting barrenness the once productive fields.[10]

Such disasters, Marsh felt, were brought on by the wanton destruction of forests, and he called for local governments to purchase their watersheds and manage them properly. Man, according to Marsh, had to "become a co-worker with nature in the reconstruction of the damaged fabric...he must aid her in reclothing the mountain slopes with forests."[11] The "damaged fabric" was not just that of nature, but was also Americans' faith in nature. The "torrents of fluid mud" which doomed their fields to "everlasting barrenness" shook Americans' confidence in the benevolence of land reclaimed from wilderness. By "reclothing the mountain slopes" people could restore their faith in a tame nature, as well as prevent future damage to their economic well-being. Marsh took the appreciation of wilderness beyond the spiritual or aesthetic, as evoked by Thoreau, and

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[10] George Perkins Marsh, Man and Nature, (New York: Charles Scribner, 1864), 232.

[11] Marsh, Man and Nature, 35.

grounded it in economic terms.

By identifying the relationship between humans and nature as a reciprocal one, where the bounty of the land depended upon the sensible treatment of it, Marsh also provided the philosophical basis for the emerging American conservation movement. Conservationists opposed the wasteful practices used to harvest the country's natural resources, encouraging instead that land be managed to produce sustainable yields of raw materials. By leaving a few seed trees on each acre, they suggested, loggers could allow a forest to regenerate quickly, providing future timber and protecting the watershed.

Influenced by Marsh and other conservation leaders, President Benjamin Harrison created fifteen forest reserves in 1891, withdrawing over thirteen million acres of woodlands from the public domain. Harrison established the reserves to protect them from indiscriminate logging, but he offered no formal management policy to embody the conservationists' ideals. The ensuing struggle among conservationists to determine the proper policy for the reserves split the movement into two distinct camps, one aligned with the aesthetic and spiritual concerns of Thoreau, and the other based on the economic and restorative ideology introduced by Marsh.

John Muir, the leading proponent of wilderness preservation in the late nineteenth century, felt that the best use of the reserves would be to perpetuate the wild character of the land. While Thoreau wanted to keep a foot in civilization and another in the wilderness, Muir sought the wilderness as completely as possible, engaging in long sojourns through the wildest areas of the country. At first Muir promoted wilderness as a

contrast to the growing urbanity of America, encouraging people to throw off the "galling harness of civilization"[12] and revive themselves in the wilderness. Later, Muir added a more complex layer to his advocacy, proposing that wilderness be preserved for the sake of wilderness. He advanced a biocentric philosophy which regarded man as just one of the creatures on earth, and not necessarily the most important one.[13]

Muir's desire to preserve the nation's wild character was not shared by most Americans. The perception of wilderness as a positive resource, rather than a burdensome obstacle, was still a new idea in the late nineteenth century. Americans better understood the philosophy of conservation, recognizing the economic benefits of turning wilderness into a sustained producer of raw materials. Muir responded to this discrepancy by proposing that the reserves could meet both ends. "The forests must be," he wrote, "not only preserved, but used, and...like perennial fountains...be made to yield a sure harvest of timber, while at the same time all their far reaching uses may be maintained unimpaired."[14] One part of the reserves could be harvested, reasoned Muir, while another could be preserved in a pristine wilderness state.[15]

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[12]As quoted in Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 127.

[13]For a fascinating discussion of Muir's philosophy as one of the first postmodern critiques of society see Max Oelschlaeger, The Idea of Wilderness, (New York: Yale University Press), 1991.

[14]As quoted in Alston Chase, Playing God in Yellowstone, (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 306.

[15]Muir and other commentators considered the western wilderness to be pristine. It has become clear, though, that by Muir's time all American lands had been altered significantly by human activity through the fire management techniques of native

This idea was strongly opposed by Muir's counterpart in the conservation movement, Gifford Pinchot. Pinchot, born and raised in the East, decided on a career in forestry in order to make his mark on the world. He traveled to Germany in the early 1890s to attend forestry school, as there were none in the United States, and learned the science of silviculture. Silviculture applied conservation philosophy to forests, developing a scientific method for harvesting the maximum sustained yield of timber from the land. When Pinchot returned to the United States he lobbied for the forest reserves to be managed by professional foresters trained in the science of silviculture. The Organic Act of 1897 finally established a formal management policy for the reserves, directing that they be managed "for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of watershed and to furnish a continuous supply of timber."[16] Pinchot was made chief of the forest reserves, responsible for putting the Act's direction into practice.

Pinchot appreciated the aesthetic qualities of forests, but regarded such considerations secondary to making the reserves produce the maximum sustainable amount of raw materials. He rejected Muir's desire for a portion of the reserves to be harvested and the rest left in a

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populations, the invasion of cheat grass and other exotic species, fuel accumulation from fire suppression, riparian damage by grazing, and the eradication of large predators. In the popular conception, though, Western lands have continued to be seen as pristine, untouched places. Thus when I refer to the Western wilderness it is to the popular idealization of a pristine condition. Discussions with Dick Andrews of the Vermont Wilderness Association clarified this point, and Alston Chase lays out the argument in Playing God in Yellowstone, 45.

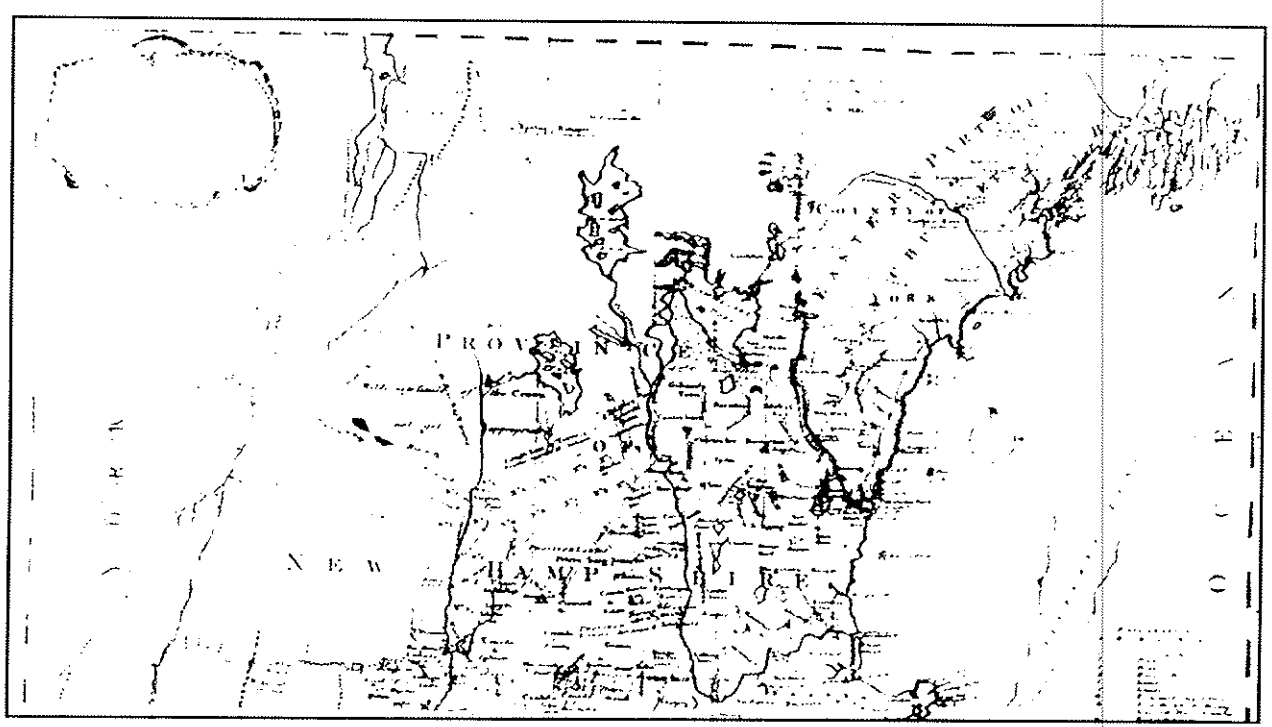
[16]As quoted in Michael Frome, The Forest Service, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 19.

permanently wild state, wanting instead to keep each acre available for economic production. Toward that end Pinchot announced that the reserves would be opened to sheep for grazing. Muir despised sheep, often referring to them as "hoofed locusts" since they rapidly turned pristine mountain meadows into overgrazed pasture. Pinchot' s announcement convinced Muir of the impossibility of simultaneously preserving wilderness and harvesting resources from the same piece of land.

Pinchot's announcement ended their friendship, and their personal break was symbolic of a wider division among supporters of conservation. Muir and his followers left to form a distinct movement for preservation of wilderness, turning their energies toward establishing a National Park system. At the same time, Pinchot succeeded in expanding the reserves into a National Forest system and founded the Forest Service to manage the system. Though both preservation advocates and proponents of sustained economic production were able to stand under the theoretical umbrella of conservation ideology for a time, the need to manage specific pieces of land quickly revealed an inherent conflict between wilderness preservation and a conservation ethic committed to harvesting natural resources.

When wilderness was abundant Samuel Champlain had viewed it with both enterprise and awe. By subduing wilderness early settlers could make a profit and conquer their own fears. The retreat of wild lands to the West, however, reversed some Americans' perception of wilderness, recasting a once evil and dangerous obstacle into a valuable asset. For most conservationists the value of wilderness lay in its potential for

sustained economic production, and the minority who instead valued the pristine character of wilderness left to form their own movement for preservation. The growing scarcity of wilderness rendered the desire for enterprise and the sense of awe contained in Champlain's description no longer compatible.



3. Vermont was still an uncharted wilderness in 1771 on Carrington Bowles' *A Map of the Most Inhabited Part of New England.* Reproduced from Lipke, Vermont Landscape Images, 1976.

Transforming Wilderness

Evolving perceptions of wilderness and debate over the proper use of the nation's natural resources during the nineteenth and early twentieth century were of little interest to the people of Manchester, Vermont, who busied themselves wresting a living from the land. Settled in a medium-sized valley sandwiched between the steep rise of the Lye Brook plateau to the East and Mt. Equinox to the West, the pioneers of Manchester redeemed the land from its wild state at an astonishing rate. Having cleared the valley of trees, they soon looked to the mountains on either side of the town. Individual pioneers transformed Manchester's wilderness into a livable landscape, but it would require larger economic and social forces to eliminate the wilderness of the Lye Brook area.

Manchester's English settlers were actually latecomers to the Green Mountains. Long after much of New England had acquired substantial colonial populations, the Green Mountain region remained a wild place. "Wilderness Lands of the Crown not yet appropriated," was how Carrington Bowes characterized the land that would eventually become Vermont on his 1771 map of New England [see map on preceding page].[17] The wars between the loosely knit Algonquians of New England and Canada and the Iroquois Confederacy made the Green Mountains a no-man's land and inhibited European exploration of the area. During the

[17] Carington Bowles, "A Map of the Most Inhabited Part of New England," London, 1771, as reproduced in William C. Lipke, Vermont Landscape Images 1776-1976 (Burlington: Robert Hull Fleming Museum, 1976), 49.

1700s, the imperial wars between England and France drove away most of the native people and prevented European settlement. After the French and Indian War ended in 1763 the region's English population grew rapidly. Benning Wentworth, Governor of New Hampshire, carved Vermont into 23,000 acre-units and sold the town of Manchester to a group of land speculators in 1761. The speculators promptly sold the town to another group from Amenia, New York, who became the town's proprietors.

The pioneers who first traveled to Manchester in 1764 were not interested in the spiritual or aesthetic values of wilderness, preferring instead to convert the wild land into a livable landscape. The first thing they did was make six clearings, some amounting to over two hundred acres so they could farm and build their homes. Wood was their primary natural resource, used as a building material, heat source, and trade good. Indicative of wood's primacy, Manchester had a sawmill, built in 1765, before it was a village or had a store.[18]

Around Manchester "the forest still exceeded cleared lands," and the roads were "only foot and bridle paths"[19] in 1776, but the woods in the valley did not last for long. According to historian William Cronon, "a typical New England household probably consumed as much as thirty or

[18] John S. Pettibone, "The Early History of Manchester," Vermont Historical Society Proceedings, (1 December 1930): 149-153.

[19] For the history of Manchester from its inception to 1960 I have relied heavily on the only book-length history of the town, Edwin Bigelow and Nancy Otis, Manchester Vermont: A Pleasant Land Among the Mountains, (Manchester: Town of Manchester, 1961), and supplemented it with articles by other authors. While the Bigelow test is less interested in analysis than it in information, it gives an invaluable overview of the area.

forty cords of firewood per year, equaling an acre of felled forest."[20] The new residents depleted the easily accessible timber in Manchester's valley by approximately 1810. The town's population, which had grown by 226 people during the previous two decades, stalled for the next two, gaining only 23 new residents.

The rise of commercial agriculture across New England in the early nineteenth century provided the impetus for Manchester's residents to follow the retreating woods into the mountains on either side of the valley. Connected by a series of turnpikes to the markets of New York City and Boston in the first decade of the century, the farmers of Vermont shifted "from mixed, predominantly subsistence agriculture to a predominantly specialized production of one kind of commodity on a commercial scale for the national market."[21] One such commodity was lye, which the burgeoning wool industry of England used to make soap for cleaning its raw wool. Lye, also known as potash, was produced by burning, leaching, and boiling hardwood trees. The resulting ash was light and valuable. Forty pounds, the remains of one large elm tree, brought about $3 in the early 1800s.

Initially, the woods of Lye Brook[22] had remained secure due to the

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[20] Cronon, Changes in the Land, 121.

[21] Institute for Conservation Archaeology, A Cultural Resource Overview of the Green Mountain National Forest, (Cambridge: Peabody Museum), 75.

[22] Lye Brook is the brook which drains the area. For simplicity I refer to the entire area as Lye Brook, releasing us from the tiresome modifiers of area and plateau. Local residents refer to Lye Brook through all mentioned combinations and as East Mountain.

difficulty of transporting its enormous trees, some of which reached two feet in diameter. The demand for potash, though provided an inducement for the first development of Lye Brook and gave it its name. By burning and leaching the trees in the tight valleys of the mountain, and then transporting the light, valuable ash down to the town, Manchesterians could produce a product that was in high demand. The production of potash became a major industry in Vermont. The state produced 718 tons in 1840, but the invention of a process to extract lye from salt in 1850 promptly ended the business.[23]

The digging of the Champlain canal in 1823 and construction of the Rutland Railroad in 1849 offered efficient connections to the Hudson River and the markets of New York City. The canal cut shipping costs from $30 a ton to $10 and lowered the time required to bring a load of lumber to market from twenty-five days to ten.[24] Since the Connecticut River's shipping rates remained high, western Vermont enjoyed a competitive advantage over other areas producing lye and timber. Additionally, the barges plying the canal and the railroad cars on the Rutland line were able to transport sawn boards, as well as rough logs, and this capability allowed local woodsmen build their own sawmills and add value to their product.

[23]Victor Rolando, Two Hundred Years of Soot and Sweat: the History and Archaeology of Vermont's Iron, Charcoal, and Lime Industries, (Manchester: Mountain Publications, 1992), 247.

[24]Harold Meeks, Vermont's Land and Resources, (Shelburne: New England Press, 1986), 247-248.

These efficient connections to urban markets brought changes to Lye Brook that can be seen in the Beers Atlas of 1869 [see map on following page]. The Atlas shows four sawmills near Manchester, three of which were located in Lye Brook Hollow, the tight valley cutting into the Lye Brook plateau. The mills used the brook as a power source and were connected to the town by a rough road. The Atlas also reveals a small logging hamlet in the northeastern corner of the Lye Brook plateau, just North of Bourn Pond, connected to Manchester by the Rootville road. Named after Henry Root, this logging town contained three sawmills, a shop, and five other structures. Though there is little other information about these long-abandoned sites, there presence makes it clear that a considerable amount of logging took place in Lye Brook in the mid-nineteenth century. They also illustrate how improvements in transportation and road networks made the forests of Lye Brook accessible, for it was now profitable to bring the mill to the trees, cart the sawn boards down to the town, and load them onto railroad cars. So much lumber was cut in western Vermont, in fact, that the state became a net importer of lumber during the 1840's.

The improvement of transportation networks and particularly the railroad also affected the population of Vermont. Having cleared the accessible timber from much of the state, Vermonters turned to the railroad as an avenue leading to greater opportunity in the sparsely settled West. The state experienced such a dramatic outflow of people that by 1860 nearly half of the state's population had left, the highest rate of

emigration experienced by any state in the union.[25] Manchester, too, experienced a downturn, losing ninety-six people in the 1850's.

For Manchester, however, it was what the railroad brought, rather than took, that proved to have the greatest impact on the town. Located on the main north-south turnpike for the western half of the state, Manchester had long been a stop for traveler. The opening of railroad passenger service to New York City in 1851 brought a new type of traveler to town, the summer visitor. These visitors came to experience the homeopathic cure, an Eastern health craze that confined activity to the social life of the hotel and required the ministrations of local doctors. Manchester became particularly adept at satisfying the demand for cures of this nature, housing enough doctors at one point that a section of town was referred to as "Pill Alley".[26] It also developed a number of grand hotels, all of which, according to the Manchester Journal, were "erected for the express purpose of accommodating summer guests. No pains or expense has been spared by their enterprising proprietors."[27] By 1862 the paper could proudly proclaim that, "our quiet little village can almost vie with a Saratoga or a Newport,"[28] the era's preeminent summer resorts.

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[25]John A. Douglass, "A History of the Green Mountain National Forest, 1981" TMs [photocopy], (Supervisor's Office, Green Mountain National Forest, Rutland, Vermont), 22.

[26]Bigelow, Manchester in the Mountains, 164. One doctor Sprague operated the "Manchester Water-Cure" from 1861-1863, a combination boarding house-nursing home. The "Water-Cure" attracted many patients form out of town as well as Manchester, where They were put in "electrochemical and Medicated bathe" of Manchester water.

[27]"Manchester as a Summer Resort," Manchester Journal, 4 June 1861, 2.

[28]Bigelow, Manchester in the Mountains, 199.

Beginning in the 1850s another group of travelers began visiting northern New England and upstate New York, but these tourists sought wild scenery, not medical baths. The popularization of the positive qualities of nature and particularly "wild" nature, as espoused by Thoreau, inspired Eastern urban elites to seek out what was still primitive in the country. An art historian William Lipke succinctly stated,

> like an Englishman taking a Grand Tour of the Lake District in the early nineteenth century, the American counterpart would follow a guide like *The Picturesque Itinerary of the Hudson River,* published by Jacques Milbert in 1829...traveling in "search of scenery" and...the guidebooks and images provided a visual formula in the mind's eye (which was) imposed on the landscape.[29]

The scenery sought by the city dwellers had to have a wild character about it. Ironically Vermont, whose wilderness had persisted longer than most of New England's, was not wild enough:

> Guidebooks depicting the American landscape prior to 1860 tended to concentrate on the regions of the Hudson River and adjacent Catskill range; the scenery found in the White Mountains...the upper Hudson river Valley, particularly Lake George. Vermont, with but few exceptions, was not on the major itinerary ...the preference was for landscapes closer to their original, wild state.[30]

By the 1870s, Vermont's forest cover had been reduced by two-thirds from one hundred years before, leaving a primarily agricultural landscape.

After the Civil War, however, Vermont's agricultural landscape became the scenery desired by travelers, and they began to flock to

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[29]William C. Lipke, "Changing Images of Vermont Landscape," in William C. Lipke, ed., Vermont Landscape Images 1776-1976, (Burlington: Robert Hull Fleming Museum, 1976), 36.

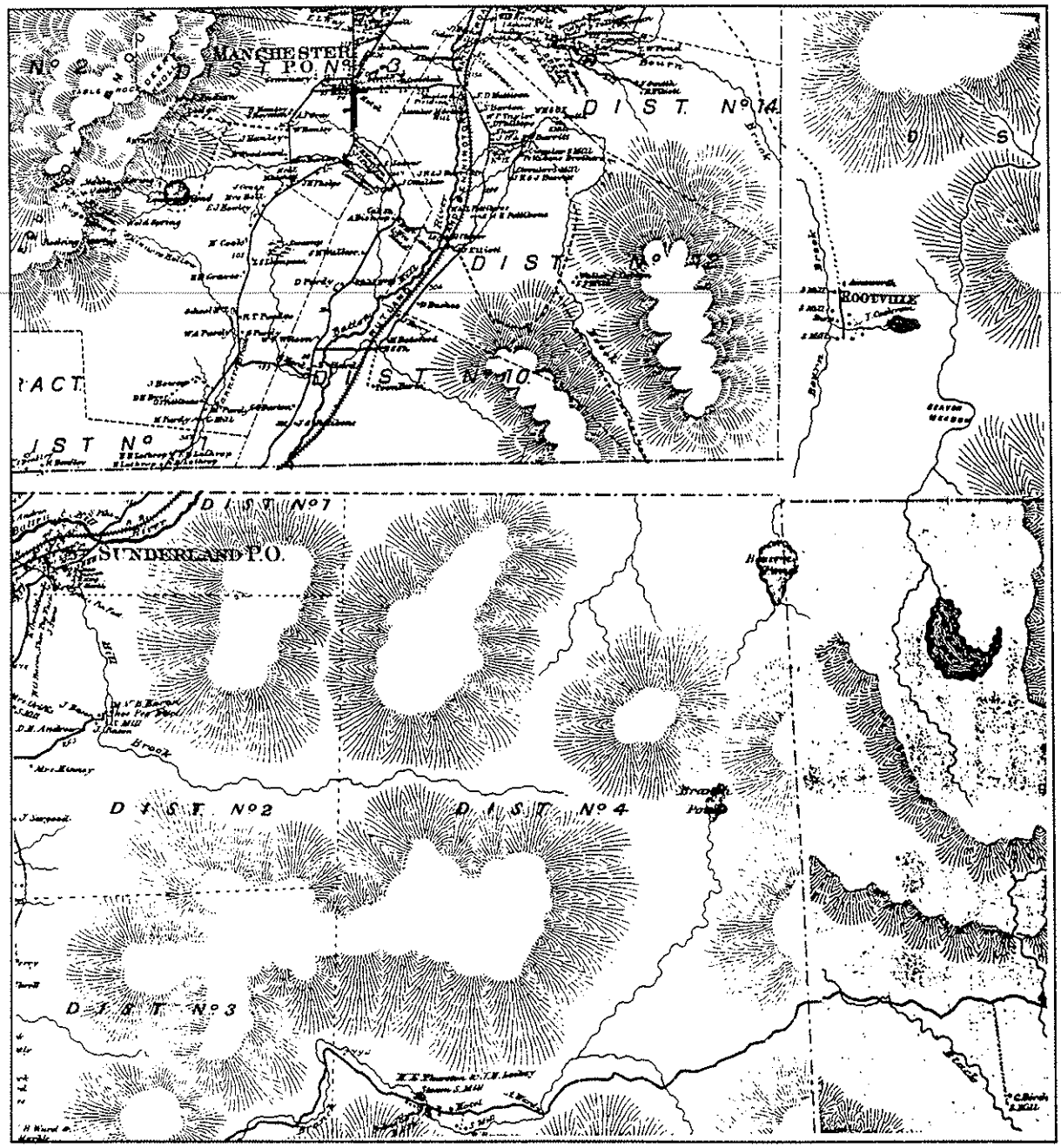
[30]Lipke, Vermont Landscape Images, 37.

Manchester in mounting numbers. This new generation of tourists was no longer interested in searching out representative scenes of an early American wilderness. They instead sought pastoral scenery as a backdrop for their outdoor excursions. Vermont's close-cropped landscape was now in demand by those seeking the pastoral ideal embodied in cleared fields dotted with grazing sheep and cows. The new vacationers were more interested in pleasure, play or relaxation than their earlier counterparts, who had associated leisure time with contemplation, rest, or self-betterment.[31] These tourists actually left the hotels and ventured into the countryside. The Manchester Journal summarized the new travelers' activities with pride, stating "there have been excursions to the summit of Mount Equinox, to the Cave in Skinner's Hollow, to Deer Knoll, to the marble quarries, to Well's Pond, and to Downer's Glen. The Angler has had the finest sport in Bourn and Lye Brooks, in the Battenkill, and in the Equinox Trout Ponds."[32]

Drained by the outflow of residents to the West and undercut by an influx of mid-western produce, Manchester needed the tourists' money to survive. The townspeoples' first concern was maintaining their new source of income and attracting more. Though there was a daily train from New York City an 1871 editorial in the Journal complained that, "nine hours and three-fourths from New York to Manchester is better than "going afoot" but not exactly what we hoped for from the "great

[31]Lipke, Vermont Landscape Images, 40.

[32]Lipke, Vermont Landscape Images, 205.



4. F.W. Beers' Atlas of 1869 shows a number of sawmills in the area. Within the boundaries of the present Wilderness Area there are two on the Eastern edge of Manchester and a third on a rough road leading up the Lye Brook ravine. The northeastern quadrant also reveals Rootville, a logging hamlet replete with three sawmills and a shop. The Lye Brook area straddles four towns and Beers' surveyors did not align them exactly, necessitating the exploded view shown above. Reproduced from F.W. Beers, Atlas of Bennington County, 1869 and Atlas of Windham County, 1869.

4. Manchester's late nineteenth-century pastoral landscape as seen in a "View In Manchester, VT," 1872. Reproduced from Bigelow, Manchester Vermont, 1961

northern' through route to Montreal."[33] By 1887 the trip was down to six hours, and in 1905 the 'Green Mountain Flyer' made the daily trip in even less time.

Once visitors arrived, the hotels and townspeople assumed responsibility for holding their interest. Responding to their visitors' desire for pleasurable experiences in a tame natural environment, the hotels and residents banded together to remake the town. "No pains or expense," announced the Journal about the town's hotels, "has been spared by their enterprising proprietors to provide such appurtenances, artificial ponds, fountains walks, carriage roads, marble sidewalks in every direction, et cetera, which can minister to the comfort and happiness of their inmates."[34] One entrepreneur built a wagon road to the top of Mt. Equinox, providing, for a small fee, a view of Manchester and its pastoral landscape. In 1880, the Equinox House, one of three venerable town hotels, created a ten-acre artificial pond on its grounds and stocked it with trout, providing a sure catch for its guests. In an article entitled, "Manchester As A Summer resort - A Prediction Fulfilled" the editor of the Journal reflected on the town' s accomplishments, remarking that,

> in addition to the hotel improvements, since 1853, nearly every house in the village has been remodelled and repainted, and a large number of new ones built. White marble sidewalks have been laid... additional shade trees have been set out and we venture to say that

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[33] As quoted in Bigelow, Manchester in the Mountains, 92.

[34] "Manchester as a Summer Resort - A Prediction Fulfilled," Manchester Journal, 4 June 1861, 2.

no town in the state is more handsomely sidewalked and shaded.[35]

As the hotels crafted small environments to entertain their guests and the townspeople repainted their homes, a group of Manchester sportsmen went a step farther. They decided to recreate part of the regional environment to appeal to the visiting urbanites' images of nature and to provide themselves with sport. By 1875, no wild deer remained in southwestern Vermont. To remedy this situation, local sportsmen raised money to place deer on the Lye Brook plateau. Four red deer were shipped from Virginia and released at Bourn Pond.[36] The animals had to be taken away from town so they would not return, but the choice of Bourn Pond is indicative of the fact that the Lye Brook area, despite the economic activity taking place there, was still seen as a natural area, or at least the closest thing to nature remaining in an extensively altered landscape. The game release foreshadowed the future of Lye Brook as a contested landscape, where differing perceptions of nature and wilderness would clash.

Not all the residents of Manchester willingly embraced the premise that the town had to be made over in pursuit of tourists' dollars. Si Clone, pen name of a sardonic local journalist, presented an important minority perspective when he complained in the Vermont Advance of Nov. 3, 1900 that "it seems Vermont must become a wild west of underbrush or be made into a game preserve and the inhabitants become game wardens for the rich summer guests and sportsmen." Clone was disturbed by the

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[35]"Manchester as a Summer Resort," Manchester Journal, 2.

[36]Bigelow, Manchester in the Mountains, 190.

imposition of the tourists' values on Manchester's landscape and the accommodating role assumed by the local population. He identified in 1900 one of the tensions that would reappear seventy-three years later when Lye Brook was declared a federal wilderness.

Despite Clone's view, tourism became a staple of the local economy by the turn of the century, and the townspeople organized a Manchester Development Association in 1901. Adopting a "Manchester-in-the-mountains" slogan, the association sent out 15,000 brochures a year. By the mid-1920s, tourists were spending over $500,000 a year in Manchester hotels and boarding houses.

As the Development Association promoted a Manchester in between the mountains - a settled place in a natural environment - the mountains East of town underwent a different transformation. In addition to bringing tourists, the railroad also allowed industrial logging operations of increasing size to be located in Lye Brook. Eventually, the railroad itself was used as a tool to make the Lye Brook plateau accessible to lumber interests.

In 1869 there were three sawmills operated by local individuals in Lye Brook, but by 1880, larger, non-local industrial activity had begun to make its mark on the area. The Barnum Richardson company built twelve brick charcoal kilns near the Rootville logging hamlet, creating an industrial site capable of producing approximately 240,000 bushels of coal annually from the nearby timber.[37] The company made charcoal by

[37] Eight more brick kilns from the same time period are located by Bourn Brook in the northern part of the Lye Brook area, though it is unclear who operated them.

burning logs, producing a coal that was lighter, burned hotter and emitted less smoke than wood. Charcoal probably had been first produced in Lye Brook at the same time that lye was manufactured there in the early nineteenth-century. In the earlier phase, charcoal had been produced by burning mounds of cordwood, providing farmers with a product to market alongside their produce. The later construction of the brick kilns, though, represented a move to large-scale production, and across the state, "charcoal making shifted from pin money to industrial profit."[38]

Another operator, the Battenkill Lumber company, tackled the continuing problem of transporting whole logs off the plateau once they were cut. In 1901 the company built a six mile flume up Lye Brook Hollow. Having secured a six year contract to furnish 17,000 cords of pulpwood a year to a paper mill in Connecticut, the company had the assurance it needed to invest in the flume. Creating a series of dams and holding ponds along the brook, the company significantly changed the landscape before going bankrupt in 1907.[39] Both the brick kilns and the flume reveal how the use of Lye Brook's timber shifted away from local individuals and into the hands of more distant companies.

It took the intensive capital investment of the Rich Lumber Company of New York, though, to eliminate the vestigial wilderness of the Lye Brook area. Timber speculators for the Company surveyed the Lye Brook area and surmised that if a railroad were built up the steep valley of

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[38]Rolando, 200 Years of Soot, 164.

[39]Bill Reed, "Lye Brook, A Paradise and Its Past," Stratton/Bromley Magazine, Summer 1985, 72-75.

Lye Brook Hollow and onto the plateau above, the area would yield fifteen years worth of timber for a large mill. The Company, which had already completed three other timber operations - two in Pennsylvania and one in New York - entered into a contract for approximately 12,000 acres located in the towns of Manchester, Winhall, and Sunderland. The acreage matched almost exactly the boundaries of the future Wilderness Area.

The Rich Lumber Company had no intention of remaining connected to the land. They created a company town, Richville, at the base of the mountain and imported over three hundred Italian immigrant workers to construct the railroad. It was an accepted practice in the logging industry at this time to set up a large but temporary sawmill to handle the cut, clean out the area, and move on.[40] Construction of the rail line began early in 1913, and when completed a year later it ran from Richville up Lye Brook Hollow and onto the plateau. It continued across the top of the mountain past Bourn Pond to the Winhall River, with spurs in various locations, for a total distance of approximately sixteen miles. The railroad drastically changed the landscape as it climbed the steep six percent grade, for the bed had to be cut from the mountainside. The company also built one sixty-five-foot long, high trestle, several medium-length trestles, and a number of small bridges to negotiate the many side valleys.[41] Along the line, contractors operated several logging camps where the trees were cut and brought to the rail side. The operation cut approximately sixteen

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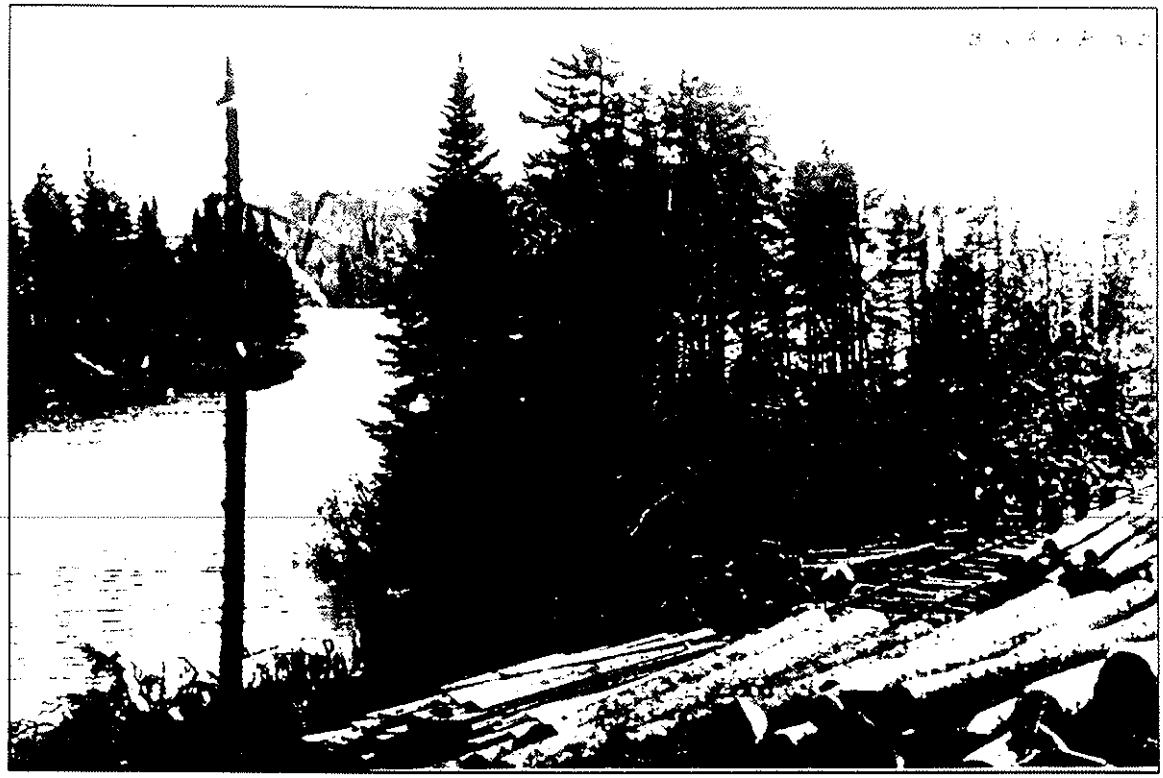
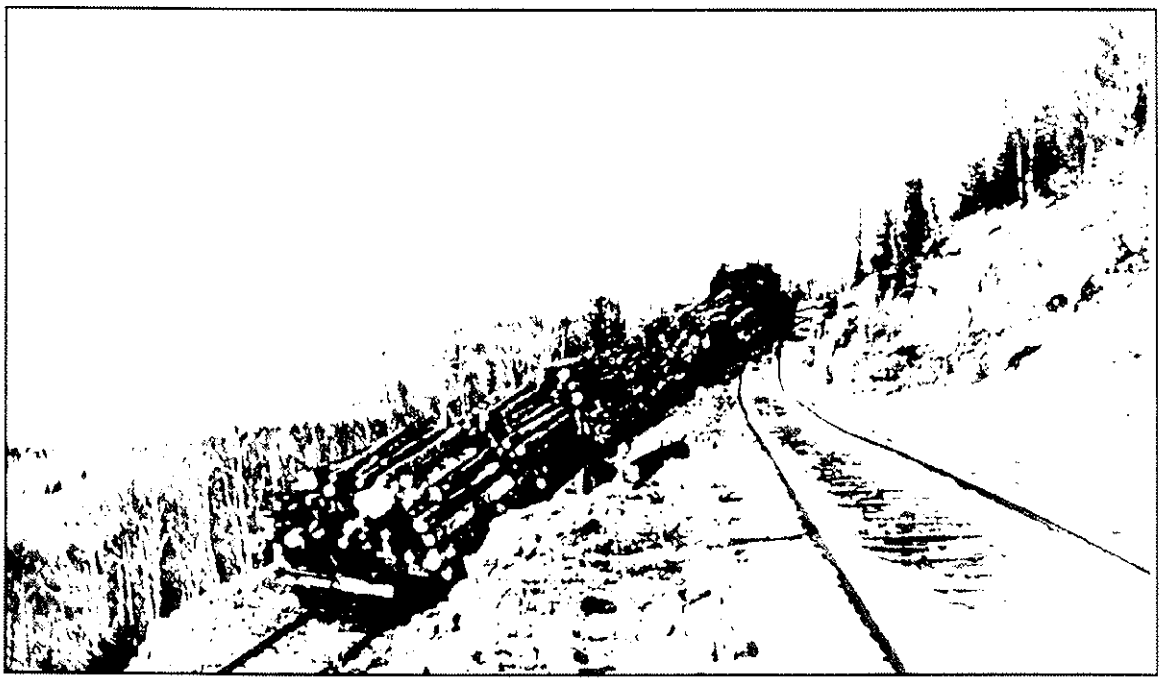
[40] Richard Allen, William Gove, Kevin F. Maloney, and Richard F. Palmer, eds, Rails in the North Woods, (Sylvan Beach: North Country Books, 1973), 3-4.

[41] Bigelow, Manchester in the Mountains, 93.



6. Bourn Pond circa 1913-1919. The Rich Lumber Company railroad is in the right foreground. Courtesy U.S. Forest Service.



7. A Rich Lumber Company train climbing the steep grade on the western slope of the Lye Brook Plateau. Manchester can be glimpsed in the left background. Reproduced from Allen, Rails in the North Woods, 1978.

million board-feet per year and employed from 250 to 400 people.

By mid-1919, after only five and a half years, the timber ran out, falling far short of the fifteen-year projection. The mill burned down just two weeks before a rumored shut down, and the company was liquidated. The operation left the Lye Brook area bare of all but a few hardwood trees.

Because of its relative inaccessibility, it took until 1919 to deforest Lye Brook. During the prior century national attitudes towards nature and wilderness had become more positive, bringing visitors to northern New England. Faced with a stalled economy at mid-century, Manchester responded quickly to the ideas of its visitors, remaking its image, recreational environments, and to some degree the regional environment, to better fit the pastoral ideal sought by the urban visitors. Despite their focus on activity in the natural world, the visitors were not interested in the Lye Brook area. Lye Brook, rather, grew more distant from the concerns of the town as it was transformed from a wilderness into an industrial landscape.

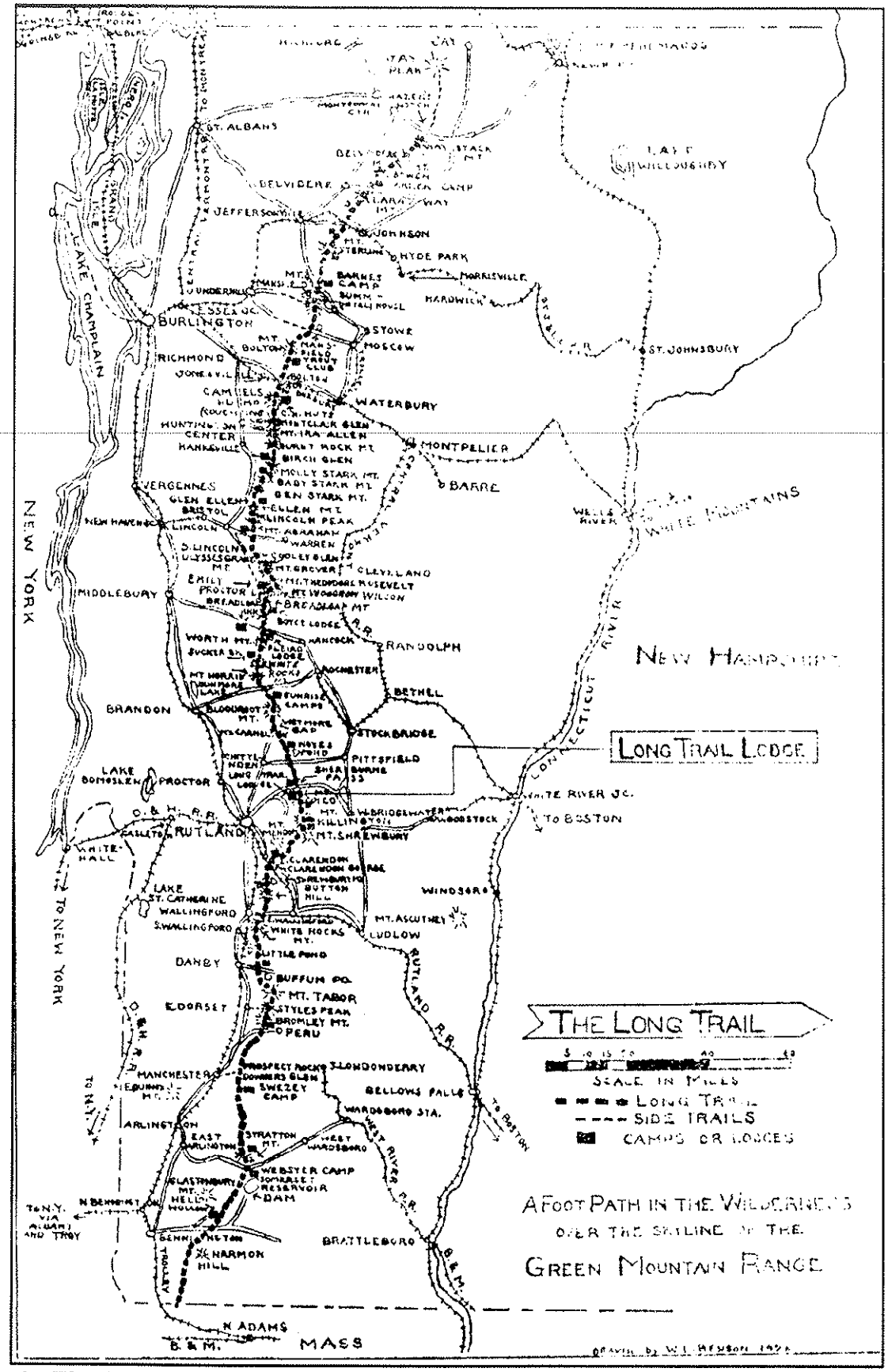
Part 2 Viewing the Landscape

Perceiving Lye Brook

In the 1920s, the national debate over preservation and conservation reached Lye Brook. The Green Mountain Club (GMC), a Vermont hiking organization, interpreted the philosophy of preservation by building a long distance hiking trail the length of Vermont. The Long Trail passed along the shores of Bourn Pond and created a new perception of Lye Brook in hikers. The GMC, though, was composed of prominent Vermonters whose vision of a wilderness trail neither appealed to the tourists frequenting Manchester nor provided a use which significantly added to the town's economy. At approximately the same time, the U.S. Forest Service, the embodiment of conservation philosophy, also appeared in Lye Brook when Vermont's leaders established the Green Mountain National Forest. The Forest Service purchased a large amount of the cut-over acreage of Lye Brook and began managing it for long term timber yields. Both the GMC and the Forest Service introduced new ideas into Lye Brook, offering different ways to perceive its landscape.

In 1910 J. P. Taylor, a Vermont schoolteacher, decided to create a hiking trail connecting the peaks along the spine of the Green Mountains. By founding the Green Mountain Club and laying out a trail, Taylor attempted to, "make the Vermont mountains play a larger role in the life of the people."[42] For centuries the Green Mountains had been seen as an

[42]As quoted in Jane Curtis, Green Mountain Adventure:Vermont's Long Trail, (Montpelier: The Green Mountain Club, 1985), 12.



8. The Long Trail engendered a new conception of the Green Mountains. It can be seen passing by the Swezey camp East of Manchester. "The Long Trail," W.L. Benson, 1926. Reproduced from Guidebook of the Long Trail, 1930.

obstacle to Vermonters' progress, and many residents found the idea of using them for recreation difficult to understand. "Vermonters regarded those who walked or rode up a carriage road as tourists who might be crazy enough to do anything." It was Taylor's dream to change this attitude.[43]

Taylor turned to prominent Vermonters to begin the club, and lawyers, editors, judges, professors, and other state leaders provided the first twenty- three members. The small club worked hard, organizing local trail chapters and gaining members. By 1913, the Bennington chapter of the Club had cut trail from the Massachusetts line to a point two miles East of Manchester, reaching Bourn Pond [see map on following page].[44] They named the trail "The Long Trail: a primitive footpath in the wilderness" and reprinted the slogan on their maps and in their guidebooks.

By creating and promoting the Long Trail as a "footpath in the wilderness" the GMC defined wilderness for thousands of New Englanders, offering the allure of the exotic combined with the safety of the familiar. The 1930 Guidebook of the Long Trail propounded how,

> the Green Mountains of Vermont have for the last few years become well known to the hiking enthusiast... their rich and inviting forests, that reach in most cases to their summits, a strong contrast to the barren grandeur of the White Mountains.[45]

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[43] Curtis, Green Mountain Adventure, 13.

[44] Curtis, Green Mountain Adventure, 19.

[45] Green Mountain Club, Guide Book of the Long Trail, (Rutland: The Co., 1930), 3.

The mountains, according to the Club, were not only "rich" and "inviting," but were perhaps even better than New Hampshire's famous White Mountains. Anticipating that such a landscape might create fear of the unknown in those contemplating a hike, the GMC attempted to calm novice hikers. In a 1931 radio interview, a club member explained that,

> there is no dangerous climbing, there are no treacherous precipices to scale, no dizzying heights to cause danger of falling, no ropes or insecure ladders... there is no danger from large wild animals. At no place on the trail is it many miles down to regular highway and the habitations of man. In a word, the Long Trail offers the combination of safety, of apparent wilderness remoteness, and actual accessibility.[46]

The wilderness of the Long Trail, then, was beautiful and safe. It was an experience with "apparent wilderness remoteness " that offered great reward with little risk and required only a healthy amount of exertion.

The Club's definition of wilderness was significantly different from that popularized by the most prominent wilderness advocate of the time, John Muir. Muir's wilderness existed with or without human presence, standing on its own merit. The GMC's wilderness idea, however, centered not on land, but on people, defining wilderness as the site for recreational hiking.

The Green Mountain Club, while part of the national movement for wilderness preservation, was distinctive in its interpretation of the wilderness idea, creating a wilderness that was Vermont-specific. When the GMC inscribed their idea of wilderness into the landscape in the form of the Long Trail and its improvements, they did so in carefully chosen

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[46] As quoted in David Mayhew, "Recreational Hiking and the Changing Wilderness Landscape of Vermont," Master's Diss., University of Vermont, 1993, 63.

ways, reflecting the settled condition of the land. Beyond clearing a trail, the GMC built shelters, cleared vistas, bridged rivers, and placed numerous directional signs along the path. The shelters ranged from three-walled lean-tos to framed cabins containing dishes, beds and stoves. The Club did attempt to make their improvements blend in with the natural surroundings, using logs and stones instead of milled lumber for early trail projects, but there was no mistaking that this was a largely built environment.[47] Their wilderness was a corridor of human architecture in the woods.

For many Eastern hikers, however, the Long Trail was quite wild indeed. Hikers were accustomed to short, guided walks from one of the mountain-top hotels that dotted the Green Mountain range. Thus Trail users prior to World War II generally found overnight trips on the Long Trail, which required them to carry their belongings and food, to be an adventuresome departure from their normal activities and comforts.

The GMC also produced the Guidebook of the Long Trail, which interpreted the experience for hikers. Though the Rich Lumber Company's railroad had run along its shores and cleared the entire area of trees just ten years before, the 1930 Guidebook described Bourn Pond as an ideal Long Trail experience. "This pond is one of great beauty," it read, "full of trout, and with three camps at the inlet or South end, one of which is open for all comers, and provided with beds and bedding, stove and

[47] For a different interpretation of the GMC's improvements see Mayhew, "Recreational Hiking and," 71.

utensils."[48] This description of the pond encapsulated the Club's promise of a beautiful aesthetic experience combined with comfort and safety, akin to Thoreau's Walden. Whether the Guide was portraying the actual scene or creating an illusion, it is clear that a new perception of Bourn Pond was emerging just ten years after it was clearcut.

After ten more years passed Robert C. Anderson saw Bourn Pond as a beautiful and even wild place. In 1940 he found Bourn Pond "exquisitely wild,

> There almost any day you can sit on the porch of a hunting lodge, long since abandoned, and see deer browsing among the rushes and sedges of the pond...the body of water is not large, but in the center are several islands overgrown with tall stately spruces; if you've dreamed of making that backwoods lake picture on the old calendar in the kitchen come true, go to Bourn Pond. The country remains virgin and chock-full of porcupines, hawks, and deer.[49]

Anderson was in the process of hiking the entire length of the Long Trail, and was therefore perhaps more sensitive to the appearance of the pond than most hikers, but it is still remarkable that he found the country "virgin" just nineteen years after it was logged. The area appeared "virgin" and "exquisitely wild" to Anderson because it fit his image of wilderness, which had probably been formed by the Long Trail. The GMC defined wilderness on their trail to contain human architecture and evidence of past utilization of the land, and in that context Bourn Pond, with its cabins and young trees, was wilderness.

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[48] Green Mountain Club, Guidebook of the Long Trail, 83.

[49] W. Storrs Lee, ed., Footpath in the Wilderness, (Middlebury: Middlebury College Press, 1941), 69.

The Town of Manchester, which had responded so vigorously to the influx of tourists brought by the railroad in the mid-nineteenth century, manifested little interest in the Long Trail and its users, concentrating on recreation that promised greater economic returns. For a short time Manchester did have its own chapter of the Green Mountain Club, which held its initial meeting in 1914. The chapter appears to have been short-lived and was reorganized in 1931 with twelve members who agreed to care for the stretch of trail from Bourn Pond north for fifteen miles to Mad Tom Lodge. Reflecting the town's focus on tourism, the Manchester Journal reported with some disappointment that, "the Section's [chapter's] activities will include a great deal of hard hiking for those who enjoy it," but offered more hopefully that, "there are also to be gentler exertions such as picnic parties at nearby points of interest and longer trips by motor to different parts of the state."[50] The wilderness experience offered by the chapter failed to interest the town because it did not interest the town's tourists. They would be happier with "picnic parties" and "longer trips by motor," and thus the Journal encouraged these more sedate activities. Not surprisingly, the chapter dissolved in the early 1940s and was never more than a minor part of recreation in Manchester.[51]

The Manchester Development Association increased its promotional activity, attempting to maintain the town's pastoral image and keep pace with visitors' demand for upscale recreation. Skiing, soon to be referred to

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[50]Manchester Journal, "Local Chapter of Green Mountain Club Begins," Manchester Journal, 28 April 1932, 1.

[51]Bigelow, Manchester in the Mountains, 240.

as "white gold," arrived in Vermont in the 1930s, though it was not until after World War II that it became a national pastime. In 1935, Manchester appropriated $800 for constructing ski trails near the town, and in 1937 it voted $2000 for promotion of winter sports. This was a large outlay for such a small town, but the skiers were an important source of revenue during the Depression years, and the appropriations continued. The town voted to spend $1500 in 1941 and 1942 and another $500 in 1943. After a war-time recess, the town resumed spending promotional money in 1947 with a $3000 appropriation. As Bigelow noted, "these expenditures represent[ed] an attempt to capitalize on that most valuable asset...climate and scenic charm."[52] Responding to the advertising, tourists came to Manchester in unprecedented numbers, often brought by the increasingly available automobile. The automobile also spelled the end of the tourist trains, and the Rutland Railroad removed its last two accommodation trains in 1948 and discontinued the Green Mountain Flyer in 1953.[53]

The Long Trail, which might have fostered a connection between the town's interest in the tourists and Lye Brook, failed to do so because of the lack of revenue associated with its use. While skiers, most of whom were from out of state, took hotel rooms in town, ate in restaurants, and bought souvenirs for their families, Long Trail hikers slept for free, ate prepared meals and, as they were often from Vermont, had little interest in

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[52] Bigelow, Manchester in the Mountains, 156.

[53] Bigelow, Manchester in the Mountains, 53.

souvenirs. The difference between Manchester's active wooing of the skiers and disinterest in the hikers was based on economic opportunity.

The establishment of the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont had a far more lasting impact on the town and surrounding lands. Conservation ideology had begun to enter Vermont politics in the 1890s in response to the appalling condition of the Vermont forests. The type of logging done in Lye Brook by various small operators and eventually the Rich Lumber Company had been repeated throughout the state, and at the turn of the century tiny Vermont was the country's fourth largest producer of Spruce timber.[54] Alarmed by the situation, Governor Urban Woodbury warned the state legislature in 1894 that "owners of timber lands in our state are pursuing a ruinous policy in the method used in harvesting timber...[but] by the preservation of spruce trees of ten inches in diameter and under, when the large timber is cut, a good crop can be cut every fifteen years."[55] Woodbury's ideas embodied the conservation movement's philosophy of selectively cutting trees in order to provide a continuing crop. His statement, though, could only be a warning, as he had no legal power to regulate logging in the state, all of which took place on private lands.

In 1909, the state legislature appointed a state forester and began establishing small state reserves. The Vermont State Forest Service attempted to reforest some of the denuded areas by planting trees and

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[54] Douglass, "History of the Green Mountain National Forest," 42.

[55] Douglass, "History of the Green Mountain National Forest," 39.

providing fire protection. Its series of mountaintop lookouts were successful in detecting fires, but the job of reforesting the state was too large for the tiny Service. The main problem lay in the Service's inability to withdraw lands from the private sector and place them back in the public domain, where they could be carefully managed. After half a century the Vermont State Forest Service had acquired a total of only 7,423.5 acres.[56]

Acknowledging that the problem was too big for the state government, a number of prominent state leaders began to push for Federal control of Vermont's forests during the 1910s. Vermont had previous experience with distant interests controlling its forests, for in the eighteenth century King George of England had laid claim to the Green Mountain forests and sent out agents along the river valleys in search of trees that could provide masts and spars for the Royal Navy. Additionally, in 1704, the English Parliament passed an act which imposed a five pound fine on anyone who cut a pitch pine or tar tree that reached twelve inches in diameter. The law, however, proved to be unenforceable in the remote woods of the Green Mountain region. In the early twentieth century, it was the state who requested outside intervention. The demand for a National Forest originated with the state's leaders, including the Editor of the Burlington Free Press and the President of the University of Vermont. They reasoned that,

only through federal participation would Vermont assure a

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[56] Frank Merrill, History of Forestry in Vermont,1909-1959, (Montpelier: State Board of Forests and Parks, 1959), 46.

> healthy watershed and a steady source of quality timber for wood industries. In addition, a National Forest would build and maintain roads [of vital concern to a largely rural and poor state], contribute to a growing tourist industry, and bring, it was hoped, a new and steady source of tax income to many townships."[57]

The movement was frustrated for a time by the federal government's inability to procure the land necessary for a National Forest, for no mechanism existed to enable federal purchases of private land for timber protection. The National Forests of the West had been withdrawn from the public domain, but no public domain was left in Vermont. Congress passed the Weeks Act in 1911, enabling the federal government to purchase lands to protect watersheds and in 1924 the Clark-McNary Act expanded the acquisition qualification to include valuable timber land. A series of devastating floods and forest fires caused by the slash left from logging provided impetus for legislative action. In 1925, the state legislature passed an act enabling the federal government to purchase lands for a National Forest in Vermont.

The U.S. Forest Service purchased an initial 1,842 acres in 1932, within a Forest boundary area of 102,100 acres. Congress expanded the boundary later in the decade to over 500,000 acres, which included the Lye Brook area.[58] To counter discontent among local communities the Forest Service promoted its management activities, attempting to convince Vermonters that long-term yields of timber were better than short term gains from indiscriminate logging. Still, local communities were not

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[57] Douglass, "History of the Green Mountain National Forest," 12.

[58] Douglass, "History of the Green Mountain National Forest," 50.

necessarily enthusiastic about the creation of a National Forest in their towns. They feared a loss of tax revenue because National Forest land could not be developed privately. The Forest Service's policy of distributing twenty-five percent of the revenues from timber sales to local towns reduced some of the opposition, but the local communities' concerns were strong enough to add two amendments to the enabling act. The first created a review process that required purchases to have the approval of the state land use board, consisting of the governor, state attorney general, commissioner of forestry, and the commissioner of agriculture. In 1937 the enabling act was further amended to require written approval from local town selectmen. This approval system was, and remains, more thorough than in any other state in the Union, and it indicated the seriousness with which Vermonters regard control of their land.

For resort towns, such as Manchester, the Forest Service had to pay particular attention to the consequences of its actions for outdoor recreation. It assured communities that it would not build resorts or cabins that might compete with their accommodations for tourists. The day use facilities developed by the Forest Service, though, drew support from Manchester. The Journal opined in 1936 that,

> The National Forest will ever be a great recreational resource. Hapgood Pond Forest camp...is scheduled for completion by July 1. This recreational development, consisting of a bathing beach, picnic shelter, camp sites and sanitary facilities offers tremendous opportunity.[59]

The Journal reacted positively to these developments because they offered

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[59]Manchester Journal, "Renewed Activities in Green Mountain Forest," Manchester Journal, 26 March 1936, 1, 7.

a "tremendous opportunity" for Manchester's visitors, who were much more likely to go for a picnic than an overnight hike on the Long Trail. The Forest Service's emphasis on the recreational opportunities created by its management activities was largely a political sweetener offered to help communities swallow the bitter pill of long-term timber management.

During the 1930s, the Forest Service began buying the cut-over acreage left by the Rich Lumber Company's operation in Lye Brook. By 1953, the area was reforested with a second and third growth of trees and the Forest Service offered a contract for three and a half million board feet to be cut in the vicinity of Bourn Pond. The Forest Service did not log the Forest itself. It offered up a certain amount of board-feet of timber to be cut in an area and let independent contractors bid for the job.

One of those independent contractors was Chris Swezey Jr., and his bid was accepted. Following in the tracks of the earlier users of Lye Brook's natural resources, Swezey made repairs to the old Rootville road so he could transport the logs off the mountain. Swezey used a bulldozer to improve the road, but "the bridges," he recalled, "were put in there many years before where the railroad had gone. So I re-put-in the new bridges for the trucks...I drove trucks as far as Bourn Pond on the railroad grade."[60] Though the rails had been taken out and the forest had overgrown many of the stumps, the pattern of the Rich Lumber Company's activity was plainly evident to Swezey, and it determined how he used the land. Lye Brook had begun as 90% softwood trees and 10% hardwoods, but

[60]Chris Swezey, Interview by Dick Andrews, 28 December 1993, transcript, Lye Brook Wilderness File, Green Mountain National Forest, Manchester, Vermont, 19.

the Rich Lumber Company removed almost all the softwoods, as they were the more valuable timber in the early 1900s. As the trees regrew the hardwoods won out over the softwoods in the competition for sunlight, establishing an entirely different tree composition for Lye Brook. Swezey cut the hardwoods and completed his allotment in three years. Able to selectively cut the stand that the Rich Lumber Company and his father had clearcut thirty years earlier, Swezey's activities epitomized conservation philosophy by creating a sustained yield timber stand out of a previously denuded mountainside.

Wilderness remained outside the interests of either Swezey or the Forest Service, though an increasing demand for outdoor recreation in the Forties and Fifties did cause the Forest Service to spend some time and money on recreation. Focusing on the automobile, the Forest Service built campgrounds and picnic areas and the roads that led to them. A 1957 report on recreation visits to the Green Mountain National Forest reflected the national increase in recreation, with use in the Green Mountain National Forest increasing over 300% for the camping and picnic areas during the previous ten years.[61]

The report, appropriately, identified no wilderness use in the Green Mountain National Forest and projected none in the future, for what recreation planner in 1957 would have thought that wilderness would one day come to Vermont? The few wilderness areas under Forest Service

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[61]Green Mountain National Forest, "Recreation Visits to the Green Mountain National Forest in the State of Vermont, 1946 and 1957; Projections to 1966,1976 and 2000, 1947" TD, Rutland, Vermont.

administration at that time were all far away in the Western half of the country. In a few years, however, Lye Brook would become a contested landscape, due in large part to the triumph of the national wilderness preservation movement, which had been gaining strength since it separated from the conservation movement in the early twentieth century.

Defining Wilderness

Conservation ideology seemed to have won the day, founding the Forest Service that controlled the National Forests, but some preservationists, drawn to Muir's legacy, appeared within the Forest Service in the 1920s. Agitating for official preservation of wilderness, they formulated increasingly inclusive definitions of wilderness in order to make more land eligible for preservation. Their abstract desire to preserve wilderness ran into problems, however, when they attempted to preserve a specific piece of land. Wilderness is more than the condition of the land; it is also the state of mind evoked by the land, and defining and protecting a state of mind proved more difficult than preserving land. By drawing circles on maps and issuing regulations, land managers attempted to define wilderness -- both the physical entity and the mental experience -- by creating special areas, known as "Primitive," "Wild," or "Wilderness Areas."[62]

Arthur Carhart, a landscape architect, was the first person in the Forest Service to apply preservation philosophy to a specific piece of undeveloped land in a National Forest. Asked to plan the siting of vacation homes on the shores of Trapper's Lake in Colorado, Carhart instead recommended that the best use of the area would be to keep it roadless and deny the vacation home permits. To his surprise, Carhart's proposal was

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[62] From this point in the text Wilderness with a capital "W" is distinguished from wilderness beginning with a lowercase "w". [W]ilderness is the legal definition of wilderness, contained in the federal government's Wilderness Areas. [w]ilderness is the conception of wild land, both the physical entity and the condition of mind evoked by that physical entity.

accepted and Trapper's Lake was designated as an area to be kept roadless and undeveloped in 1920. Carhart, though, was not interested in wilderness preservation. His aim was to preserve the scenic value of undeveloped areas. After the designation Carhart wrote to Aldo Leopold that: "the time will come when these scenic spots, where nature has been allowed to remain unmarred, will be some of the most highly prized scenic features of the country."[63] Carhart was interested in the preservation of "scenic features," a more narrow concern than preserving wilderness, but his proposal set a precedent by recognizing the positive aspects of undeveloped land and then acting to protect them through recreation policy. At the same time, in a separate memo, Carhart complained that there were "a great wealth of recreational facilities and scenic values within the Forests, which have not been so utilized."[64] Previously, the Forest Service had considered undeveloped lands to be useless. By proposing that an undeveloped area had not only "scenic value" but was also a place for recreational use, Carhart created an opening in Forest Service policy for preserving wilderness.

Carhart's communication with Leopold, a young forester in southern New Mexico, encouraged him, for Leopold had also been thinking about the issue of preservation. Initially interested in preserving wildlife, Leopold soon expanded his ideas to include preserving the environment

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[63]As quoted in Craig W. Allin, The Politics of Wilderness Preservation. (Westport: Greenwoood Press, 1982), 69.

[64]As quoted in Dennis M. Roth, The Wilderness Movement and the National Forests, (Texas: Intaglio Press, 1988), 2.

that supported wildlife. In a short essay entitled "The Wilderness and Its Place in Forest Recreational Policy"(1921) Leopold built upon Carhart's idea, moving beyond a concern for scenery by calling for preservation of representative sections of American wilderness.

Leopold wanted to preserve not only wild land, but also a wilderness experience, a particular way to experience the land. He argued for the diversification of the Forest Service's recreation policy, stating that "the recreational needs and desires of the public vary through a wide range of individual tastes...requiring a very varied administration."[65] Leopold felt that the agency should distinguish between a wilderness and non-wilderness form of recreation, and provide separate areas for each. To distinguish the two he offered a definition of wilderness. Wilderness, wrote Leopold, was "a continuous stretch of country preserved in its natural state, open to lawful hunting and fishing, big enough to absorb a two weeks' pack trip, and kept devoid of roads, artificial trails, cottages or other works of man."[66] Reflecting his focus on recreation, Leopold defined wilderness in human terms, requiring it to be "big enough to absorb a two week's pack trip" and "open to lawful hunting and fishing." Yet his wilderness was also defined by the absence of civilization; it had to be devoid of the "works of man." This seemingly contradictory definition captured Leopold's desire both to preserve the wild condition of the land and enable humans to have a wilderness experience.

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[65] Aldo Leopold, "The Wilderness and its Place in Forest Recreational Policy," Journal of Forestry 19 (1921): 720.

[66] Leopold, "The Wilderness and its place," 719.

Leopold had a specific place in mind when he made his proposal, seeking to preserve the wilderness surrounding the headwaters of the Gila River in the Gila National Forest, New Mexico. The Forest Supervisor responded by officially designating the area the Gila Roadless Area and placed it under a ten-year wilderness recreation policy. In the Gila Roadless Area, encompassing approximately 500,000 acres, the Forest Service limited roads and acquired private inholdings, though it allowed grazing and water developments to continue. There was a gap between Leopold's definition of wilderness and the administrative policy for the Gila because the Forest Service showed little interest in Leopold's concern about a wilderness experience. Within the Gila, "a laissez-faire approach prevailed. It was considered sufficient to administratively designate an area wilderness, prohibit building roads and hotels, and then leave it alone...Wilderness was simply set aside."[67] No attempt was made to manage the land for a better wilderness experience, as Leopold desired. Administrative policy fell short of Leopold's goals in another way by only classifying the Gila a Roadless Area for ten years. This temporary classification, created by the District Forester, could change just as easily as it was given and provided no assurance of permanent wilderness preservation.

Paradoxically, it was a growing demand for non-wilderness recreation and the ensuing inter-agency rivalry between the Forest Service and the Park Service that accelerated the preservation of

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[67]John C. Hendee, George H. Stankey, and Robert C. Lucas, Wilderness Management, (Washington: GPO, 1978), 35.

wilderness. As the number of automobiles in America increased, the demand for campgrounds and picnic areas in the National Forests rose exponentially, as did the threat to wilderness posed by roads built to improve access. Previously such demands had been met by carving National Parks from Forest Service lands. But by classifying as wilderness many of its most scenic lands, the Forest Service could protect its land base and gain the support of the preservation movement. The agency also stood to lose little from its utilitarian constituency, logging and mining companies, since the wilderness areas were often high, rocky and carried little timber. Responding to the growing demand for non-wilderness recreation, the Forest Service adhered to the first priority for agencies, which is survival, and that entailed building political and budgetary support.[68]

In 1929 the Chief of the Forest Service, William B. Greely, attempted to further protect his land base and win the support of preservationists by issuing the L-20 Regulations. The regulations renamed all recognized roadless areas as "primitive" areas, and directed local Forest Service personnel to "maintain primitive conditions of transportation, subsistence, habitation, and environment...conserving the values of such areas for purposes of public education and recreation."[69] But the regulations had no teeth as they were simply a recommendation to field officers, not a policy that categorically excluded development activities from the areas.

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[68]J. Douglass Wellman, Wildland Recreation Policy, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1987), 133.

[69]Roth, The Wilderness Movement, 3.

Though they were little more than bureaucratic protectionism thinly veiled as recreational opportunity, the L-20 Regulations did represent a first attempt to establish wilderness as a general classification of land use[70] and gave some administrative credence to wilderness preservation.

In spite of these limited steps the Park Service continued to receive most of the credit for wilderness preservation, and National Parks continued to be carved from National Forests, often including former Primitive areas. From the Forest Service's point of view, not only did it "furnish recreation to four times more people than did the Park Service, and had set aside much more land in the wilderness category than had the Park Service, but it also did not "bottle up' needed resources as did the 'single-use' Park Service."[71] Yet the general public was not interested in backcountry adventures and did not find the multiple-use policy of the Forest Service focused enough on their recreational desires. They preferred the particular recreational amenities provided by the Park Service, whose dominant-use policy focused on recreation. Wilderness advocates, however, found the Park Service's practice of cluttering its Primitive areas with recreational amenities distasteful and formed the Wilderness Society in 1935 to promote preservation of a more primitive wilderness within the National Forests.

A founding member of the Society, Robert Marshall, joined the Forest Service in 1937. Marshall defined wilderness as,

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[70] Wellman, Wildland Recreation Policy, 135.

[71] Harold K. Steen, The U.S. Forest Service, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976, 210.

> a region which contains no permanent inhabitants, possesses no possibility of conveyance by any mechanical means and is sufficiently spacious that a person in crossing it must have the experience of sleeping out...it requires anyone who exists in it to depend exclusively on his own effort for survival; and second, that it preserves as nearly as possible the primitive environment. This means that all roads, power transmissions and settlements are barred. But trails and temporary shelters, which were common long before the advent of the white race, are entirely permissible.[72]

Marshall characterized wilderness in terms of a human recreational experience even more explicitly than Leopold and was less concerned with preserving land in a pristine condition. Emphasizing physical hardiness and danger, the need for a visitor to "depend exclusively on his own effort for survival," Marshall valued wilderness as a psychological retreat from modern civilization. To Marshall, wilderness was not so much the condition of the land as it was the human "experience" of the land. The existence of trails and shelters, which disturbed Leopold's desire for a pure wilderness devoid of man's works, failed to bother Marshall because they did not infringe upon what he considered to be a wilderness experience.

Marshall attempted to transfer his ideas into policy by drafting the Forest Service's U-Regulations of 1939, which supplanted the L-Regulations of the previous decade. The U-Regulations provided greater protection for Primitive areas than the previous policy, prohibiting logging and road construction and requiring special use permits for hunting camps or stores. They also sought to protect the wilderness experience by prohibiting motorboats and the landing of aircraft, which destroyed users' feelings of remoteness from civilization. The administrative translation

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[72]Wellman, Wildland Recreation Policy, 148.

from Marshall's definition of wilderness to the U-Regulations, however, suffered from obstacles similar to those encountered by Leopold a decade earlier. Unwilling to compromise its traditional multiple-use policy of land management because of the substantial economic interests and the political power of mining companies, stockmen, and water development projects, the Forest Service continued to allow grazing and mining and countenanced the possibility of reservoir and dam construction in the Primitive areas. Yet the U-Regulations represented a major step forward for systematic wilderness preservation. The regulations removed the formation of wilderness policy from the hands of field officers, making wilderness regulation a nation-wide policy determined by the office of the Chief Forester.

The U Regulations also called for a reclassification of all primitive areas as either "Wilderness Areas", constituting 100,000 acres or more, or "Wild" areas, containing between 5,000 and 100,000 acres. The reclassification process proved to be a major stumbling block for wilderness preservation when the field officers of the Forest Service took a different view from that of their Washington superiors. The Washington office had sought to fend off continuing loss of land to the Park Service by creating a system of "Wilderness Areas" that offered a more dispersed type of recreation than that offered by the National Parks. Many field officers, though, had grown to doubt the wisdom of classifying land Primitive, or now as Wilderness or Wild, because those lands seemed to be the parcels most often turned into National Parks. The field officers reasoned, "that if the Park Service was going to get the Primitive areas for Parks...during

the review [reclassification] process they would see to it that the primitive areas were reduced in size and stripped of any lands suitable to commercial exploitation for lumber and minerals."[73] The reclassification process stretched over two decades and a great deal of acreage was eliminated by field officers from the original Primitive areas when they were finally reclassified Wild or Wilderness Areas. When the total number of acres did not change, the location of acreage sometimes did. Wilderness advocates accused the Forest Service of substituting acreage that lay above timber line for lower, productive areas that they wished to harvest.

Such activity, besides revealing the self-serving basis of the Forest Service's receptivity to wilderness preservation, also brought into question foresters' willingness to recognize wilderness as a fragile condition of the land. Preservationists began to sense, "a crucial difference in the 'mental image' of wilderness held by foresters, who often looked upon environmental changes as subject to the recuperative powers of nature."[74] Foresters were and are trained in the science of sustained-yield forestry, coaxing poorly managed forests into mature timber stands, which, when harvested properly, regrow periodically into fine stands of timber. Preservationists questioned whether such training made the concept of a permanent wilderness, one which would not return if it was logged, a difficult one to grasp and administer.

As preservationists and the Forest Service argued over the

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[73] Allin, Politics of Wilderness Preservation, 84.

[74] Roth, The Wilderness Movement, 5.

reclassification process, wilderness lands not under the limited protection of the U Regulations were disappearing rapidly in the post-World War II era. Pressures of economic growth and increased demand for outdoor recreation, along with the new threat of large-scale water projects for the burgeoning cities of the West, encroached upon wilderness lands. Such pressures and growing distrust of the reclassification process caused Howard Zahniser, executive director of the Wilderness Society, to deliver a 1951 address entitled, "How much wilderness can we afford to lose?" Zahniser proposed that the pressure of commodity interests on the Forest Service and its reclassification process were so great that administration of the wilderness system needed formal status under law to stop the loss of wild lands.[75] During the 1950s, the preservation movement had expanded to include a large and vocal section of the public, which gave Zahniser's proposal weight and provided a base of support for major wilderness preservation battles. Zahniser made a proposal for a federal wilderness system to Congress in 1955. The proposal attempted to provide clearer statutory authority for the maintenance of Wilderness Areas by removing the authority of Forest Service officials to decrease in size or declassify Wilderness Areas. It also sought to protect Wilderness Areas against intrusions from mining and water projects and required designation of Wilderness zones in units of the National Park system, federal wildlife and range system and within Indian reservations.[76]

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[75]Michael McCloskey, "The Wilderness Act of 1964: Its Background and Meaning," Oregon Law Review 45, (1966): 297.

[76]McCloskey, "The Wilderness Act," 298.

The Forest Service, however, strenuously resisted the establishment of a federal wilderness system, saying it "would strike at the heart of the multiple-use policy of National Forest administration."[77] Foresters tended to interpret multiple-use policy as if every acre in the forest was to support every type of use. Educated as generalists, foresters believed it unnecessary to segregate timber production from watershed management and recreational demands, stating that "a skillfully managed forest can serve all these purposes at the same time."[78]

Areas preserved for wilderness alone went against the basic management philosophy that founded the Forest Service, for wilderness preservation was an inherently dominant, if not singular, use of a piece of land. Using a wilderness for almost anything except a wilderness experience usually eliminated the wilderness. Wilderness preservation could only be included within a multiple-use framework if policy was applied at the Forest level, which is what Marshall and other advocates desired. At the Forest level, one part of the Forest could be mined for coal, recreationists could drive to a nearby picnic ground, and a Wilderness Area could exist several miles deeper within the Forest. The lack of a clear Forest Service policy statement that recognized wilderness preservation at the Forest level caused a large part of the resistance within the agency.

The Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 attempted to make such a policy statement, though the result was less than clear. Drafted

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[77]McCloskey, "The Wilderness Act," 299.

[78]Copeland Report, "A National Plan for American Forestry,"1933 as quoted in Steen, The U.S. Forest Service, 299.

and proposed by the Forest Service, the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act (MUSYA) provided a statutory codification of long-standing Forest Service policy. The Act declared that the "National Forests are established and shall be administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes."[79] The Act widened the major official uses of the Forest from the original emphasis on timber and watershed. The Act, however, left ambiguous the scope of multiple-use policy. Would it apply to each acre of the Forest, or would it create areas where each use could be the dominant one for that area? In an effort to limit the range of acceptable interpretation, the Wilderness Society had the following sentence inserted at the last minute: "the establishment and maintenance of areas of wilderness are consistent with the purposes and provisions of this Act."[80] Secure in the codification of its long standing multiple-use policy and the inclusion of Wilderness Areas in the jurisdiction of that policy, the Forest Service withdrew its opposition to Zahniser's proposal for a federal wilderness system.

After nine years, sixty-five different bills and eighteen legislative hearings, the Wilderness Act of 1964 created the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The Act gave immediate Wilderness Area status to all fifty-four Wilderness and Wild areas in the Forest Service domain, encompassing approximately 9.1 million acres, and mandated review of thirty-four remaining Primitive areas within ten years for

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[79] Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act, June 12,1960, (P.L. 86-517, 528-531), Sec. 1.

[80] Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act, Sec. 2.

inclusion in the system. Within the designated areas, the Act prohibited road building, logging and other commercial activities, along with other uses incompatible with preserving a wilderness character. Motor transportation and grazing were also excluded, except where they were established practices before the Act.[81]

The Act, however, had been weakened by the legislative compromises necessary to pass it. The Forest Service disliked statutory preservation because it deprived the agency of administrative flexibility and discretion in managing the Forests. Commercial interests, particularly mining and water development companies, fought the permanent "locking up" of resources in Wilderness Areas, and both they and the Forest Service managed to alter significantly Zahniser's original proposal. The bill passed with the major conditions that each addition to the system was dependent on a special act of Congress and that mineral prospecting and development were permitted until 1984.[82] The requirement for positive Congressional action made adding Wilderness Areas considerably more difficult because Congress would be advised by the Forest Service on whether areas were suitable for designation. Mining interests gained a twenty-year allowance for their activities and the assurance of future production from established mining investments. These compromises reflected society's general ambivalence over the relative merits of wilderness and civilization.

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[81]Glen. O. Robinson, The Forest Service, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1975), 159-161.

[82]Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 225.

The definition of wilderness offered by the Wilderness Act also reflected this ambivalence. It codified, rather than resolving, many of the tensions first found in the formulations of Leopold and Marshall. It reads:

> A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.[83]

Wilderness, as defined by the Wilderness Act, was actually three different types of wilderness: that of human experience, that which was antipodal to the human landscape, and that which was both wild and affected by humans. Emphasizing the positive aspects of human visitation to wilderness, the opening sentence echoed Marshall's desire for wilderness to be experienced as a recreational activity. In clause two, however, the definition went further by recognizing explicitly the psychological aspect of the wilderness experience. The need for "solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation" was an emotional one, and such a statement of need was focused upon the human experience of wilderness. Yet, at the same time, the definition set up a strong separation between Wilderness and humanity. Wilderness was "in contrast" to human landscapes and retained its "primeval character", a place where wild nature stood in

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[83]U.S. Congress, Senate, Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, 88th Cong., 2nd Sess., 3 September 1964.

opposition and dominance to the world of human design and control. Finally, clause one recognized a more common middle ground, where lands no longer primeval, but "generally appear[ing]" to be "primarily" natural, could be considered Wilderness.

The Act was a triumphant codification of the preservation ethic, but its conflicting definitions of Wilderness sowed the seeds for future controversy regarding additions to the NWPS. The Act failed to answer several crucial questions: What exactly was a primeval condition? How could an area affected by humans also be primeval? What former human activity was considered substantially unnoticeable enough for a Wilderness Area to be established? Did Wilderness Areas exist for human recreational experiences, providing psychological refuge and recuperation, or were they truly wild areas, separate from the world of humans?

Essentially, the wilderness of a "Wilderness Area" was defined by what it was not: it did not contain certain works of civilization, and certain human activities could not occur there. This definition of wilderness was rooted in an unquestioned belief in the separation between humans and nature, civilization and wilderness. Yet Wilderness Areas were also focused on the human recreational experience. By creating Wilderness Areas, humans sought to control that which is by definition uncontrolled, preserving not wilderness, but a wilderness experience of their own design.

A Contested Landscape

No one nominated Lye Brook for Wilderness status. Though it was once part of the great expanse of wilderness viewed by Samuel Champlain, two centuries of human activity had profoundly altered Lye Brook. The area failed to meet the purity requirements of the 1964 Wilderness Act, appearing neither to "have been affected primarily by the forces of nature," nor to "retain its primeval character."[84] The recent triumph of the preservation movement and subsequent reorganization of the Forest Service, though, did begin to affect Lye Brook. On the cusp of the back-to-nature movement, out-of-state hikers began coming to Lye Brook for recreation, and the Forest Service recast its policy for the area to meet their demands. Some Manchester residents continued to use Lye Brook for hunting and fishing, but the town's visitors generally desired the more comfortable, developed type of recreation that the Forest Service provided in other parts of the Green Mountain National Forest. By the late 1960s, what had been a wilderness less than 150 years before became an increasingly contested social landscape, subject to an expanding range of ideas about the land.

The majority of Manchester's residents wanted the Green Mountain National Forest to provide comfortable recreation for the town's tourists. Resident G.S. Bennett offered high praise of the Forest program in 1961 by writing in the Manchester Journal: "close by we have the Hapgood Pond

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[84] Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, section 3.

area in the GM Forest, as well as the Greendale over in Weston, which are great additions to the outdoor enjoyment of thousands of people during the summer months."[85] Though Hapgood Pond was nine miles away, and the trail leading up the Lye Brook ravine began just outside of town, Bennett did not promote nearby Lye Brook. He instead reflected the interests of the town's summer clientele, praising the Forest Service's development of the Pond into a recreational area offering picnic tables and parking areas. The absence of such attractions and the completion of Chris Swezey's logging contract in 1956 left most of Lye Brook all but unused by either the local population or Manchester's usual visitors.

But a new group began coming to Lye Brook in the mid-1960's, motivated by the national preservation movement and attracted by the Long Trail of the GMC. Jubilant over the 1964 triumph for wilderness preservation, East Coast college students and activists turned to the Long Trail as an embodiment of the great American wilderness. An early vanguard of the back-to-nature movement, these hikers began to descend on Lye Brook in mounting numbers, using the Long Trail as it passed by Bourn Pond. They were aided by a technological revolution in backpacking equipment that made previously cumbersome canvas tents into lightweight nylon shelters. Overcrowded GMC shelters became a fact of life and the area around shelters, and the trail itself, began to degrade under the volume of hiking traffic. The GMC found it "necessary to fashion permanent waterbars, place puncheons over wet places and install

[85]G.S. Bennett, "From the Shelf," Manchester Journal, 30 March 1961, 2.

cribbing"[86] along the trail, creating a more intensively constructed architecture for the hiking corridor. Looking for wilderness, the young hikers found a crowded trail created and maintained by a Club with a definition of wilderness different from their own.

The increased demand for hiking and the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act's recent recognition of recreation as a major use of the Forest caused the Forest Service to shift policy for Lye Brook. Since 1960 the administration of the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) had become more complex because of the hikers' demands, and the authorization for enlargement of non-timber programs by MUSYA prompted the hiring of more specialized personnel. The GMNF's administration was reorganized to place timber, wildlife and range under one managerial responsibility, while recreation, land acquisition and special uses became another.[87] Recreation could now receive more attention.

The Forest Service attempted to appear sensitive to the hikers' demands by classifying Lye Brook a special "Backwoods Area" in 1960, casting the area in a new light. "It was a somewhat novel thing to do," according to Recreation Planner Bob Pramuk. "They recognized that this [Lye Brook] was one of the few sizable areas on the Forest not to have a paved road cutting through it."[88] By limiting vehicular access to the area,

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[86]Curtis, Green Mountain Adventure, 75-76.

[87]Douglass, "The History of the Green Mountain National Forest," 113.

[88]U.S. Forest Service Recreation Planner Bob Pramuk, interview by author, 5 December, 1994, Rutland, Vermont, tape recording, in possession of author.

this Backwoods Area classification won the Forest Service appreciation for responding to the needs of hikers but avoided the controversy and attention that proposing the area for official "Wilderness" status would have drawn. It was, in fact, an easy thing for the GMNF's staff to do, for Lye Brook would not contain harvestable timber for another thirty years. The designation was only a local policy, created by the GMNF's Supervisor to emphasize recreation without becoming entangled in official Primitive land designations, but suddenly Lye Brook had become a natural recreation area instead of a timber stand.

When it promoted the new Lye Brook Backwoods Area, the Forest Service presented a candid picture of the land. In a 1963 promotional pamphlet, they described Bourn Pond as

> A beautiful secluded body of water surrounded by gentle wooded hills... Dead trees along the shore give the pond a wild appearance...The mixed forests surrounding the pond are characteristic of much of the backwoodlands in this region where extensive lumbering once occurred...It can be reached only by hiking trails.[89]

By stating that the dead trees on the shore gave the area a wild "appearance," rather than simply describing the area as wild, the pamphlet drew an important distinction. It implied that the area may "appear" wild, but was in fact not truly wild. The pamphlet went even further by explicitly acknowledging that there had been extensive logging in the area, and that such activity actually changed the composition of the forest being viewed, conveying the true history of the landscape. Most

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[89]Green Mountain National Forest, "Bourn Pond, 24 January 1963," TD, p. 1-2. Recreation Files, Supervisor's Office, Rutland, Vermont.

users, however, and especially the mounting number of hikers, interpreted Bourn Pond as a wild, untouched place. It was a rare moment for the Forest Service to deflate such an idyllic image of their holdings, one not to be repeated since.

A few years later the Forest Service applied a strikingly different idea to another part of the Lye Brook plateau, developing it as a sight for mass recreation. The Forest Service released an "Outdoor Recreation Summary" in 1966, recognizing the difference between the automobile-based recreation traditionally pursued by Manchester's visitors, and the more dispersed type of recreation demanded by the young people hiking the Long Trail. The Summary recommended a plan for Lye Brook which spoke to each of these groups, and inscribed the tension between them directly into the land.

The report recommended "developing three new water-based recreation areas with a total of 235 camping units, 120 picnic units, three swimming beaches with bathhouses, and a group campground," and one of these areas was Branch Pond, located on the Lye Brook plateau just two miles south of Bourn Pond.[90] To provide access to the development a large gravel road, able to be driven at forty-five miles an hour, was constructed a few years later. The plan divided the plateau into two different management areas, casting the Branch Pond area as a place for mass recreation, while it continued to treat Bourn Pond and the rest of the plateau as a Backwoods Area. Lye Brook, in the eyes of the Forest Service,

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[90]Green Mountain National Forest, "Outdoor Recreation Summary, 1966," TD, p. 1, Recreation Files, Supervisor's Office, Rutland, Vermont.

was a resource to be mined for recreation, one part for mass recreation and another part for dispersed recreation.[91]

The Recreation Summary also began to strengthen the perception of Lye Brook as a wild place, moving away from the candor of the earlier promotional pamphlet. The Summary made the Backwoods Areas part of Forest-wide policy and more clearly defined their purpose as places to experience nature:

> To meet the growing demand and to provide the opportunity to enjoy the solitude of the Forest and get closer to nature, seven areas comprising 20% of the Forest are to be held as "Backwoods Areas". Though these areas will still be managed for all the resources, recreation will be the key value and there will be no man-made development of a permanent type, except for trails and primitive campsites to control use and provide sanitation.[92]

Backwoods Areas, including Lye Brook, were now places to enjoy "solitude," answering the need to "get closer to nature." Distinct from the world of humans, they had "no man-made developments of a permanent type." Suddenly, the drafters of the Summary had applied an interpretation to Lye Brook that had previously been reserved for the Wilderness Areas of the West. Casting Lye Brook as a place to visit a nature kept separate from the developments of civilization, a place to have what Leopold had earlier termed a "wilderness experience," the Summary

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[91] Mass recreation, of course, brought money to Manchester and helped sustain the budget of the Forest Service's recreation department. As the Forest Service's management structure was broken into more numerous divisions, money no longer came down in lump sums, requiring management divisions to justify their individual budgets and consequently their jobs. Proposing management actions such as building campgrounds and picnic areas maintained recreation budgets from year to year. Dispersed recreation, however, required few management actions, adding little to the recreation budget and making it a low priority.

[92] Green Mountain National Forest, "Outdoor Recreation Summary," 2.

represented a striking transformation in perception from that time ten years earlier when Chris Swezey logged the area.

Since the late 1800s the development and perception of the Lye Brook area had been influenced by increasingly distant groups, moving from local woodsmen, to lumber barons, to the state-wide GMC, and finally to the conservation movement. The Forest Service's new Backwoods policy, catering to the vanguard of young out-of-state hikers, represented a critical turning point. From that point onward the ideas of a disembodied national movement would come to supplant completely those of the traditional users of Lye Brook.

Part 3 From Landscape to Wilderness Area

Mandating Wilderness

In the early 1970s, the national preservation movement, which had lobbied for the Wilderness Act of 1964 and subsequent environmental legislation, began to push for wilderness closer to their East Coast homes. Overriding the views of the Green Mountain Club, Forest Service, and local residents, the preservationists seized Lye Brook as their own, recasting it as a federal Wilderness Area. The preservationists argued that the cut-over land would eventually revert back to a wild state and should be protected. This argument redefined wilderness to include that which will appear as wilderness in the future. This new definition of wilderness, however, was not accompanied by a redefinition of a federal Wilderness Area. Wilderness Areas remained sites of preservation, where an existing wilderness would be perpetuated.

In 1971, the Green Mountain National Forest began preparing a management plan for the Lye Brook Backwoods Area. As required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970, forest managers held a public listening session in Manchester to further the planning process. The listening session revealed a broad range of opinion among residents, a marked contrast to the singular picture presented by the town leaders' focus on tourism. Many residents displayed a new concern for open land and outdoor recreation and held strong opinions about how Lye Brook should be managed. Though the Backwoods Area policy had been developed to satisfy the young backpackers, it also served many local

residents' desire for a multiple-use recreation area.

Franklin Frantz, a resident of the nearby town of Woodbury, opened the hearing by stating that Lye Brook was depleted of game and should be closed to vehicles to allow animal populations to recover. Frantz viewed the area through the eyes of a hunter or fisherman, wanting to keep the land undeveloped, and he held no objection to selective logging. George Pearlstein, the President of the Green Mountain Club, saw Lye Brook as a natural recreation site. He wanted to prohibit logging and keep the area in a natural state for primitive recreation, but he encouraged altering the area to make it more attractive. Reflecting the GMC's historical emphasis on a natural-appearing environment improved by human hands, Greenstein noted that, "a number of scenic viewpoints [in the area] have not yet been developed."[93] But Angus Black, a teacher from Manchester, felt that the area should be preserved as it was, remarking that "the salvation of man's soul may lie in the wilderness."

Francis Smalley and Carlton Winslow of Manchester offered slightly different viewpoints, arguing that the area was an important resource for the town. Smalley wanted to maintain the timber harvest so that local towns would continue to receive 25% of the revenues from timber sales. Winslow agreed on the economic value of the area, but felt it should be developed with horse trails and bicycle paths to make it an additional recreational attraction for Manchester's visitors. Chris Swezey, the Manchester resident who had logged the area just fifteen

[93]Green Mountain National Forest, "Report of Public Listening Sessions, Lye Brook Area, 1 May 1972," TD, Recreation Files, Supervisor's Office, Rutland, Vermont.

years earlier, asked how changes in policy would affect abutting landowners. Swezey, one of the few people to still own land in Lye Brook, saw a threat that could affect his property.

What almost all of the fifty-four participants in the hearing agreed upon, though, was maintaining the roadless condition of the area. The Forest Service promised to close the dirt logging roads it would create for timber sales, allowing them to revegetate. Given that assurance, most people felt that the area could be left in its natural-appearing state, used for a variety of different recreational purposes, and logged selectively. Almost no one, except the young teacher, mentioned wilderness in the same breath as Lye Brook.

Forest Service personnel were pleased with what they heard, for the hearing basically endorsed the continued management of Lye Brook as an informal Backwoods Area, where primitive recreation would be emphasized but logging could continue. After analyzing the hearing and statements submitted by the public, the Forest Service managers concluded that:

> there is only a limited preservationist interest in retaining each area in a strict "wilderness" status; i.e. no timber harvest, road or trail construction, or recreation development...most favor timber harvest and timber management activities with some limitations to protect fragile or scenic areas.[94]

The report, therefore, recommended that the area continue to be administrated under the auspices of the informal Backwoods Area policy.

When the upper-level management of the Green Mountain National Forest met, three months later, to discuss the recommendations of the

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[94]Green Mountain National Forest, "Public Listening," 2.

report and decide on a management plan, they had a new piece of information. They had learned that Vermont Senator George Aiken was about to introduce a Congressional bill to establish a statutory system of "Wild Areas" in the Eastern National Forests. Designation of land as a Wild Area would limit the administrative flexibility of Forest Service managers, and the possibility dismayed the Green Mountain Forest's top administrators. The GMNF Supervisor, Floyd Marita, and his advisors felt they had three administrative options for Lye Brook in light of the new information: they could (1) continue managing the area as an informal Backwoods Area (2) make Backwoods a term with official designation, or (3) propose designating Lye Brook a "Wild Area".

Discussion among the managers focused on the best way for them to retain administrative control over the Backwoods Areas in the future. One staff member noted that, "there hasn't been any real push by preservationists to create Wilderness in Vermont. Designating the area now [as an official Backwoods Area] may discourage pulling [the area] out of preservation [as a Backwoods Area] in the future."[95] The speaker proposed preserving Lye Brook as an official Backwoods Area, thereby lessening the chance of it being classified a Wild Area in the future. Forest Supervisor Marita concurred, stating that he "could foresee more hearings in a couple years for Wild Areas. By designating the area now Vermonters may back us in the future."[96] Marita felt that Vermonters might fight future designation of the land as a Wild Area if it was made into an official

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[95] Green Mountain National Forest, "Public Listening."

[96] Green Mountain National Forest, "Public Listening."

Backwoods Area now. Marita was concerned about losing administrative control of the land, for if it was made part of the proposed Wild Areas system, or worse yet, the National Wilderness Preservation System, his management options would be prescribed by Congress, excluding timber sales and focusing the public's eye on his office's activities. Questioned at the end of the meeting about the value of official designation of the Backwoods Areas, Recreation and Lands Officer Joseph Sposta clarified the point as being "protection for use and management, and to defend against more restrictive designation in the future."[97] "Protection" in this instance meant protection for Forest Service management programs, and the ability "to defend" against the more restrictive Wild Area designation. Lye Brook, then, would be designated an official Backwoods Area, partly to meet the desires of the local public, but mostly to protect the Forest Service's management options. That summer, the Forest Service released a draft plan for an official Lye Brook Backwoods Area.[98]

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[97] Green Mountain National Forest, "Public Listening."

[98] An interesting instance of inter-office confusion occurred when a lower-level recreation officer wrote a draft of the recreation management plan for the entire Forest, based on the sentence: "Since preservation of the near natural landscape is the prime objective, further penetration of the Forest with permanent public roads is undesirable". This draft appears with a gallon of red ink splashed across it and the main offending sentence crossed out with a large "no". In the margin the editor instructed that the "objective here should be to plan the roads for maximum aesthetic benefit consistent with the purpose of the road - not to eliminate the roads". Clearly the writer and editor had different ideas about how the land should be managed for recreation. The draft was so off-base that it drew a letter from Gilbert Churchill, the District Ranger of the Middlebury District, objecting that "this plan assumes that Wilderness is the ideal standard and our objective should be to approach this standard as closely as possible...I disagree. Management of the Forest is our prime objective. There is a place for Wilderness and a place for Wild Areas...however this type of management should not be our only goal. I believe we should be managing our Forest for recreation values as well as other values. We can improve on natural landscape by creating a variety of age classes or species (i.e. we can create a paper birch stand along a highway). We can manage for large trees...lets talk about vegetation management in the plan and not leave the impression of managing the whole Forest as a wilderness."

During the same summer, though, Senator Aiken did introduce legislation to establish a system of Wild Areas in the National Forests of the East. This attempt to make up for the paucity of Wilderness in the East is best viewed in the context of previous administrative policies. Following passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Forest Service had decided to determine which lands in its holdings were suitable additions to the Wilderness system. The agency initiated the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE) in the late 1960s to identify undeveloped roadless areas larger than 5,000 acres. Although RARE identified 1,449 areas nationwide, six of which were in Vermont, it recommended only 274 for Wilderness status, excluding all areas in the East. The Wilderness Act's three different definitions of Wilderness theoretically allowed for a wide range of interpretation. The Forest Service chose to use the purist definition, citing the Act's direction that Wilderness was, "an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence."[99]

Selecting this restrictive definition was not done by chance. By considering only land perceived as pure for inclusion in the NWPS, the Forest Service severely limited the acreage classified as Wilderness on National Forest land in the West. In an unusually candid admission of the rationale behind this policy, Forest Service Chief John McGuire argued that, "a 'restored' lands definition of Wilderness for all National Forest lands could markedly reduce the management options for a great portion

[99] Wilderness Act of 1964.

of the National Forests in the West."[100] To avoid more Wilderness in the West, the Forest Service declared there to be no Wilderness in the East.

For the Eastern-based preservation movement, designation of Wilderness in their region was a crucial matter. Having won the struggle to establish the Wilderness System and protected millions of acres in the West, preservationists now desired a weekend Wilderness closer to home. With growing popular support in the early 1970s because of the public's heightened environmental consciousness, these groups turned to Congress to overcome the intransigence of the Forest Service. Aiken's bill, though, did not please the preservation groups. Despite the Green Mountain Forest personnel's fear of Aiken's proposal, the bill had actually been written in consultation with the heads of the Forest Service in Washington. Aiken and the heads of the Service felt that the pressure for Wilderness in the East was so great that it would probably succeed, so they decided to introduce a bill which would limit the "damage" to the East. They sought to keep additional lands in the West from being designated as Wilderness by creating a separate Eastern system of Wild Areas, with a different criteria for selection.

The hearings on Aiken's bill revealed the polarization between the Forest Service and the national preservation groups and ultimately introduced a new definition of Wilderness which opened admission to restored lands. Aiken's proposal did not name specific areas in the East, and thus not a single resident of Vermont, besides Aiken himself, spoke at the hearings. Opening the hearing, Aiken stated that Easterners needed,

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[100]Robinson, The Forest Service, 172.

> access to areas where they can enjoy the primeval condition which only wilderness areas can provide...in the National Forests of the East there are numerous areas of lesser size *that are rapidly reverting to primitive conditions...these areas contain physical and scenic features that would enable outdoor-minded people to enjoy experiences which the wilderness provides*. It is for the purpose of protecting, maintaining, and managing such *wilderness-type areas* that we have sponsored this legislation [emphasis added].[101]

Aiken carefully separated wilderness from wilderness-type areas by stating that they each answer the same needs, but are not the same thing. Wilderness provided a "primeval condition," but the areas in the East "reverting to primitive conditions" provide "physical and scenic features." Those features "enable" people to enjoy the same experiences that wilderness provided, even though the areas were not wilderness.

The main preservationist group at the hearing was the Wilderness Society, and it did not accept Aiken's distinction. The Society chose a different definition of wilderness than that which Aiken and the Forest Service had selected, defining wilderness as that "which *generally appears* to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work *substantially unnoticeable* [emphasis added]."[102] Many Eastern areas, they argued, were sufficiently recovered to meet these criteria. More importantly, they proposed that an area still in the process of recovering was "potential wilderness," and should be administratively protected to, "allow time to remove any incompatible structures and for the area to naturally recover; whereupon, in due course, it could be considered

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[101]U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Environment, Soil Conservation, and Forestry, Wild Areas in the National Forests: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Environment, Soil Conservation, and Forestry, 92nd Cong., 20-21 July 1972, 12.

[102]Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, section 3.

for placement in the NWPS."[103] By explicitly proposing that cut-over areas would one day revert to wilderness, the Society moved beyond the idea of preserving a virgin wilderness. The ethic of preservation - of saving a precious remnant of something primeval - was left behind in favor of simply advocating a wilderness experience which could be evoked by certain lands, regardless of their past history.

As Aiken's bill was debated during the fall of 1972, the Eastern Regional Office of the Forest Service released a draft environmental statement for a proposed Lye Brook Wild Area, superseding the plans of the Green Mountain Forest's management for an official Lye Brook Backwoods Area. The statement characterized the area as unsuitable as Wilderness, but adequate for management as a Wild Area, for which, "areas may be selected where some evidence of man's activities is apparent, if the affected sites can be restored to an appearance of near-natural, primitive conditions."[104]

By the end of 1972, however, Aiken's bill was dead. It was replaced by a proposal for an Eastern Wilderness Amendment that maintained the physical distinction between Eastern and Western lands, but included Eastern areas as part of the NWPS. In response to the shifting political winds, the Eastern Regional Office of the Forest Service rapidly turned out

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[103]U.S. Congress, Wild Areas in the National Forests, 12.

[104]U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Draft Environmental Statement - A Proposal - Lye Brook Wild Area, (Washington, D.C. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, January 1973), appendix A.

a new proposal, this time for a Lye Brook *Eastern* Wilderness.[105] The new proposal still found Lye Brook unsuitable under the Wilderness Act of 1964, stating that, "the area shows the imprint of man. Cover [vegetation] types, size, and arrangement are the direct result of man's lumbering activities over the past two hundred years." It also found, though, that the area would be eligible for Eastern Wilderness if

> through the natural process, much of the effects of man's past use and impact have been or will be restored to an acceptable standard. Roads and trails may be closed to travel and revegetated. Structures, fences and stone walls may be removed. Timber harvest and silvicultural treatments would be restricted. The healing process of nature would dominate the area and ultimately result in a climax vegetative cover. Use of the area should be restricted or controlled to lessen the probability of damage and retain the atmosphere of solitude. *With such modifications and controls, the Lye Brook area could be a created Eastern Wilderness* [emphasis added].[106]

Reluctantly adopting the restorative philosophy of the Wilderness Society, the proposal listed the actions required to turn Lye Brook into a place that would evoke a wilderness experience. The proposal was also a last stab at classifying Lye Brook as a kind of Eastern wilderness distinct from a Western area because of its history of utilization.

The Wilderness Society, though, refused to accept a separate system for the Eastern and Western halves of the country out of a fear of foreclosing millions of Western acres from possible Wilderness classification, and it succeeded in killing the Eastern Wilderness

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[105]Indicative of the rush to have the area classified as an Eastern Wilderness before things got even worse, the Forest Service proposal is a poor document, rife with clerical and copy errors.

[106]U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. A Proposal - Lye Brook Eastern Wilderness, Green Mountain National Forest, Vermont. (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, February 1973), 19-20.

Amendments bill. After fighting through a succession of approximately twenty different bills, the preservationists finally won. The Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975 was passed as an amendment to the Wilderness Act of 1964. It admitted sixteen areas in the East, including Lye Brook, into the National Wilderness Preservation System under the criteria of the 1964 Act.

By admitting lands generally acknowledged to be far from pristine, the Eastern Wilderness Act fundamentally redefined wilderness to mean that which gives the appearance of wilderness, detaching the history of the land from the perception of the land. The definition of a Wilderness Area, however, remained unaltered even though it now embraced Eastern areas. Wilderness Areas continued to be defined as places to preserve wilderness, both the physical entity and the experience, and the experience was based upon the supposedly pristine lands of the West.

The Forest Service had purchased Lye Brook and other Eastern roadless areas precisely because the land was in such an abused condition. The crucial notion of a difference between Eastern and Western lands included in Aiken's attempt to create two distinct systems was lost in the political struggle to provide primitive recreational opportunities in the East without affecting the classification of lands in the West. Lye Brook, despite its history, was claimed for the National Wilderness Preservation System, made a part of the national wilderness landscape, and asked to embody all the solitude, remoteness, and adventure of the Western wild lands.

But how could Lye Brook be made to live up to such a mandate?

Seeking Nature

Lye Brook's designation as a federal Wilderness Area drew little comment from local residents. Manchester and many similar towns across Vermont were in the midst of a more sweeping transformation at the time of the designation, one which changed how the state's land was both used and perceived. In the four decades after World War II, Vermont shifted from a predominantly agricultural state into a modern landscape of cities and extended suburbs that more closely resembled the southern half of New England. A detectable socio-economic stratification developed between those Vermonters of the younger generation, who took better paying jobs in the burgeoning service economy, and an older generation who continued to work the land. Many young Vermonters enjoyed a leisure time unknown to their parents and began to look to the state's natural areas for recreation.[107]

Simultaneously, the same changes in social values that inspired the Wilderness Act and subsequent environmental legislation of the 1960s and 1970s also motivated many Americans to move to Vermont in search of a higher quality of life. By 1977, forests covered 75% of Vermont, recovering from a low of 25% forest cover in the 1870s during the peak of

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[107] The transformation of Vermont since World War II has yet to be adequately studied. This examination of the Vermont wilderness movement provides some insight, and other parts of the issue have been tackled by Deborah Rawson, Without a Farmhouse Near, New York: Available Press, 1989, Joe Sherman, Fast Lane on a Dirt Road: Vermont Transformed 1945-1990, Woodstock: Countryman Press, 1991, and Winifred McCarthy, "The Migration of Cosmopolites to Rural Vermont," Ph. D Dissertation, New School for Social Research, 1986.

agriculture in the state[108], and the wealth of trees helped form the new immigrants' view of Vermont as a beautiful and perhaps wild state. This influx of nature-seekers soon began looking for ways to preserve Vermont in their favored image.

Using the designation of federal Wilderness Areas as a vehicle, the Vermont Wilderness Association (VWA) organized to preserve its own image of Vermont. The majority of its support came from the recent immigrants and the younger generation of Vermonters. The Vermont Wilderness Association was actually less interested in the preservation of wilderness than it was in keeping Vermont as it was, retaining the beauty and primitive recreational opportunities of the roadless hiking areas.

Manchester residents' reactions to the designation of Lye Brook as a Wilderness area in 1975 were fairly subdued. Lye Brook had never made the front page of the weekly Manchester Journal since the paper's founding in the 1850s, and the federal designation drew only four letters to the editor. Selectmen of the nearby town of Dorset wrote that "the loss of timber on these 14,000 acres dwarfs any beneficial objective of the proposal," as both local wood-using industries and town coffers would suffer from the prohibition of timber sales.[109] Manchester resident John P. Stannard supported the Selectmen, arguing that Lye Brook was a poor choice for Wilderness as it was already a working timber stand that had been harvested several times. His focus was not on the dubious validity of

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[108]Lloyd C. Irland, Wild lands and Woodlots: The Story of New England's Forests, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1982), 114-115.

[109]Dorset Town Selectmen, "Lye Brook Wilderness Area," Manchester Journal, 25 July 1974, 12.

Lye Brook as wilderness, but rather the tension between the needs of local residents and those from outside the state. "We are to give up," he wrote, "possibly $56,000 worth of timber production so that a few individuals can find "solitude and serenity" in their "Instant Wilderness."[110] Stannard questioned whether the area should serve the desires of a disembodied national electorate or those of the people who lived nearby, contrasting the vague concepts of solitude and serenity with the tangible economic gains from timber sales.

The Chairman of the Sierra Club's Connecticut River Valley Group was the lone voice to defend the designation. He wrote that the Selectmen

> have completely ignored the value of "Wilderness"... and have considered only the economic value of the land... the public will have forever, an area of solitude, an escape, if you must, from the mechanized, and economically oriented world we have created. The loss of timber is worth the gain of solitude and serenity, which the area can offer to everyone.[111]

Lye Brook was no longer solely the concern of local people and their industries, the Chairman pointed out, but was now for "everyone." It was particularly for those seeking "an escape" from "mechanized" society, such as the urban members of the Sierra Club. In the next issue of the Journal, the Chairman responded once more, bluntly stating that, "the National Forests belong to all citizens of the United States, not just those local interests who benefit from economic exploitation of its resources. And in the end it will be all the people who will decide whether or not the Lye

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[110]John P. Stannard, "Instant Wilderness," Manchester Journal, 22 August 1974, 12.

[111]Stanton Allaben, "Lye Brook Wilderness Area," Manchester Journal, 1 August 1974, 12.

Brook area becomes wilderness once again."[112] The critical attention of the Sierra Club Chairman indicated not only the type of people who had inspired the designation, but also the transformation that perceptions of Lye Brook had undergone in the twenty years since it was last logged.

Surprisingly, the Manchester Journal came out with an editorial a week later supporting the designation. "At first sight," wrote the Journal,

> 'Wilderness' may seem like a pretty big word for an area that has been the site of extensive logging ventures, recreational use and introduced deer herds. A hundred years from now, however, the appellation may be cherished by our descendants ...the future will be grateful to Senator Aiken, President Ford and the National Forest Service for 'creating' wilderness.[113]

Both the historical relationship between the town and Lye Brook and the spread of environmental awareness in the 1970s throughout Vermont puts the Journal's supportive editorial into context. During its history, Manchester had distanced itself from industrial activity, including the logging of Lye Brook, choosing instead to take advantage of its location along a major north-south route to court the tourist industry. In so doing, the town had willingly remade itself in the image desired by its summer visitors. The Journal was the primary booster for the town, promoting its adopted pastoral image, and thus it was probably not a great stretch for the paper, and the town, to accept an equally rapid transformation of Lye Brook.

Even more important in winning acceptance of Lye Brook as Wilderness was the rise of environmental concern among leaders in

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[112]Stanton Allaben, "Lye Brook Wilderness Area," Manchester Journal, 29 August 1974, 12.

[113]"Comment", Manchester Journal, 8 May 1975, 10.

Manchester and other Vermont towns. In the early 1960s, the construction of Interstates 91 and 89 opened Vermont to a new flurry of visitors, enabling the urban residents of the northeast to spend weekends in Vermont. Many of those visitors chose to build second homes or live in the state permanently. Because a majority of Vermont towns lacked any planning process, the state stood ready to be overrun by the same type of unrestrained development that had already carved up much of southern New England.[114] Many Vermonters, though perhaps less self-consciously than those in Manchester, cherished the state's pastoral image and enacted legislation to control development. Act 250, passed in 1970 with the broad objective of preventing Vermont land from being used in a manner detrimental to the environment, required developers to apply to a district commission for permits for certain developments. The commission determined whether a development project would degrade the water or air quality, soil stability, availability of educational services, and several other factors, making the Act one of the most stringent land use laws in the country.[115] Mirroring the concerns of Act 250, Manchester passed a 1976 referendum by an overwhelming margin to attract non-polluting light industry. Increasingly concerned with the quality of their lives and no longer dependent on the wood products industry, Manchester residents generally accepted the federal designation of Lye Brook as a Wilderness

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[114]Howard Kunstler, "The Selling of Vermont," New York Times Magazine, 10 April 1988, 52-54, 66-67, 71.

[115]Robert McCullough, "Historic Preservation and Land Use Control at the State Level - Vermont's Act 250," Boston College Environmental Affairs Law Review, 14 (Fall 1986), 1-29.

Area.

Despite the passage of Act 250 and its controls, many people did buy second homes or settle permanently in Vermont, finding the environmental concern embodied in Act 250 to be an additional attraction. For the nature-seeking immigrants, many of whom looked to Vermont as an example of a higher quality of life, Wilderness Areas and wild lands took on a new importance. Nationally, Wilderness Areas

> increasingly came to be thought of as environments for an urbanized society, a qualitative setting for living and leisure. They were a natural world that provided a setting for the built society of urban America, and an escape from that society.[116]

Wilderness was upheld as a site for renewal of the American spirit, a cure for urban nerves, and a creative inspiration: one would emerge having found the balance necessary to participate in the structure of civilization. Such benefits, paired with a decreasing supply of open lands for recreation, created a new demand for nearby Wilderness in the 1980s,[117] one which had significant implications for Vermont.

Consisting primarily of the young generation of Vermonters and new immigrants, the membership of the Vermont Wilderness Association (VWA) organized to protect and expand wilderness in Vermont. The VWA used Wilderness designation as a vehicle to preserve both a vision of Vermont and the various benefits, physical and psychological, derived from maintenance of natural areas. "Wilderness is important," wrote one spokesman of the VWA, "it provides solitude, peace, quiet, adventure, a

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[116]Samuel P. Hays, Beauty, Health and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[117]Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 265-67.

sense of permanence, a place where trees grow old and huge. Wilderness preservation is historic preservation of a special part of Vermont's heritage, a part that will vanish without decisive action."[118] The argument made for wilderness was three-fold: it provided the psychological benefits of "solitude, peace, quiet, adventure, a sense of permanence", it represented an official reproach to the ravaging world of man by providing a place for "trees (to) grow old and huge", and it preserved a historic piece of the Vermont landscape which was endangered. The historic preservation argument was an admittedly promotional one, for wilderness advocates knew better than most that Vermont's vestigial wilderness had been eradicated long before. Their arguments for the non-commodity benefits of wilderness and its function as a balance to human civilization reflected those of the national preservation movement, and they found support among both young Vermonters and the new immigrants.

An anti-Wilderness group, the Vermont Forest Coalition, rose to fight the movement for additional Wilderness designations, questioning the basic philosophy of the VWA. To many Vermonters, the concept of wilderness in Vermont simply did not make sense, for it ran counter to the images of a settled, pastoral landscape with which they had grown up. For the members of the Coalition, most of whom were long time residents who worked the land directly or were employed by forest product industries, Wilderness designation meant limitations on recreational and economic

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[118]Dick Andrews, "How Much Wilderness," Vermont Environmental Report 4 (January/February 1982), 1.

opportunities.[119] They found no value in the non-commodity benefits sought by the VWA and saw no practical reason for expanding the Wilderness Areas since their use had sharply declined after a peak in the mid-1970s.[120]

The Green Mountain Club also opposed Wilderness Areas that included the Long Trail because the wilderness experience created by the Club along its trail did not meet the standards of federal Wilderness Areas. The GMC complained that, "the absolute prohibitions against logging and motorized equipment contained in the Wilderness Act of 1964 are not needed to preserve the wilderness experience along the portions of the Long Trail System within the Vermont study areas."[121] The GMC was sympathetic to the designation of Wilderness when it did not involve the Long Trail but refused to support designation when it did. In a Wilderness Area, the Club would no longer be able to build huts or clear scenic vistas, and that would alter their vision of a wilderness experience.

Mail to the Vermont congressional delegation, made up of Senators Leahy and Stafford and Representative Jeffords, ran three to one in favor of more Wilderness in Vermont. On March 23, 1983, Senator Stafford introduced a bill for the designation of additional Wilderness Areas in Vermont, and Jeffords introduced an identical bill in the House. The bills

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[119]U.S. Congress, Senate, "Vermont Forest Coalition - Statement of Principles," 98th Cong., 1st Sess.. Congressional Record, (15 November 1983), vol. 129.

[120]Lye Brook's visitor days, measured as twelve hours of use, dropped steadily from the peaks of the mid-1970s to 7,100 in 1979, 4500 in 1980, 3900 in 1981, and 3800 in 1982.

[121]Robert Hagerman,"Board Opposes (Certain) New Wilderness Areas," GMC Magazine, November 1978, 3.

recommended 64,840 acres for Wilderness designation, which would establish three new Areas and add approximately 2,660 acres to the southern boundary of the Lye Brook Wilderness. The areas essentially mirrored those recognized by the second roadless area inventory (RARE II) undertaken by the Forest Service in 1978, though the Forest Service had then found none of the areas suitable for designation. The Lye Brook addition was in two blocks, covering the southern end of the plateau. It included Branch Pond, but extended no farther to the south due to the gravel-surfaced Forest Road 70, which had been built by the Forest Service in 1970 to open the Pond for intensive recreational use.

Introducing the legislation, Stafford made no mention of the numerous logging roads and trails that crisscrossed the addition, emphasizing instead how, "an irregular shoreline with boggy margins characterizes pristine Branch Pond...In recent years the 39 acre pond has hosted one of only a dozen pairs of loons that successfully nested in Vermont."[122] This questionable characterization of Branch Pond, which was visited by hundreds of fishermen, canoeists and snowmobilers each year and had once been partially drained by a Forest Service recreation crew, as "pristine" was indicative of the illusionary nature of the bill.

The legislation found the Vermont areas suitable for Wilderness because they "generally appear(s) to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature," satisfying one of the definitions contained in the

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[122]U.S. Congress, Senate, Senator of Vermont speaking for himself and Senator Leahy on the Vermont Wilderness Bill to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, S. 897, 98th Cong., 1st Sess.., Congressional Record, (23 March 1983), vol. 129, no. 38.

Wilderness Act. The bill, though, also went further than the Wilderness Act by proposing the preservation of "such areas as an enduring resource of wilderness which shall be managed to perpetuate *and, where necessary, restore* the wilderness character of the land [emphasis added]."[123] The distinction was at once heartening and troubling, for it recognized the difference between the Vermont areas and the Western models, but then directed that the difference be erased. Directing the management of the areas toward restoration, the bill sought to create an image of Vermont that accorded with the desires of local and national preservation groups.

Such a wilderness, however, was not what a large number of Vermonters wanted, and the ensuing debate over wilderness grew into the most hotly contested environmental issue in Vermont history. The congressional delegation held two hearings in the state following the introduction of the bill, documenting an extraordinarily wide range of views on the appropriate use of Vermont's public lands. The larger and more influential hearing was held in Manchester on July 9, 1983, and over two hundred people submitted oral or written testimony. For the residents of Manchester, the hearings offered a chance to shape the debate on wilderness - a chance that they did not have when Lye Brook was designated in 1975. The Forest Service's listening session in 1971 had focused on future recreation management policy for Lye Brook, not on the possible establishment of a federal Wilderness Area. At that time, the majority of Manchester residents had advocated the continued

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[123]U.S. Congress, Senate, Representative Jeffords speaking on the Vermont Wilderness Bill, 98th Cong., 1st Sess.., Congressional Record, (24 October 1983), Vol. 129. 3.

maintenance of the area as multiple-use Forest lands with an emphasis on dispersed recreation and a sensitivity to the area's attractive features. At the Congressional hearing, however, the debate among Manchester's residents polarized into two distinct camps. This revealed the growing separation between those who still worked the land and those who worked in the new service economy, and highlighted the new faces brought to town by the migration of nature-seekers into the state.

Francis Smalley, a Manchester resident, set the tone for much of the local testimony by stating:

> I am one of the few breed of dyed in the wool Vermonters left...I do not see any more benefits than there already are. One can get all the solitude-if they feel they need it - out of the forest as is. We do not have any virgin wilderness, and it would take 150 years to get back to something that it was once 200 years ago. Ponds, bogs and wetlands are protected under the Forest Service management plans.[124]

Smalley's position was similar to that taken by most residents in 1971, acknowledging both the past history of the land and its present value for recreation. Noting that special sites, such as "ponds, bogs and wetlands," could be protected by the Green Mountain National Forest, Smalley saw no reason to apply new interpretations and restrictions to the land to satisfy a need for solitude.

Sam Lloyd, a resident of nearby Weston, also regarded the application of the wilderness idea to Vermont's lands as an undesirable illusion. "I do not believe," he said,

> that it is rational or fair to select land that has been worked

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[124]U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks, Additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks, 98th Cong., 1st Sess.., 9 July 1983, 64.

> over by man and his machines at various times since the early 1800s and decree it to be wilderness today, creating a certain kind of recreation for a comparative few and eliminating another kind of recreation for a great many.[125]

Lloyd took Smalley's objection to the next logical step, arguing that not only was the designation a contradiction of the land's history, but that it was motivated by a new set of desires for primitive recreation which did not make sense to people of his generation.

For other residents of Manchester and nearby towns Wilderness designation was objectionable on more practical terms. Phyllis Reiss raised the prospect of economic hardship, explaining that, "as a taxpayer in Sunderland, [a township covered by the] Lye Brook Wilderness Area...I do not wish to see any more land added to the Wilderness Area, as it will increase our property taxes...our 1983 taxes are over $5.30 per acre. For this reason our property is for sale."[126] Stan and Janie Zecher of Manchester opposed additional Wilderness designation because it made lands inaccessible to a large portion of the population, limiting the range of recreational opportunity that the area had previously provided. "To keep our forests healthy," they wrote, "they must be properly managed, not deserted," exemplifying the widespread idea that designating an area Wilderness and enforcing regulations to remove human influence from the land -- making them "deserted" -- was simply not a legitimate use of the resource. Another Manchester resident, Howard Hill, saw Wilderness Areas as a direct threat, warning that designation "is going to create one

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[125]U.S. Congress, "Additions to the National," 24.

[126]U.S. Congress, "Additions to the National," 131.

of the greatest fire hazards the State of Vermont has ever had. If this wilderness is left to lay for 10 or 12 years and a fire breaks out in it, there is no way in hell it can ever be put out."[127] In addition to being an economic burden and limitation on recreation, Wilderness might be a real danger for the nearby town.

Despite the generally negative reaction of many local residents, a significant number of voices from Manchester and surrounding towns supported expansion of Wilderness Areas, illustrating the diversification of opinion brought by the transformation of Vermont's economy and influx of nature-seekers into the state. James L. Montague, living in Manchester Center, stated that he was in favor of the designations because of their power to preserve the beauty of the state:

> I have owned property in Vermont since 1945. I was attracted to the State for its scenic beauty and quietness. Since coming here, I have seen mountains stripped of their forests to make ski tows and slides and chalets and condominiums, motels, roads and restaurants. Vermont has become a resort - farms giving way to land developments and orchards to housing projects.[128]

Wilderness designation, then, was a method through which Montague's favored image of Vermont could be preserved, though it had little to do with a need for wilderness. Similarly, Joan Gardner of Bennington connected Wilderness designation with preservation of the Vermont landscape. "During the 1960s," she said,

> I lived in California at a time when the newspapers reported that one-eighth of that State was then under concrete or asphalt. Those of us who moved here from other areas of the country to escape the miles of paving...feel a special

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[127]U.S. Congress, "Additions to the National," 22.

[128]U.S. Congress, "Additions to the National," 133.

> responsibility to maintain Vermont as it was yesterday and is today.[129]

The desire of recent immigrants to maintain the natural appearance of the state, which had originally attracted them, led them to support the expansion of Wilderness Areas, and they bolstered the standing of the Vermont Wilderness Association.

The basic problem facing residents of Manchester and other towns near the proposed Wilderness Areas was their inability to choose a middle ground. The debate over wilderness was shaped by the VWA in absolute terms, providing a choice between more wilderness and no wilderness. A middle ground that recognized the desire of residents to retain the natural appearance of Vermont's landscape while keeping it open to most recreational uses and economic utilization -- a possibility under the Backwoods Area policy -- was no longer available. Given a choice between Wilderness designation and the questionable and amendable protection provided by the Forest Service for recreational lands, many Vermonters chose wilderness.

To gain support, the Wilderness Areas' proposed boundaries were modified in the final Vermont Wilderness Act passed on June 19, 1984. Reducing the total acreage to approximately 41,260 acres, the Act's redrawn boundaries eliminated many of the snowmobile trails and usable roads from the Areas. In the case of Lye Brook, the proposed addition of 2,700 acres was reduced to 1,080 in order to exclude existing snowmobile trails on the western and eastern sides of the addition. Branch Pond was

[129]U.S. Congress, "Additions to the National," 79.

removed because of its easy accessibility on Forest Road 70 and because of its popularity with snowmobilers who liked to ride over its frozen surface in winter. The Green Mountain Club supported the legislation once an exemption was written in which stated that the Long Trail and its related structures "may be maintained."[130]

The most significant attempt at accommodation among the various users, however, was the simultaneous establishment of the 36,400-acre White Rocks National Recreation Area on the northern half of the Forest. The Recreation Area recognized a more inclusive range of recreational activity, allowing snowmobiles and freeing the Forest Service to manage wildlife. Like the Backwoods Area policy, the Recreation Area carried none of the philosophical implications of Wilderness designation, acknowledged the historic use of the land for many purposes, and allowed future alteration of it while maintaining dispersed recreation as the primary objective.

Such an acknowledgement of history - and of the multiplicity of views and uses of the Vermont landscape - was not contained in the final form of the Vermont Wilderness Act. Whereas the version proposed by Senator Stafford in March of 1983 stated the purpose of the bill to be to "perpetuate and, where necessary, restore the wilderness character of the land," the final version dropped the direction for restoration. The final bill's directive was,

> to preserve such areas as an enduring resource of wilderness which shall be managed to *perpetuate and protect* watersheds

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[130]U.S. Congress, Senate, Vermont Wilderness Act of 1984, 98th Cong., 2nd Sess.. 19 June 1984.

> and wildlife habitat, preserve scenic and historic resources, and promote scientific research, primitive recreation, solitude, physical and mental challenge, and inspiration [emphasis added]."[131]

This directive was essentially identical to the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Eastern Wilderness Act. The bill called for the preservation of the landscape and promotion of the wilderness experience. Recognition of a difference between Eastern and Western landscapes, which was acknowledged by the earlier bill's directive to restore the Eastern lands, was dropped from the final Act. In so doing, the Act established additional Wilderness Areas in Vermont based on an ideal of Western wilderness.

Seeking to preserve opportunities for natural recreation and the appearance of the state, the Vermont Wilderness Association turned to federal Wilderness designation. Ironically, by attempting to keep the land as it was, they instead sponsored legislation which would seek to make the land something else. It fell specifically to the Forest Service to find, perpetuate, promote, and create the experience of Western wilderness in the Wilderness Areas of Vermont.

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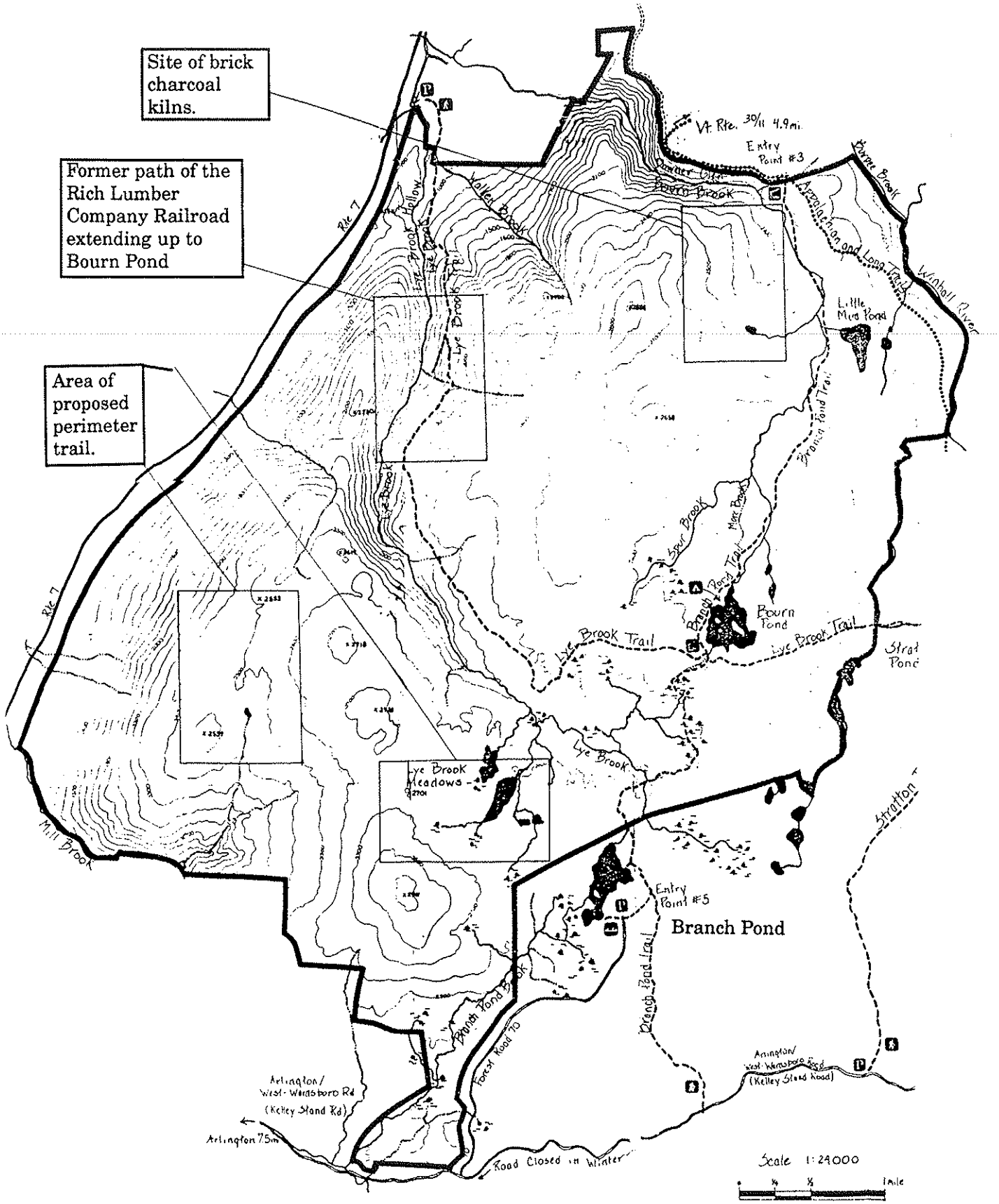
[131]U.S. Congress, Vermont Wilderness Act of 1984, Section 101 (b).



9. The Lye Brook Wilderness Area circa 1994. Bourn Pond is located at right center. Reproduced from "The Wilderness Times" USFS, 1994.

Part 4 Constructing Wilderness

Creating a Wilderness Area

Given a mandate for wilderness, the staff of the Green Mountain National Forest began turning Lye Brook into a Wilderness Area in 1975. Wilderness advocates had used Wilderness classification as a means to protect recreation areas from development and maintain their favored image of the land. Actual Wilderness designation, however, brought a quite different set of ideas to the land. Attempting to preserve the presumed purity of Western landscapes, lawmakers had defined Wilderness Areas as natural worlds in opposition to the civilized world of humans, devoid of human works or the evidence of human impact. To make Lye Brook a Wilderness Area the Forest Service had to remove the most obvious evidence of previous human activity. In so doing, the Forest Service moved beyond the principle of preservation, seeking not merely to preserve, but to create a particular kind of physical entity.

By marking boundaries, changing maps, closing roads and acquiring acreage, the Forest Service attempted to separate Lye Brook from the rest of the Forest. It also sought to end activities within Lye Brook that no longer conformed to Wilderness standards, simplifying what had been a contested landscape into one for a singular use. Of the 14,600 acres contained in the designated area, 2,170 belonged to private individuals. The Forest Service approached the owners with offers to buy or trade equivalent land for their holdings, and acquired approximately half the private acreage within a year and a half. Chris Swezey sold off his

final 41 acres within the boundary, ending half a century of family lumbering in Lye Brook, though he kept a hunting camp just outside the boundary line. For those who did not want to sell, the designating Act directed that the land be kept as it was on the day of designation. Owners had to notify the Forest Service sixty days in advance whenever they planned, "a change in use, different from that which existed on January 3, 1975, which will result in significant new construction or disturbance of the land surface or flora or will require the use of motor vehicles."[132] As a last resort, the agency could initiate condemnation proceedings against owners who continued to engage in non-conforming activities, such as felling timber or constructing new buildings. To prevent vehicles from entering the Area, the Forest Service let the old logging roads grow over, angering local fishermen and hunters who had driven into the area in the past. By purchasing private inholdings and outlawing non-conforming uses, the Forest Service attempted to freeze the land as it was on the day of designation, screening out activity no longer appropriate in a Wilderness Area.

In 1976, the Green Mountain National Forest released a Forest Plan that established a management policy for Lye Brook. This Plan marked the introduction of modern planning for the Forest, analyzing present demands and setting targets for future production. The Plan treated Wilderness Areas in a contradictory way. It generally recognized the increased demand for dispersed recreation, recommending a 16% increase

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[132]Green Mountain National Forest. "A Brief Summary of Wilderness Areas in the Eastern United States With Emphasis on Vermont, 11 June 1975." TD. Recreation Files, Supervisor's Office, Rutland, Vermont, 2.

in the recreation budget and a 38% reduction in the timber budget. At the same time, though, the Plan adopted a system of target outputs, or production goals, for each resource. For Wilderness Areas the only measurable output was days of visitor use, an evaluation which failed to account for many non-commodity benefits ascribed to wilderness, such as solitude and escape from civilization.

Foresters of that decade were not trained to recognize, provide, or assess the non-commodity benefits of wilderness. "Most of the managers," according to Recreational Planner Bob Pramuk, "were like farmers trying to harvest a crop, so anything you didn't utilize was a total waste, and wilderness was looked at by the Forest Service as a real waste because the trees just fell down, and what good was it?"[133] Since the Forest Service interpreted user demands as simply the demand for land to hike on, the Plan focused on preserving the physical resource, not on the wilderness experience. The Plan stated that the Forest Service would, "provide for Wilderness resource uses and outputs with emphasis on the maintenance of areas providing opportunities for a natural recreational experience with a high degree of solitude."[134] While it mentions the non-commodity value of "solitude" as a goal, the focus was preservation. The Area would be maintained to provide opportunities for solitude, but the opportunities would not be created.

Lye Brook, however, was being overrun by hikers. The rise of

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[133]Robert Pramuk, U.S. Forest Service Recreation Planner, interview by author, 23 February 1995, Rutland, Vermont. Tape recording, in possession of author.

[134] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Green Mountain National Forest Plan, Rutland, Vermont, 1975, 88.

environmental concern in the late 1960s and early 1970s inspired a backpacking craze, much of which focused on the new Wilderness Areas of the East and the Appalachian trail, which had been designated a National Scenic Trail in 1968.[135] Now a Wilderness Area, Lye Brook's visitor days shot up from a few thousand to over 21,000 in 1975, with approximately 85% of the use occurring along the Appalachian trail corridor in the eastern quarter of the Wilderness Area.[136] Bourn Pond, with two GMC shelters and an attractive shoreline, was a popular spot for hikers, as it had been among local people for years.

The hikers' effect on the Pond disturbed the Forest Service. "It was like a cattle barn," recalled Pramuk, "with 50 or 60 people camped along the lake shore and back in tiers, many overlooking a sea of tents before the pond."[137] The hikers began to cause the Pond and the whole trail corridor to degrade as they stomped on vegetation, collected firewood in an ever widening radius, polluted streams with improper waste disposal, and turned the trail into a wide, muddy track. To preserve the landscape the Forest Service attempted to control users by placing a Wilderness Ranger at Bourn Pond and establishing a permit system. The Ranger attempted to spread out the impact of the hikers, encouraging them to explore the western half of the Wilderness Area, educating them in proper disposal of wastes, and prohibiting camping in certain areas. Permits were free, but

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[135]Before 1967 only 53 people had ever hiked the length of the 2100 mile Appalachian trail, but by 1973 166 people were completing the trek *annually*.

[136]One visitor day equals twelve hours of use.

[137]Pramuk, Robert, U.S. Forest Service Recreation Planner, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

outlined rules to be followed and asked for planned routes and a stated length of stay. The informational pamphlet provided with the permit discouraged groups of more than ten people partly because, "their gregarious behavior tends to destroy the wilderness solitude of others visiting the area," but primarily because "this size group wears out campsites by compacting soil, destroying ground cover, and using up available wood supplies."[138] As was the case in the Forest Plan, the wilderness experience was given limited attention, the main focus was controlling use in order to preserve the land as it was.

With four shelters and, at times, over one hundred people on the five-mile stretch of the Appalachian Trail/Long Trail (AT/LT)[139] contained in Lye Brook, it was rare for anyone to find solitude. Most hikers, however, appeared unconcerned, for they did not come to Lye Brook seeking a Western type of wilderness experience. According to Nort Phillips, the first Wilderness Ranger in Lye Brook, "people wanted to be here because of what it was, that is a big piece of woods and some nice water and trees. The fact that its a big "W" [Wilderness] or little "w" [wilderness], or even the Appalachian Trail, wasn't that important."[140] The hikers sought recreation in natural-appearing areas, and rarely complained about a lack of solitude or other wilderness value. They instead criticized the Forest

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[138]Green Mountain National Forest, "The Lye Brook Wilderness, June 1975," TD, Wilderness Files, Supervisor's Office, Rutland, Vermont.

[139]The Appalachian Trail follows the Long Trail through much of southern Vermont and they are usually referred to as the AT/LT.

[140]Nort Phillips, U.S. Forest Service staff, interview by author, 19 January 1995, Rutland, Vermont. Tape recording, in possession of author.

Service's actions to control the degradation of the land. "The complaints were about us," recalled Pramuk, "that we were cutting back on trail maintenance, issuing permits. A lot of things we were trying to avoid [such as overcrowding] didn't bother them. We never got numbers of people complaints."[141] As the Forest Service began preserving Lye Brook by controlling use, the hikers who supported the designation discovered that having Wilderness Areas in Vermont meant something different from just having a nice place to hike.

How different soon became evident. After the Forest Service established the Lye Brook Wilderness Area it turned to bringing the area up to the agency's physical Wilderness standards, which were based on the Western landscape. The contradiction between what Wilderness Areas were supposed to be and what the Forest Service found in Lye Brook created problems. "The [Forest Service] manual direction we were getting," recalled Pramuk, "was this Western type of puristic direction, so things like the shelters didn't belong in wilderness since they were a man-made object. There were a lot of inconsistencies between what was there, and what the Forest Service manual says is Wilderness and how you manage it."[142] Similarly, the Forest Service textbook Wilderness Management, published in 1978, had been based on the Western model. Out of the thick textbook, the few pages devoted to Wilderness Areas in the East offered first sympathy, then illusion:

You have to manage as Wilderness what you inherit through the

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[141]Robert Pramuk, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

[142]Robert Pramuk, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

> *allocation process* - and if the allocation process yields heavily impacted areas...the job of managing land for the maintenance of natural processes will certainly be tougher...the challenge is to fully integrate these eastern areas, despite their somewhat different conditions, into a Wilderness system that is truly national...applying the same basic principles of Wilderness management, modified only to the extent required by local circumstances [emphasis added].[143]

The Wilderness Areas of the East, despite their long history of use, were to be made "truly national", worthy of inclusion in a Wilderness system made up of Western landscapes perceived to be pristine.

In Lye Brook, the regrowth of the forest hid much of the evidence of past logging activity from all but the trained eye, but other uses of the land left more visible reminders. The heavily developed AT/LT corridor and the four shelters along it were unmistakably man-made. Directed by the Forest Service manual and Wilderness Management textbook to treat the land like any other Wilderness Area, the Forest Service began to actively manage Lye Brook's landscape to make it better fit the national standards for Wilderness.

During the 1978-79 season the Forest Service ordered that the AT/LT be moved out of the Lye Brook Wilderness as much as possible, relocating it to avoid Bourn Pond and just skirt the northeastern corner of the Wilderness Area. The trail would have been moved out completely if there had been more Forest Service land to the East. Soon after, the Forest Service eliminated two of the shelters along the former AT/LT, directing the GMC to move them to a location outside the Wilderness Area. The Forest Service had actually encouraged shelter building during the 1960s

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[143]Hendee, Wilderness Management, 374.

to ease the impact of the growing number of hikers, but it now banished the same shelters because of their incompatibility with national Wilderness standards. By moving the trail and eliminating the shelters the Forest Service signalled a major policy shift, stepping beyond its traditional role of preservation into that of restoration.

This activity displeased both the VWA and the GMC, the only Vermont groups that remained invested in the area. The GMC welcomed the new AT/LT, once it was completed, because of the poor condition of the existing trail. At the same time, the Club was dismayed by the idea that their trail was not good enough for a Wilderness Area. The GMC, after all, had been active in Lye Brook years before the Forest Service, creating their "footpath in the wilderness." Their interpretation of wilderness, however, differed too much from the wilderness codified by the Forest Service in its Wilderness Areas. Removing the trail was also partly an act of retribution, for many people in the Forest Service still resented the imposition of the problematic Wilderness Areas on their timber stands. "There was," noted Pramuk, "a feeling of, 'you want Wilderness, fine we'll give you Wilderness'."[144]

The last thing the VWA and other preservation groups wanted was for the Forest Service to be engaged in active management of Wilderness Areas, even if it was to make them more "pure". They distrusted the agency's motives, and wanted the Areas to be accessible to hikers. Most hikers, however, were undisturbed by the relocation of the AT/LT and elimination of the shelters. They were not concerned with where the trail

[144]Robert Pramuk, interview by author, 5 December 1994.

was, as long as it remained available for their use.

The different reactions of the VWA and the more general group of hikers surprised the Forest Service, which had perceived them as a single body. "We found we had two different publics out there," recalled Pramuk, "one that was manipulating the legislation [the VWA], they were the people that got on our case about things, they didn't want this pristine Wilderness, and there were the hikers who didn't care."[145] By moving the AT/LT and controlling hikers, the Forest Service screened out the vision of the GMC and VWA, completing the evolution of Lye Brook from a contested landscape into a Wilderness Area.

The removal of the AT/LT and an ebb in the backpacking craze during the early 1980s caused a dramatic drop in usage of the Lye Brook Wilderness. Visitation plummeted to 3,700 visitor days in 1983 from a previous high of 21,000 just eight years earlier.[146] The decline in use gave the Forest Service some breathing room. Taking advantage of this respite, a few members of the recreation staff turned from making Lye Brook into a Wilderness to wrestling with the type of wilderness experience Lye Brook was providing. They suggested that the area did not have to live up to the Western model.

Western Wilderness Areas were expected to provide a primitive level of recreation, producing values of remoteness, solitude, and challenge. In 1982 Landscape Architect Don Larsen proposed a plan for

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[145]Robert Pramuk, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

[146]David L. Kulhavy, ed., Wilderness and Natural Areas in the Eastern United States: A Management Challenge, (Texas: Austin State University, 1986), 214.

the Lye Brook Wilderness that emphasized more realistic expectations. "My feeling is that we should consider providing primitive experience within the capabilities of [the] land. For example we may not be able to maintain a primitive level of remoteness in all locations (i.e. near the perimeter [of the Wilderness Area]) but we can still do our best with the Area."[147] He proposed managing the former AT/LT corridor and the Lye Brook trail, located at the western edge of the Wilderness Area,[148] as areas of semi-primitive experience, while managing the trail-less interior to provide the primitive level of recreation. Such management would not require further erasure of evidence along the AT/LT corridor, since that section would no longer be expected to provide a primitive experience. With such a perspective, Larsen suggested, the Forest Service could actually provide a better Wilderness experience because the agency would be free to create a number of campsites along the semi-primitive trails, further dispersing hikers and adding to a feeling of remoteness.[149]

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[147]Don Larsen, "Considerations on Wilderness Management, 8 November 1982," AMs [photocopy] Wilderness Files, Supervisor's Office, Green Mountain National Forest, Rutland, Vermont.

[148]The Lye Brook trail and much of the western edge of the Wilderness Area receive excessive noise from Route 7, which was rebuilt as a four lane divided highway in 1981-82.

[149]While Larsen's proposed direction is most relevant to the discussion, it is interesting to note that another manager, Recreation Staff Officer Joseph Sposta, was interested in enhancing the wilderness experience in Lye Brook in 1977. Examining the relationship between Branch Pond, the high-standard highway leading to it (Forest Road 70), and the Lye Brook Wilderness, Sposta suggested that a parking area be built half a mile up the road, and the rest be torn up and reduced to a 10 to 12 foot travel surface which would be gated shut except for administrative purposes. This would provide a transition area, or buffer zone, between the fast moving traffic of the Kelley Stand road to the South of the Wilderness Area, and the Wilderness Area boundary. Though the plan was denied due to the agency's unwillingness to lose the recreational development at Branch Pond, it is an early example of attempting to manage Lye Brook for a wilderness experience.

In 1984 Robert Pramuk was directed to write the management plan for the Lye Brook Wilderness, which was to build on Larsen's notes and be the official management document for the area. Pramuk agreed with the proposition that the Lye Brook Wilderness should be managed in a more realistic way, recognizing that the area remained in a semi-developed condition despite the agency's attempts to erase evidence of human activity. His draft of the plan stated:

> Regarding the physical setting, the lack of remoteness presents a barrier to providing a primitive experience. National remoteness criteria requires that a primitive area be at least three miles from roads, railroads or trails with motorized use. Due to past developments, no area in Lye Brook can meet this criteria...and thus [Lye Brook] will be managed as a less than standard area.[150]

Pramuk readily admitted that the area did not fit "the national criteria... developed with the Western landscape in mind," but argued that "much of the land [in Lye Brook] is capable of providing the primitive recreational experiences the congressional designation intended for it."[151] Recognizing the distinction between a Western model and Eastern reality, Pramuk chose not to manage for the illusion of purity, but rather to provide the type of experience desired by the general group of hikers who came to Lye Brook. The plan's summary directed that, "Lye Brook will be managed to maintain, perpetuate, and enhance the wilderness values present over the long term." Rather than creating the feeling of remoteness or other wilderness values through manipulation of the landscape, management

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[150]Pramuk, Robert, "Lye Brook Management Plan: Draft, 7 March 1984," TD. Wilderness Files, Supervisor's Office, Green Mountain National Forest, Rutland, Vermont.

[151]Pramuk, "Lye Brook Management Plan: Draft."

would concentrate on those values already "present" in the area, and would maintain, perpetuate, and promote the wilderness qualities of Lye Brook as they existed at that point.

The issues Larsen and Pramuk struggled with in their proposed management plans were also encountered by other managers of Eastern Wilderness Areas. In 1985, managers of Eastern Wilderness Areas held a symposium on the challenge of managing previously utilized land for a wilderness experience. In the keynote address, the main issue touched on by Pramuk and Larsen was succinctly stated:

> What management activities are required to produce a feeling of solitude among users of the wilderness? Or how does management create the perception of primitive recreation in an intensively utilized recreation area? These and similar questions illustrate the difficulty of managing wilderness in such a way as to produce a specific effect on the minds of users.[152]

To "produce a specific effect on the minds of users" would take a concentrated commitment of the Forest Service's time and money, and in their desire to control the kind of wilderness experience Lye Brook was providing, Larsen and Pramuk were ahead of their time.

Among the staff of the Green Mountain Forest, the two were unusual in their long range view. "Don Larsen and I were cell mates here," recalled Pramuk,

> we were trying to deal with these social values...But the budgeting process on the District really de-emphasized Wilderness...[higher management] were under pressure to crank out certain targets that are measurable and this has always been the problem with recreation: it's a qualitative thing. But the miles of road you build and the amount of timber you cut, those are very quantifiable. These people were not

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[152]Kulhavy, Wilderness and Natural Areas in the Eastern, V.

> looking at long term situations, they were dealing in the short term.[153]

The Forest Service's target output system assessed only the amount of use a Wilderness Area received, which meant that the type of experience Larsen and Pramuk wanted to provide was uncountable, and therefore unfunded. The Forest Service focused on land preservation, based on the amount of use it received, not on the experience produced by it. Not surprisingly, Larsen's notes were ignored and Pramuk's draft plan never became final, leaving Lye Brook without a formal management direction. Since it had controlled the threat posed by the influx of hikers and had brought the area into better accordance with national Wilderness standards, the Forest Service took the Lye Brook Wilderness out of active management and gave it little attention for the rest of the decade.

But, as Larsen and Pramuk had begun to ask, how much wilderness was there in the Lye Brook Wilderness Area?

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[153]Pramuk, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

The Forest Service had turned Lye Brook into a Wilderness Area by eliminating the most obvious signs of past human activity and allowing the forest to overgrow other evidence of previous use. In 1990, however, a new management team started on a different course, turning from a focus on preserving the land to enhancing the wilderness values produced by the land. While the team employed many of the same tools as previous managers, eliminating or changing physical features such as trails and signs, the goal was no longer to approach the physical ideal of a pristine Western landscape. They sought, rather, to encourage and instill in users of Lye Brook the wilderness values produced by a Western landscape, feelings of remoteness, solitude and challenge.

At the start of the decade, the fifteen-year-old Lye Brook Wilderness still had no official Management Plan. Use of the area had leveled off in the 1980s at less than half the amount recorded during the previous decade, and the area had been largely ignored by the Forest Service. Despite the decline in user interest, several factors converged to encourage completion of a Management Plan. Nationally, the flurry of state Wilderness designations in the 1980s, made in response to the RARE II process, drew to a close. Cessation of designation battles provided the Forest Service staff with some breathing room. As Recreation Planner Bob Pramuk explained, "we got off the battle of chasing after more Wilderness...the word was out from Wilderness societies nationally that the focus was going to be on getting management plans and management

into place."[154] Changes also occurred in the staffing of the Green Mountain National Forest, as upper level managers more sympathetic to Wilderness moved into spots previously occupied by people whose eyes were fixed on timber. Some of the new Rangers showed greater receptivity to public input and participation, which was still a new concept for a Forest Service that consistently took an adversarial stance in the earlier struggle for Wilderness in Vermont. Finally, a product of that struggle, the Vermont Wilderness Act of 1984, mandated that management plans be drawn up for all six Wilderness Areas in Vermont by 1994.

A combination of upper management support for public participation; staff shortages in the face of the approaching deadline; and the desire of Pramuk, the new District Ranger Michael Schrotz, and recently arrived forester Diane Strohm to involve the public; created a most unusual process for writing the Management Plan. Wilderness legislation from the previous three decades had provided little guidance for managers, having produced multiple definitions of wilderness and established only basic rules to prevent development in the Areas. In the case of Lye Brook and most Wilderness Areas in the East there was a vast difference between the preservation focus of the legislation and the altered condition of the land. "The gap," opined the Forest Service's Wilderness Management textbook,

> between specific policy and unanticipated contingencies is filled by the manager's philosophical perspective... within the range of uses permitted by the Acts, there is considerable diversity with regard to the styles of use and the accompanying facilities and developments...[the Acts] do little to resolve the

[154]Pramuk, interview by author, 23 March 1995.

issues of what kinds of use and how much.[155]

Faced with a choice in management direction, District Ranger Schrotz encouraged Pramuk and Strohm to solicit ideas from the public about how the area should be managed, and they invited four interested citizens to form a core team of people who would join them in debating and writing the Management Plan. Not surprisingly, those most interested in the Lye Brook Wilderness were four VWA activists, creating a strange combination of bedfellows drawn from the previously hostile groups. Attempting to identify the issues, the core team sent out a questionnaire to fifty people who had expressed interest in the area, asking how the Lye Brook Wilderness should be managed. That few of the respondents lived in Manchester underscored the degree to which Wilderness designation had regionalized Lye Brook.

The great majority of the respondents consisted of wilderness advocates from across the state and neighboring New Hampshire. The group presented a wide range of views on how a Wilderness Area should be managed, drawing a continuum from an emphasis on preserving the land solely for the use of humans to preserving it for its own sake. "I haven't noticed crowded conditions," wrote one respondent, "and think trail shelters and attendant facilities consolidate impact. Wilderness Area legislation seems designed for vast tracts of land in the Western U.S. and not areas which were clearcut eighty years ago."[156] Objecting to changes

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[155]Hendee, Wilderness Management. 142.

[156]Joseph Cook, "In My Point of View: Questionaire, 14 December 1990," AMs. Wilderness Files, Manchester District, Green Mountain National Forest, 1.

initiated by Wilderness Area designation, the writer saw no need to alter the character of the area to meet the national guidelines.

A different view was offered by James Northup, and summarized by Strohm as "we should continue to blaze the AT/LT. We're going too far towards achieving wilderness purity. The AT/LT is an anomaly - we should just accept it. It is a through trail, and should be treated as such. Shelters are ok, maintaining [scenic] vistas along the AT/LT is appropriate."[157] Northup felt that the AT/LT and its associated amenities were exceptions, human-made items that should not be erased because they had little impact on the regional ecosystem. They should be regarded, he felt, as a minor exception to an area where the ecosystem should come first and people second.[158]

Other respondents called for a more completely biocentric direction for management, emphasizing the need for a natural landscape preserved for values other than human recreation. One respondent found the trails themselves to be unacceptable, stating, "I don't think any trail is appropriate in a Wilderness Area - unless it's a game trail of course."[159] Buck Young, director of Preserve Appalachian Wilderness, a recently formed advocacy group, offered the most extreme view: "Creating scenic vistas through intensive vegetative management is completely

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[157]Dianne Strohm, "Notes From Phone Conversation With Jim Northrup, 10 March 1992," TD. Wilderness Files, Manchester District, Green Mountain National Forest, Manchester, Vermont.

[158]Personal communication, James Northup, March 28, 1995.

[159]Mike Zwekelmain, "In My Point of View: Questionaire, 14 December 1990," AMs. Wilderness Files, Manchester District, Green Mountain National Forest, 1.

inconsistent with Wilderness...Sacrificing the needs of the Wild for the needs of backpackers is unacceptable...Recreation is only one use of Wilderness, and in our opinion should take a second seat to biological diversity."[160] For Young, Wilderness Areas were both biological preserves and entities unto themselves, protecting not only biological diversity but also the "needs of the Wild." Under such protection, any action focused on human recreational use was secondary and usually unacceptable.

Thomas Linnell took an intermediate position, asking that he be included in, "the number of hikers who do not want signs marking trails and trail distances. Signs clutter the forest with intrusive man-made objects."[161] Linnell objected to "man-made objects" that intruded upon his visual experience, but he found the man-made trails he hiked upon to be acceptable because they allowed him easy access to the area. Linnell sought a human recreational experience, but wished it to seem as natural as possible by eliminating reminders of civilization.

The members of the core team, however, did not embody such a diversity of views, and were much closer in their positions than the past history of their respective agencies or groups would have suggested. Personally, Pramuk did not view Lye Brook as much of a wilderness, saying, "I walk out in those woods and I see stone walls, old roads...I see a

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[160]Buck Young. "Letter, 14 March 1992." TLS. Wilderness Files, Manchester District, Green Mountain National Forest, Manchester, Vermont. 1.

[161]Thomas Linnell, "Letter, 22 January 1991," TLS. Wilderness Files, Manchester District, Green Mountain National Forest, Manchester, Vermont.

lot of man."[162] Professionally, though, he felt that the Area could offer some of the qualities of the Western ideal, saying,

> You don't need that kind of [Western] land base to provide some of that...if you can get away from the sights and sounds of things, because you don't look to the horizon out here due to the vegetation, the feeling a lot of us had was that *you could provide that kind of experience, just maybe not on the same scale* [emphasis added].[163]

While he would not pretend Lye Brook was a vast Western Wilderness, Pramuk believed there were ways to create an experience with some of the same values in the area. Strohm also believed that "there should be a balance between people enjoying it and it being a natural area, but with the priority of preserving its naturalness, restoring its naturalness."[164] Pramuk and Strohm hoped that the area could evoke more ideal wilderness values and were slightly biocentric in their desire to preserve the area's naturalness.

The wilderness advocates held a more anthropocentric view, feeling that hikers could enjoy high quality primitive recreation in the area without significantly disturbing natural processes. One member, Dick Andrews commented,

> I look at Wilderness more as a matter of zoning for particular purposes than I do as preserving something that is pristine and will never be changed...I am a lot less worried about recreational pressures than other people.[165]

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[162]Pramuk, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

[163]Pramuk, interview by author, 5 December 1994.

[164]Strohm, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

[165]Dick Andrews, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

Andrews, and the other members of the VWA felt that Wilderness was zoned for the particular purpose of protecting natural recreational areas, as they had made clear during their earlier struggle to have more Wilderness designated in Vermont. They were, therefore, less concerned about recreational pressures than Forest Service managers. "I see no reason to restrict recreational use," wrote Andrews,

> unless there is reason to believe it will adversely affect natural processes...If the stream siltation caused by a trail treadway is seriously damaging to nature, then the impact of the lightest logging job imaginable would be devastating...look at what moose do in remote bogs and you will be a lot less worried about the impact of occasional human visitors.[166]

Because he felt that hikers' impact on an area was insignificant compared to the impact created by other uses of the forest, Andrews argued for the areas to be kept open for primitive recreation. He and the other wilderness advocates were not interested in a wilderness experience per se. They focused instead on the power of Wilderness classification to protect a natural recreation area for human use.

In writing the plan, the core team chose a position closest to that of the respondent Thomas Linnell, who called for a balanced management of the Wilderness Area that provided opportunities for human use, but was sensitive to the user's desire for a natural-appearing area. "The major challenge," stated the Plan,

> in managing Lye Brook Wilderness is to *protect and enhance wilderness resource values while allowing for wilderness recreation*. Recreation use should be of a primitive, unconfined nature, with behaviors and use levels low enough to allow solitude to all recreationists. *Preserving natural wilderness character is of primary importance,* and recreation use will not

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[166]Personal communication, Dick Andrews, March 16, 1995, 3.

be allowed to compromise this quality [emphasis added].[167]

While earlier management phases focused on preserving and restoring the physical land of the Wilderness Area, this plan focused on protecting "wilderness resource values" and preserving "wilderness character". The values produced by the land and the feelings that it evoked in a user were the primary focus.

The main threat to these feelings were the hikers themselves, for when an excessive number of users entered a Wilderness Area they made it difficult for others to feel solitude or remoteness and caused the physical resource to degrade. To prevent such an occurrence, the core team considered how management could spread hikers throughout the area: If they cut more trails there would be fewer encounters among users. Perhaps eliminating the shelters would help, for such amenities attracted and concentrated people. Suggesting removal of the remaining section of the AT/LT would decrease use of the area and eliminate a reminder of civilization, as the trail was so clearly constructed by humans. Limiting the information given users would create a greater feeling of remoteness for hikers and increase the challenge of a trip.

After identifying such issues, the core team created a Management Plan for the area, carefully and consciously constructing wilderness, the state of mind evoked by the land, from the raw physical material of the Lye Brook Wilderness Area. By cutting new trails through the southwestern corner of the Wilderness and across the northern boundary, connecting

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[167]Strohm, Diane, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan and Implementation Schedule, 1994" TD, Lye Brook Wilderness File, Manchester District, Green Mountain National Forest, Manchester, Vermont.

the north-south trails on either side of the area, they would create a perimeter trail, and a "large trailless interior would be provided for those desiring off-trail solitude."[168] One team member pushed for the perimeter trail because, "it captures what we want in a Wilderness. We have an opportunity to create a quality primitive experience."[169] Creating the larger perimeter trail would spread out users, helping those on the trail feel more remote, and provide a seemingly wilder interior with increased qualities of "solitude" for those who turned off the trail. The team was also concerned about the Lye Brook Falls, the highest waterfall in Vermont, where large groups of hikers liked to congregate. The team felt the Falls area was "not meeting [the] Wilderness experience,"[170] because the high concentration of users made it a place where, "solitude is quite elusive."[171] Since providing solitude was a goal, the plan recommended limiting the number of visitors to the Falls by eliminating reference to it in promotional literature distributed by the Forest Service and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

The remaining AT/LT corridor also presented a problem for the team, as the number of users it attracted destroyed solitude in the area and its obvious evidence of civilization encroached on users' feeling of

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[168]Strohm, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan," 1.

[169]Diane Strohm, "Lye Brook Meeting - Notes, 8 May 1991," TD. Lye Brook Wilderness File, Manchester District, Green Mountain National Forest, Manchester, Vermont.

[170]Diane Strohm,"Lye Brook Meeting - Notes, 9 March 1991," AMs, Lye Brook Wilderness File, Manchester District, Green Mountain National Forest, Manchester, Vermont.

[171]Strohm, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan."

remoteness. The Plan recommended removing the Wilderness Area's two remaining shelters, including the Bourn Pond shelter. "Human-made shelters," it directed, "are inconsistent with Wilderness...while the team recognizes that this shelter provides the advantage of concentrating use away from the Pond, it feels that this is more than offset by the amount of overnight use it attracts."[172] Previously two shelters had been removed from Lye Brook because they contradicted physical Wilderness standards, but the remaining shelters would now be removed because they interfered specifically with wilderness qualities the team was attempting to construct.

The team felt that the high level of maintenance done by the Green Mountain Club (GMC) along the AT/LT, which kept it wide, well marked, and scenic, infringed upon wilderness qualities. The GMC had long practiced creating "scenic vistas" along the trail by clearing away trees from ridge lines and cliffs, and the team found this particularly vexing. They "consider[ed] the creation and maintenance of vistas along Wilderness trails to be a user convenience, not in keeping with the spirit of wilderness,"[173] and prohibited the activity. The GMC was upset by the ruling, for they had lobbied to get the phrase, "the Appalachian Trail and Long Trail in Vermont may be maintained,"[174] into the Vermont Wilderness Act of 1984. The word "maintained," however, left a wide range of interpretation open to the Forest Service. The true problem, though, lay

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[172]Strohm, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan," 25.

[173]Strohm, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan," 18.

[174]U.S. Congress, Vermont Wilderness Act of 1984.

in the different definitions of wilderness held by the agency and the Club, and under close examination the incompatibility of those definitions became apparent, for the GMC was never interested in creating solitude or remoteness along its "primitive footpath in the wilderness."

Attempting to enhance the area's wilderness qualities further, the team paid careful attention to the visual image the Wilderness Area presented to users. They decided that the maintenance standards of the AT/LT should be lowered when it was within the Wilderness Area, directing that "signing and blazing will be minimized, brushing [clipping of encroaching vegetation] will be less intensive, [and] some blowdowns [fallen trees] will be left across the trail."[175] Such restrictions on maintenance would make the heavily used trail appear more wild. Other trails in the Wilderness would also be carefully managed to appear wild by "maintaining trail corridors with irregular widths and edges; obscuring or removing freshly cut vegetation and stumps; [and] leaving in place naturally occurring downed material that does not seriously impede movement."[176] The team focused on trail signs, in particular, as undesirable reminders of civilization, and according to Strohm, "ideally we wanted to have no trail signs at all, but then we realized that some people needed them."[177] When trail signs were placed they would be, "kept to a minimum and shall be of routed wood construction, unpainted and unstained and placed on natural wood posts or trees...there will be no

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[175]Strohm, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan," 1.

[176]Strohm, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan," 19.

[177]Strohm, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

mileage indicated on signs within the Wilderness."[178] By using undecorated wood and withholding information the Forest Service would make signs as unobtrusive as possible, and thus enhance a hiker's feeling of remoteness and challenge.

Since Bourn Pond was the most heavily trafficked site in the Wilderness Area and had been for over 150 years, the team decided to employ more active management techniques to construct wilderness qualities at the Pond. Besides recommending removal of the shelter, they also directed that the tables and swings built by users be eliminated and that the metal toilets be replaced with wooden ones.[179] By removing some of the man-made objects and replacing others with substitutes made of natural materials the team sought to make the pond appear more natural.

The team's active approach at the Pond went even further, though, revealing their overriding concern with constructing a landscape that would evoke a feeling of wilderness. To prevent people from camping along the shore, the team recommended that the agency create campsites in attractive spots away from the shore and directed that those "planned campsite locations...be designed to minimize interaction among campers."[180] By designing such campsites, which required clearing brush

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[178]Strohm, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan," 107.

[179]In a final ironic twist, the Plan suggested moving the Branch Pond parking area five miles up to the Kelley Stand Road and reducing the high standard gravel highway, Forest Road 70, to a twelve-foot gravel pathway, thereby reducing the vehicle noise entering the Lye Brook Wilderness. The highway and parking area were products of the Forest Service's drive to open up the Forest to automobile-based recreation in the 1960s, but were now only embarrassing reminders of how perceptions of the Lye Brook area had radically changed in the intervening years.

[180]Strohm, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan," 24.

or cutting down trees, the Forest Service could encourage feelings of remoteness. Even more remarkable, however, was the team's direction that the agency further manipulate the Pond's shoreline to provide the perceived need for solitude. The Forest Service would, "reduce the temptation of shoreline camping by providing unobtrusive paths to secluded spots on the shoreline, within dry spots, [for users] to sit in solitude."[181] By clearing an "unobtrusive" path to the shoreline the Forest Service would provide opportunities for contemplation, making a nice spot for hikers to "sit in solitude."

Such activity, of course, resembled the GMC's desire to clear vegetation from the Long Trail to provide spots for scenic views. It was only the agency's faith in being "unobtrusive" that made its activity acceptable. As the team was fairly confident that it would not occur to users that the nice, little path they found leading to the lovely rock next to Bourn Pond had been provided by the Forest Service, the agency was unconcerned about their constructive activity not being "in the spirit of wilderness," as they termed the GMC's desire to clear scenic vistas.

This activity, and the constructive focus of the whole Plan, occurred because of the inconsistency between the condition of the land and the federal mandate for the land. The quandary was perhaps best illustrated by Strohm when she reasoned, "some people say this is not Wilderness, people who have seen Colorado, and that makes it even more challenging to manage an Eastern type of landscape. But it's still wonderful because it's Wilderness, and it's 'forever wild' and we have to work with what we

[181]Strohm, "Lye Brook Wilderness Management Plan," 24.

have."[182] In many ways the team and other managers of Wilderness across the East have little choice, for they are mandated by Congress to preserve as wilderness, without distinction from the ideal of Western wilderness, lands that ceased to match that ideal over three hundred years ago.

Faced with this inconsistency, the team chose to manage the land to produce a wilderness experience as close to the ideal Western experience as possible. They constructed an idea for now that will later be overtaken by the growth in vegetation. "We are growing wilderness," Pramuk often says. The actual situation, though, is perhaps better described by Strohm when she says, "if you walk into Lye Brook Wilderness now, you probably don't even know you've crossed the boundary, but now picture it in 60 years...you'll know. But for right now it's more in your head, it's an idea, and it's very difficult to convey to people."[183] Constructing that idea, the experience of Lye Brook as wilderness in all its associated qualities of remoteness, solitude and challenge, was what the team proposed by inscribing its vision into the landscape.

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[182]Strohm, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

[183]Strohm, interview by author, 23 February 1995.

Conclusion The wilderness and Lye Brook

In his poem, "Directive," Robert Frost offers a meditation on the Vermont landscape, commenting on the passage of time in the hill towns of the Green Mountains:

> Back out of all this now too much
> for us.
> Back in a time made simple by
> the loss
> Of detail, burned, dissolved,
> and broken off
> Like graveyard marble sculpture
> in the weather.
> There is a house that is no more
> a house
> Upon a farm that is no more a farm
> And in a town that is no more a town.[184]

The landscape described by Frost is reminiscent of much of the Green Mountain region, where woods have grown to replace the abandoned fields and clearcuts of an earlier time. It is a site of passing, where one set of ideas about the land replaces another, creating new landscapes upon old. Yet Frost directs us to be wary of this passage of ideas, warning of the ease with which a time is "made simple by the loss of detail."

In Lye Brook, too, the passage of different ideas about the land has caused a loss of detail, allowing for both the regrowth of the forest and the construction of the land as wilderness. The physical state of Lye Brook was at first controlled by the local inhabitants, who harvested it periodically, and it was later tended by the Forest Service. The

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[184]Robert Frost, "Directive" in The Complete Poems of Robert Frost, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1949), 520-521. My attention was directed to this poem by John Elder's "Vermonter's and Wilderness," Vermont Life, Fall 1984, 48-53.

construction of wilderness, however, was motivated by ideas that originated from progressively distant sources. It is this succession of ideas - of visions being inscribed upon the land - that transformed Lye Brook from wilderness to landscape and back to wilderness again.

The Vermont Wilderness Association sought to classify land as Wilderness Areas to protect opportunities for primitive recreation and to preserve the landscape. The Forest Service was given a mandate for Wilderness Areas based on preserving the seemingly untouched lands of the West. But Lye Brook was not an untouched wilderness to be preserved. The Forest Service responded to this contradiction by moving beyond preservation, embarking upon a restoration of the landscape. They removed some of the more obvious signs of human activity, instituted controls to ease the impact of hikers, and created a Wilderness Area in Lye Brook.

Beginning in 1990 the Forest Service shifted gears, expanding its efforts from the mere physical restoration of the land to the construction of a particular perception of the land. Attempting to provide a wilderness experience in the Lye Brook Wilderness Area, the Forest Service drew up a new management plan which sought to produce feelings of challenge, remoteness and solitude. Seeking to live up to the mandate they had been given and to meet the perceived desire of users to have a certain type of wilderness experience, the Forest Service set out to evoke that experience by managing Lye Brook's vegetation, trails, and information.

The construction of Lye Brook as wilderness, though, is only the latest idea applied to this piece of land in its long history and one no more

natural or pure than earlier visions. Users now mine Lye Brook for the pleasing perception of wilderness as surely as it was once logged for its timber. The simultaneous retreat of wild land and rise of industrial society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries led to an idealization of the wilderness condition. Wilderness became the favorable contrast to the despoiled environment of human civilization for many Americans. The crusade in the 1960s to preserve pieces of that idealized wilderness was seen by many supporters as a last ditch attempt to prevent the extinction of wild nature.

The drive to designate Lye Brook, however, was not an attempt to save a piece of the American past. It was, rather, a wish for the future. Resisting the admission that we had utilized every square mile of land East of the Mississippi River, we turned to Lye Brook and other Eastern lands as proof of the resilience of a forgiving nature. In the most American of beliefs, we convinced ourselves that wilderness could be brought back, saved from extinction, and thus we could prove ourselves guiltless of the excesses of industrialization and suburbanization. By seeking to create, as much as possible, a separate, pure and wild nature within the boundaries of Lye Brook, we constructed wilderness as an ideal to contrast with our own troubled landscape of civilization.

Yet in constructing the Lye Brook Wilderness what we have made is not a contrast, but a mirror. Reflecting our antipodal and yet concurrent desires to destroy and preserve, to control and to free, to defile and to glorify, the Lye Brook Wilderness is an intensely human landscape. By demolishing buildings we make an area more natural, by cutting a trail

we instill remoteness, and by carefully planning an irregular path through the woods we make them more wild. The wilderness at Lye Brook is a product of human action and intention, reliant upon our continued vigilance for its existence. Seeking to create an entity outside of ourselves, we instead produced something intensely human, containing all the conflicts and contradictions of a people both dependent on nature and unsure of their place within it.

But what will we do about this ambiguity, about our desire as a people to experience a nature both wild and tame? Finding it impossible for them to exist in the same piece of land, we have attempted to separate the two, cordoning off one in Wilderness Areas distant from our everyday environments. Clearly we need to find a middle ground, a way to place ourselves within nature that both eases our need to control and supports our desire to wonder.

In the meantime, however, we must resist the temptation to turn to illusion. Walking in Lye Brook one year ago I was unabashedly happy. Entering a Wilderness invested my mind with abandon, and I exhilarated in feelings of escape, adventure, and purity. The forest was wonderfully primeval, the deer I stumbled upon filled me with awe, and I was thrilled by the idea that the signs of civilization had not reached this place.

On a recent walk, though, I wished no longer. Confronting the history of Lye Brook during the preceding twelve months required me to confront my own wish for a world less shaped by humanity. In so doing I lost a sustaining illusion, but I gained, I believe, a richer reality. For by constructing wilderness in Lye Brook we inevitably sacrifice our own

history, our own truth, and create a certain "loss of detail" within ourselves.

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