

WHY PUBLIC LANDS MATTER



Andrus Center for Public Policy



**BOISE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Why Public Lands Matter

Conference Proceedings

March 28, 2017

Prepared for the Andrus Center for Public Policy

By

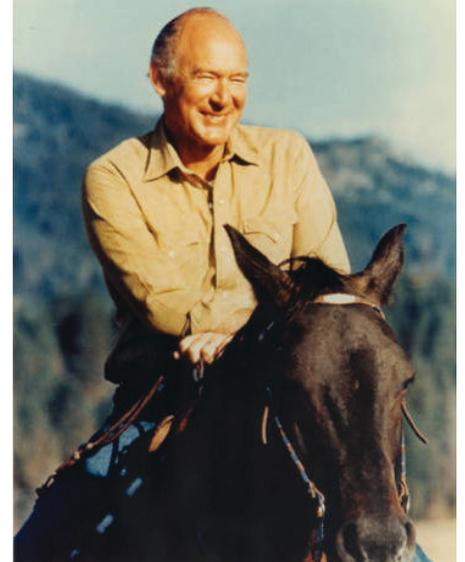
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WHY PUBLIC LANDS MATTER

A G E N D A

Tuesday, March 28
Boise State University



8:30 - 8:40 Welcome
Governor Cecil D. Andrus

8:40 - 9:15 Opening Remarks
Congressman Mike Simpson

9:30 - 10:30 Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Retrospective
Amanda Peacher, Oregon Public Broadcasting

10:45 - 11:45 Local Perspectives on Our Public Lands
Gordon Cruikshank, Valley County Commissioner
Terry Kramer - Twin Falls County Commissioner
Tom Lamar - Latah County Commissioner

Noon - 1:00 Lunch and Keynote Speaker
National Forest and Rangeland Management
Montana Governor Steve Bullock

1:15- 2:00 Legal Theories For and Against Federal Land Ownership
Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden

2:15 - 3:15 Collaborative Forest Restoration in Idaho
Bill Higgins, Idaho Forest Group
Rick Tholen, Society of American Foresters
Will Whelan, The Nature Conservancy

3:30 - 4:30 Conservation and Recreation
Luis Benitez, Colorado Office of the Outdoor Recreation Industry
Ashley Korenblat, Public Land Solutions
Peter Metcalf, Black Diamond

WHY PUBLIC LANDS MATTER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following observations are presented in the order they appear in the body of this conference report.

1. There is a growing call for changing the way wildfire budgeting is done. Fighting wildfires now consumes more than half the Forest Service's budget while other responsibilities such as trails maintenance, fuel reduction, and water conservation are not being adequately addressed.
2. Conference speakers and attendees uniformly viewed state takeover of federal lands as detrimental to long-term maintenance of public lands and preserving public access.
3. Public land managers must be sensitive to the needs of local communities and learn how to better interact and communicate with them.
4. The changing economic dynamics in many counties requires collaborative management practices, including all sectors – grazing, agriculture, and recreation – to effectively share resources for the benefit of all.
5. Public lands agencies need to do a better job of educating the public, especially those outside the west, about what they do.
6. Consider sharing or embedding state officials with federal officials in an administrative arrangement that allows each to better appreciate the other's concerns.
7. Local officials support public lands, but want federal officials to better appreciate their perspectives and concerns.
8. Westerners view public lands as our heritage.
9. Western leaders viewed last minute changes to sage grouse planning as federal over-reach and one-size-fits-all thinking that negated extensive collaborative work previously done by local experts from both federal and state agencies.
10. There is no legal basis for court-ordered transfer of federal lands to states; only an act of Congress can authorize such a transfer.
11. Millions of federal land acres have already been granted to states. In Idaho, 3 million acres were given to support schools, universities, and other institutions with the stipulation that the state was not entitled to any further grants of lands for any purpose.
12. Science has been an important foundation for effective collaboration in the case of some Idaho forest collaboratives.
13. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is perceived as too process-based and cumbersome – and as a result expensive to administer – and in need of more efficient outcome-based tools.
14. Courts have sustained collaborative work as being in the public interest.
15. Recreation is becoming an important economic use of public lands that benefits local economies. However, collaborative policies between traditional resource users and new recreation-based enterprises will be essential in maintaining community unity.



Buena Vista Overlook, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

Why Public Lands Matter

On March 28, 2017 the Andrus Center for Public Policy convened a one-day conference titled **Why Public Lands Matter**. As we stated to those we invited to speak and attend:

The events surrounding the occupation of the Malheur Refuge and renewed calls to transfer or ostensibly claim our federally managed public lands have alarmed people, not just in the west but throughout the country. Public lands -- how they are managed and how they are used - matter to many Americans, and indeed to people throughout the world. Public lands are critical to the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, watersheds, and antiquities. They're a critical source of outdoor recreation such as hiking, fishing, and hunting. They're an important economic engine driving traditional uses of the public lands, ranching, timber harvesting and mineral development, plus tourism and the dollars it brings to the states in which these lands reside. The conference was designed to look at current federal management practices, the various voices in support and dissent, and potential stakeholder collaboration toward forward-looking best practices designed to manage, protect, and preserve our public lands for the generations to follow.

The Center was pleased to convene a set of panels and speakers that we hoped would include many of the diverse perspectives on our public lands that can be found on the agenda at the front of this conference report.

Note: Due to an audio malfunction, most of the morning's events were not recorded successfully so what follows is based on notes from the morning. The Andrus Center website will post transcripts beginning with the end of the panel of county commissioners and covering the rest of the day. The transcripts have been only lightly edited.

Congressman Mike Simpson

Mike Simpson was one of two keynotes and kicked off the conference. He focused on several areas including wildland fire management, confusing regulatory differences between federal agencies, and balancing local and national interests.

Wildland fire budgeting has been a major concern of the congressman. He spoke about the issue to the conference, and in remarks in Congress:

The fire borrowing has gotten out of hand. When fifty-three percent of your budget goes for fighting wildfires, that means there is nothing left for anything else. It's one of the reasons my constituents complain about the Forest Service. They're not doing any trails maintenance. They're not doing any fuels reduction or whatever. And I noticed in your budget that fuel reduction numbers are down, trail maintenance is down, and water conservation numbers are down while we're spending money fighting wildfires.

I've thought of working with Chairman Calvert see if we can strike that language that is in our appropriations bills that says you can't borrow from other accounts. The reason being, when the rest of the members of Congress look at the end result and say, "Well they must of had the money to do it because they put out the wildfires because they didn't run out of money," what they don't see is what is not done because they're borrowing the money. And if we stopped the borrowing legislatively - I'd rather do it with our fire bill - but if we could stop the borrowing legislatively, it would force the Forest Service to come to Congress for a supplemental. And then people would understand what the true costs of fighting these wildfires are. (May 25, House Appropriations Subcommittee)

Challenges to federal land management have arisen during the last two or three years, with calls to transfer federal land, seize federal land, demand the turnover of federal land, and challenge the legal right of the federal government to manage much of the federal estate. (See Attorney General Wasden's remarks later in this paper). Simpson made his position on federal lands at the conference, and below, clear.

I want to tell you, as I have said, there are a lot of people who complain about land management in the west, that's where most public lands are, whether it's the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or Forest Service, Park Service, whatever, and there are movements to try to have the states take over the federal lands. I don't see that happening either, it would not happen in Idaho -- I don't want it to happen in Idaho -- we live in Idaho because of our public lands. ... Whatever that problem is, and I'm proud to call these people [in public lands management] my friends, who have worked out in Idaho and they do a good job of

maintaining our public lands out there, and the lands reason people want to come to Idaho. (May 25 House Appropriations Subcommittee)

At the same time, the congressman acknowledged the local versus national tension in federal land management and urged federal land managers to pay closer attention to the needs of local communities, which are often expressed through their county commissioners. (See discussion below).



Crown Fire, Forest Service Northern Region, Missoula, MT

Amanda Peacher: The Malheur Controversy

Amanda Peacher from Oregon Public Radio was the featured speaker about the Malheur controversy, as she spent a good deal of time on the ground covering the events. Her presentation included short video segments of key moments during the occupation of the wildlife refuge.

One of her most important observations about Malheur, was that it invigorated the debate over public lands, who manages them and who ought to manage them, unlike anything we have seen since the 1970s Sagebrush Rebellion. She noted that local residents were uncomfortable with the Bundy's (and those with them) as outsiders, preferring to work on disagreements with land managers themselves. But, and this is important, she stressed a common theme that local users of the public lands, in this case mainly ranchers, were frustrated with federal land managers. It was good, the locals said, that the local sheriff was put front and center with law enforcement issues, while unfortunate that the FBI was slow to realize the importance of community leaders in working with the refuge occupiers. Finally, she noted that many people from outside the region did not have familiarity with the federal agency most under fire, the BLM, because it has no real presence in the

eastern United States, and media and other analysts sought to try and understand the issue more comprehensively than they had before.

Perspectives from the Counties

Next, three county commissioners engaged in a panel discussion from Idaho counties diverse in their makeup and relationship to public lands. Valley County is rural with a population of around 10,000 and 87% of the county is federally managed public lands. Timber and mining have been critical and recreation of various persuasions is also an important use. Twin Falls County has a population of around 80,000, its largest city Twin Falls has a population 46,000; 52% of the county is public lands. Latah County has a population of 39,000, 25,000 living in Moscow, home of the University of Idaho, and 16% of the county is public lands.

Although there is some variation in the amount of public land in these counties, western counties in states like Idaho are often heavy public land counties, with high percentages of public lands. Historically many of those counties were dependent on the use of natural resources on the public lands in their local economies. Those uses were timber, grazing and mining, with some variations between counties. Changes in those uses have been one of the major stressors for the rural counties, and some of the comments indicate the stresses are viewed differently by individuals. To some, it occasionally leads to events like the Malheur occupation, while to others, it means change and adaptation.

The open question is how counties, and indeed all of us, deal with changes in economic conditions and uses. Some would like to see a return to the economies of earlier times. Certainly the Trump administration, like the Bush (both) and Reagan administrations before it, emphasizes resource use and extraction in both rhetoric and policy. Will there be push back from environmental groups, more lawsuits and so on? Of course, the opposite happened when recent Democratic administrations were in charge. We have seen whipsaws in policy. Or, does the collaborative movement that exists throughout the west offer a different promise?

Tom Lamar:

...the work that the University of Idaho is doing throughout the state with research and training, and that the trucks that everybody knows about in Latah County coming through with wood chips, the mills, the mill and up near Princeton, these are all things that we think of with public land in our county. But also, Latah County is the home of Northwest River Supply, which is the maker and seller of boats, many boats and other outdoor equipment, that's used all over the state of Idaho and actually all over the world, and a lot of whitewater rafting.

There are a lot of different pieces that are all tied together, and they're all important, and we believe that we can all prosper with, in some cases, better management, but also a respect and working together and a collaboration. (3)

Gordon Cruickshank:

And how do you afford to do that? So it isn't always just public lands.... But every one of my commissioners sit on at least nine committees, so we're with the Board of Community Guardians—with their preservation society—with the mental health district, with the central district health in our area and different health districts for these guys, so we're on the transportation committee with Idaho Association of Counties (IAC), the public lands committee, it's just a myriad. And how do you wrap yourself around it as a part-time commissioner? (1)

Terry Clark:

I'd like to say that public lands have always been at the heart of Twin Falls County. And I didn't get an opportunity to talk about the history, but public lands have been important because of, first in the grazing. A hundred and fifty years ago, that's what brought the people first into our valley was our cattle industry. And our cattle industry still today is strong. We talk today more about the recreational opportunities because it's the new growth that has happened, but underlying this is that history of a hundred and fifty years, of a sustainable agricultural base, that as that grazing, and then that multiple use concept of being able to take that land and we use it for producing agricultural products and for recreation and for the ability for our people to go out and have an opportunity to experience nature endlessly in our county. Public land is the heart of what makes Twin Falls County so strong and so good. (3)

Thoughts from a western governor: Steve Bullock of Montana (D).

Governor Bullock was clear at the outset about what he thought of our public lands:

.....these public lands are our heritage. They are our birthright. They're our great equalizer. Meaning it doesn't matter the size of your checkbook. Our public lands and access to them are for everyone. You don't need to be a millionaire from Sun Valley, Jackson Hole, Aspen, or Big Sky to hike these lands or camp with your families in your favorite parks. Our public lands belong to all of us. And I'll bet that each and

every one of you in this room have incredible memories or unforgettable stories from adventures you've had on public lands. (4)

As for the attempt to transfer public lands to states he added:

From where I sit, these anti-public land policies are gravely out of touch with the values and the voices of westerners who know that taking public lands off the nation's balance sheet will take the life out of our economy, and will take a little bit of our souls away as well. When this proposal first came up in D.C., in Montana we stood up, we came together, and said no. (7)

From mending the practice of fire borrowing to recognizing and rewarding the work of on the ground collaboratives, I believe there's more that we should be doing. (6)

So we started what's called the Forest and Folks Initiative, and this was before the Farm Bill, and said, okay I will dedicate state dollars to federal projects if that's what it takes, or I will do partnerships. And back from one of the first wars, how they would embed journalists, we proposed well let's at least offer to embed a state employee because most folks in Montana at least think my Department of Natural Resources and Conservation does a darn good job. I think that as well. So, take someone from them and put it in the Forest Service. Recognize that times have changed, recognizing that at times there is the challenge of not only changing staff but folks that too often their first response is, we can't do that. Then I ask that individual to serve to help take away the excuses why we can't do things.... So I have one employee, a forester in my Department of Natural Resources, his boss is the 56 counties, and his boss - his job is to try to make the Forest Service more responsive and responsible to those county officials, as we're planning projects and figuring out ways to do things. (12)

He used the sage grouse to offer useful information and insight for federal land managers.

Sage grouse: the challenge is that animals don't know where the state land or the private land ends and the Bureau of Land Management land begins. So, if we're really going to do landscape management, it has to be the BLM at a table with us as equals, not we're going to do all this work, then the BLM comes in and says, "well it's still going to be one size fits all or we're not going to make those movements."

But we also have to be able to demonstrate that it works, meaning that we have to have effective partners that when an animal's recovered or when the right steps are being taken, when science is actually guiding things, that either management can go back to states or we can change the dynamics. What Governor Otter was suggesting was my more politic way of saying, some of my frustrations with the BLM. We came

together with an incredible plan and we had buy-in from the BLM if we came together with this incredible plan that they would be with us as partners. And then it changed substantially when they came to approve it. (15)

Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wadsen

The Andrus Center invited Attorney General Lawrence Wadsen to address the legal arguments challenging federal land ownership. Although many people have observed that the legal arguments are essentially moot and incorrect, they seem to surface with some regularity, buzzing like public land cicadas.

Wadsen summarized the issue succinctly when he stated;

My office undertook an extensive analysis of the case - of the cases and the legal history of federal land ownership - and concluded that there was no legal basis for a court action seeking to force the United States to turn these lands over to the state. But we encouraged the legislature to take their concerns to Congress because ultimately, **the power to transfer public lands to Idaho resides in Congress**, not in the courts. (20)

Idaho, in becoming a state, adopted a disclaimer clause, as did western states admitted after the original thirteen states.

Idaho, like all other Western states, included a provision in its constitution providing that the people of the state of Idaho do agree and declare that we forever disclaim all right and title to the unappropriated public lands lying within the boundaries thereof. This is part of our Constitution ... So the drafters of the Idaho Constitution clearly believed that the state had no claim to public lands, and to emphasize that point, they took the additional step of including a provision in the Disclaimer Clause providing that it was irrevocable without Congress' consent. In order for us to amend that provision of our Constitution, it requires an act of Congress. It requires consent from the federal government as well as our regular constitutional amendment provision. We can't amend our own Constitution. It is there until Congress decides something different. (29- 30)

The authority to manage or dispose of public lands derives from the Property Clause of the U.S. Constitution:

“The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.” (Article IV, Section 3 clause 2).

Some argue that the “Equal Footing Doctrine” suggests that western states were not admitted to the Union equally because of the large amount of federal land included in their boundaries. Wasden rejected that argument (as have many others):

So in other words, proponents’ interpretation of the equal footing theory, the federal government does not own unfettered title to the public lands, rather, it holds that title only as a result of state cession and only so long as it carries out its implicit promise to dispose of those lands. The only problem with this theory is that no court has ever applied the equal footing doctrine to public lands. It has always been limited to submerged lands (24). The submerged lands point is based on the case *Pollard’s Lessee v. Hagan*, 44 U.S. 212 (1845).

In 1947 Idaho asked the federal government to keep the public lands.

This is a 1947 Senate Joint Memorial Number Six, “now therefore be it resolved by the Senate of the 29th Legislature of the State of Idaho, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that we “respectfully urge the President and the Congress of the United States to preserve public lands in Idaho in their current ownership status.” Think of that for a moment. This is passed by the Idaho legislature in 1947. What were they doing? They were saying, hey we’ve got these lands that we want to keep in the federal government’s hands. That was the current ownership status. And the legislature is saying, we want you to keep it in current ownership status. It preserves the watershed. Now you think about that also, the claim that, well, the federal government has failed to give our lands to us. Here’s the problem: we as a people said, “hey, hey, hey, federal government, please, please, please don’t give us these lands. Keep them in your ownership. That’s where we want them.” That’s what we as a people said through our legislature. That’s what we said. So we can’t now claim that the federal government has refused or failed to give us those lands when we’re the ones who said, “we want you to keep those lands in federal ownership. (27)

It may not be well understood that Congress has granted a good deal of land to the state of Idaho:

Congress gave the state over 3 million acres of land to support schools and universities. That’s section 16 and 36 of every township. And it supports schools and other institutions such as prisons and insane asylums. But it also provided that the state was not entitled to any further grants of lands for any purpose. (28)

Wasden was able to capture some of the emotion and conflict over the public lands when he pointed out that:

...in Western states we have a tradition here that we really love our public lands and we have used them with, you know, grazing and

mining and a whole bunch of stuff that really brings our history into conflict in that regard. And so as, you know, you see waves of regulation among the federal government, it's often being made by people who have never been here, don't know what we are here, and don't understand us. So, I understand that aspect of it, and the emotion that comes along with it to match that against the legal framework that applies to public lands. (34)

In summary, Attorney General Wadsen rejected any legal claim Idaho has to the federally managed public lands within the state's boundaries. He affirmed that those seeking those lands should approach Congress, not the courts.

The Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership

Next, a panel presentation turned to the potential for collaboration and partnerships. Most observers and participants in public land policymaking are aware of the growth of collaborative processes to tamp down intransigent policy conflicts and provide a path forward towards resolving them. Typically, those conflicts arise over use and value conflicts on U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land, as these are "multiple use" lands. Collaboration was also recently used during the process to avoid listing the sage grouse.

In 2010 the Andrus Center hosted "Life in the West: People, Land, Water, and Wildlife in a Changing Economy," which featured key participants in the Henry's Fork Watershed Council and Owyhee Initiative collaborative efforts. This time the Center focused on the Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership (IFRP), made up of partners who agreed to support four principles:

In Idaho's forests, strategic forest restoration is essential to address the current challenges posed by uncharacteristic wildfire, insects, disease and climate change.

Active management is needed in some areas of public forests to restore their resiliency.

A healthy forest industry is an important and necessary part of a restoration strategy to offset restoration costs and to provide jobs and economic stability in rural communities throughout Idaho.

Collaborative groups can provide useful advice and recommendations on forest restoration projects, through cooperation between citizens, including interest groups, elected officials, and public land managers

Moderator Andy Brunelle explained the historical context behind the genesis of IFRP:

In the interior western forests, we begin to see larger wildfires with uncharacteristic higher severity, and this was at a time when the timber

sale controversy was at its height, but it was also the time when we first began to see the effects of what was actually a rather effective fire suppression policy that had been in place for decades. If anything, the Forest Service was too good at putting out fires. The Andrus Center many years ago, I think at a 2004 conference, termed this the Paradox of Success, where putting out fires led to more severe wildfires when they did start. So, combined with the management gridlock on national forestlands and a growing recognition that we needed to do something different to address the fire issues, we began to see a lot of the interests that would compete for the lands by going to Congress or going to court to begin to talk to one another. (36)

As forester Rick Tholen noted:

And one last thing as we put together a position paper, the way we say what we think and how we get that out to the public is through position papers, and we have a position paper that we wrote in 2011 along with Inland Empire SAF (Society of American Foresters) that says that we believe active restoration is needed for our forests to address the wildfire and insect and disease problems, and we support the collaborative process to go about getting consensus to do that. (38)

Bill Higgins of the timber company Idaho Forest Group, and a key participant of the Clearwater Basin Collaborative, spoke about how The Nature Conservancy pointed out how scientific research had provided a space for the concept of forest restoration to work hand-in-hand with local economic needs.

This is the platform we stand on for the science-based argument for, it says we need to do a lot of treatment, cut a lot of timber, right? That for the right reasons, and we'll get all the economic benefits that go with that... it resulted in a sort of an "aha" moment for the Clearwater Basin Collaborative, because it was clear that it would require a significant increase in the level of activity in that forest in order to return those forests on that suitable timber base to a more resilient condition. In other words, we were able to say, "restoration and economics can go together in this basin." (44-45)

Put another way, by Will Whelan of The Nature Conservancy, speaking of these "self-invented" collaboratives:

They could agree that the forest timber industry infrastructure was essential to their needs. In other words, their ecological objectives and that roaded front country couldn't be met without a timber industry — and then those areas that didn't have a timber industry were really struggling to accomplish their projects; and that their projects should be multi-faceted. In other words, under Forest Service law now, permanently authorized, there's something called a stewardship contract, and that allows the revenue from the sale of wood products or other products off

of the national forest to be used to conduct certain kinds of restoration activities. So their so-called zone of agreement, what they were working on, included not just the vegetation treatment, the logging, the thinning, and so-on, it also included using those revenues to pull culverts, to decommission roads, to deal with recreation issues, to deal with invasive weeds, and that the ability to do the other aspects of restoration was an important part of their vitality. (47-8)

As for the role of the Forest Service, the panel had some important points to make. Will Whelan on the budget costs of wildfire and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):

There was a strong sense that the objectives of the collaboratives won't be met if the agency doesn't have the resources it needs to succeed. We've heard about it a couple of times here already about the impact of fire suppression and fire budgets on the overall agency's ability to manage our public lands.

NEPA has moved from being a tool for producing really informed and excellent decisions to much more of a sort of data-generating, encyclopedic, large, and grinding process that's process-based more than outcome-based. And so there's a sense that we need to figure out techniques for doing NEPA better so that the public is informed about their national forests, they care about their national forests — they don't want to be cut out — but that we can produce projects that don't have as much overhead for these. How many of you have read an EIS? (50-51)

As to the role of the Forest Service in the collaboratives, Whelan and Rick Tholen pointed out:

I think this is true of all the collaboratives on our map — they made a conscious effort to not have the Forest Service be members of the coalition. We need them desperately because they have to implement and we need to tell them - tell us whether what we're recommending is implementable, and it's ecologically appropriate, economically feasible. (53)

There is another half to that same equation and that is that it's critical that the Forest Service have a high quality interaction with the collaboratives. There's a lot of value there. But they also need to maintain their independence, because they're going to have to run a public process and listen to everybody. (54)

Perhaps for those tired of lawsuits, there was the recent ruling of Judge Lodge as noted by Tholen:

Judge Edward Lodge, who is now retired, unfortunately, but in one of his last decisions in denying the temporary restraining order, which was the first thing he needed to deal with, he denied that and then one of

his reasons for denying it was he said, and I'm going to just read it verbatim, "moreover, the project was developed in a collaboration between the Forest Service and a diverse group of stakeholders. Further, the collaborative efforts of all the defendants"— and we were a defendant because we intervened in the lawsuit — "in developing the project is in the *public's interest*." [Emphasis ours] So, basically, what he said is that the collaborative represented the public's interest because we were diverse and we were open, we don't exclude members, we don't exclude people from being involved. (52-3)

Conservation and Recreation

The final panel of the conference highlighted the growing interest and involvement of some in the recreation industry with conservation advocacy. It is a topic highlighted by observations regarding economic change, public land protection, and differing perspectives on land use.

At a certain level, discussions over recreation and conservation are part of a much longer narrative that can be traced back to John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, Theodore Roosevelt, and others. It revolves around words such as *preservation*, *conservation* and *multiple use*. To put it another way, the narrative is about what uses we prioritize on our public lands.

Can western communities dependent and near public lands use those public lands to their benefit? Ashley Korenblat thinks so:

So what's the opposite of a commodity? It's a branded product, right? So when you think about a community choosing to develop a brand for itself, to be something that can only be - that is unique, right? There is nowhere like Stanley, Idaho. There's nowhere like Fruita, Colorado. Each community has an opportunity to develop a brand that is unique to them. (62) ...I'm totally recruiting Commissioner Kramer. But so what we're working on is finding ways to use shared public land to attract both visitors and businesses, helping communities who were previously really dependent on resource extraction, see the value of keeping the public lands healthy, and using best technologies and best practices on those lands to basically protect our shared heritage. (63)

Peter Metcalf agreed, echoing an observation about western landscapes first made by Al Runte in his book *National Parks: The American Experience*:

We have the most accessible wild lands - the safest, most accessible wild lands imaginable in the world that people from all over want to come visit, so when people from China or Japan or Europe or Australia think about wild places and think about brands, American brands are all associated with that. And these landscapes are certainly our answer to Europe's historical, iconic features like the Sistine Chapel or the like. (64)

One issue that has been discussed for awhile now is whether younger people are making use of the public lands like the generations before them. When he gave the Andrus Lecture in October 2016, then National Park Service (NPS) Director Jon Jarvis talked about how NPS was using phones given to schoolkids to record pictures of tide pool life taken at Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Louis Benitez mentioned something similar:

So it's kind of like a geotagging game where you walk around with your phone and, ping! There's a point, and 20 meters over here, ping! There's another point. And so I saw her doing this and she was clearly looking for one of the markers. She got one, and five seconds after she got one, she stopped and she looked up out at the ocean and just stood there for five seconds. And I counted in my head, one one thousand, two one thousand, three one thousand. And I think our journey forward right now is to capture those five seconds and turn it into five minutes, turn the five minutes into a chosen five hours in the back country. Because it's not like the door's not there, we just have to figure out how to define what walking through it now looks like. So that intersection between technology, the current generation, how we can capture some of those pieces, the opportunity's there, we just have to continue being innovative and thinking out of the box. (69)

The issue of economic chance was graphically illustrated by Peter Metcalf in his use of the Blackberry:

I want to see a show of hands of who, ten years ago, had a Blackberry. Who here today still has a Blackberry? Son of a gun. The point I'm going to make is that iPhones replaced Blackberries because they had become anachronistic. And I look at our leaders and our legislators, at least in Utah, and what they're championing. They're championing the legacy industries of the late 1800s and early 1900s as opposed to embracing the industries that are driving Boise forward and the Wasatch Front forward, and the Moab area forward and whatnot, and if we - this is a call to our elected officials to look out the windshield, quit looking in the rearview mirror, embrace the future, and don't try to keep alive things that are dying. And in Utah, I've made the joke that Utah- if the state of Utah owned Blackberry, iPhones would be outlawed or you could only get them at the state liquor stores -if you are a state employee you'd have to carry a Blackberry and we would have wasted probably a billion dollars of taxpayers' money keeping Blackberry alive. But we don't do that in capitalism. (70)

More specifically he asserted:

And the future of Grand Staircase-Escalante and that area of Utah, it's not in mining. I mean, mining jobs- mining is being automated, coal is

going to die regardless, ranching I hope will and can be sustainable on a very limited basis, but it's not really going to fuel the economy. (73)

Metcalf suggested a path that might lead to economic adaptability, but he left somewhat unanswered what part of “government” could provide the suggested training to those hurt in the process. Perhaps that could be addressed by a deep investment in education:

Because those who were working in the mines are not going to see the entrepreneurial opportunities to open new businesses and that's where government needs to come in and help with these kind of transitions and help with all the entrepreneurs who are coming in and seeing these incredible opportunities in front of them and beginning to transform a community and turning it into a really vibrant economic place. But there's a generation that is hurt in that process. (74)

At the time of the conference, Peter Metcalf and others' suggestion to move the Outdoor Retailer (OR) show from Salt Lake City was in the news. The move to Denver was announced in early July. One of our panelists, Luis Benitez, was seen as the major force behind making the move a reality. A good discussion of how the move came about can be found at: <https://www.outsideonline.com/2197706/how-colorado-lured-biggest-trade-show-outdoor-industry>. One of the key reasons Benitez was successful was that he held, and still holds, the position of head of the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office. As noted in the online version of Outside magazine referenced above:

Nordstrom points out that Benitez' official post with the state was also essential. “In the absence of that outdoor czar position, it's hard to say that Colorado would have had that focal point to have gotten the deal done.” Colorado, Utah, and Washington already have state directors of outdoor recreation, with several others expected to join their ranks soon. Vermont recently formed a task force to bolster outdoor rec opportunities, and North Carolina has established an outdoor czar position within the state's Commerce Department. Just yesterday, the Oregon legislature passed a bill to create an office of outdoor recreation in that state. With the clout shown by Benitez in Colorado to land OR, more are sure to follow.



References

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