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Lee Metcalf And The Montana Wilderness Study Act Of 1977: A Case Study On The Wilderness Issue And Its Varying Viewpoints

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LEE METCALF AND THE MONTANA WILDERNESS STUDY ACT OF 1977:
A CASE STUDY ON THE WILDERNESS ISSUE
AND ITS VARYING VIEWPOINTS

A thesis submitted to the Department of History at Carroll College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for academic honors with a B. A. Degree in History and Political Science

John Patrick Davis
March 23, 1982
This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of History and Political Science.

Dr. Robert Swartout, Director

Fr. Jeremiah Sullivan

Mr. Dennis Wiedmann

March 23, 1982
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And finally, I wish to express my most sincere appreciation to my girlfriend, Ruth Dapp, for her many hours behind the scenes: proofreading, offering her opinion and most importantly, her constant flow of support, faith and encouragement.
DEDICATION

To all of my friends who had to put up with me, in good times and in bad, during the research and writing of this thesis.

Ego gratias vobis ago!
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INTRODUCTION

There is just one hope of repulsing the tyrannical ambition of civilization to conquer every niche on the whole earth. That hope is the organization of spirited people who will fight for the freedom of the wilderness.

Robert Marshall, 1930

In 1967 the United States Forest Service began a review of all roadless areas within the national forest system. The purpose of this nationwide roadless area review was to determine what areas, if any, should be preserved as wilderness. It was the inadequacies of this original study that led to the introduction of the Montana Wilderness Study Bill (S. 393) by Senator Lee Metcalf of Montana. The purpose of this thesis is to point out the differing views with respect to the wilderness issue in Montana and, as a result, the need for a thorough study of the lands designated in S. 393 as to their wilderness suitability.

In October 1974 S. 393 was first introduced in Congress. The sponsor of S. 393, Lee Metcalf, was a man dedicated to

the proper utilization and preservation of our environment and natural resources. Metcalf developed much of his understanding for man's responsibility to interact harmoniously with the environment during his boyhood in the rural community of Stevensville, Montana. Metcalf was born in Stevensville on January 28, 1911, to Rhoda and Harold Metcalf. Metcalf attended both grade school and high school in Stevensville. He then attended the University of Montana for one year before transferring to Stanford University, where he completed his undergraduate studies in 1933 and from which he received a bachelor of arts degree with majors in history and economics. Also in 1933 Metcalf entered the University of Montana Law School. In 1936 Metcalf received his law degree from the University of Montana, was admitted to the Montana Bar Association, and was elected to the Montana State Legislature by Ravalli County. From that point in Metcalf's life until his death on January 12, 1978, he was continually committed, with the exception of service with the United States Army in Europe during World War II, to public service for Montanans.

From 1937 until 1941, the year in which Metcalf volunteered for service in the army, he served as Assistant Attorney General for the State of Montana. Although Metcalf's budding political ambitions were showing by 1941, World War II forced them to lie dormant until 1946. During the war, Metcalf trained with the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion. He eventually went to Europe for the Normandy Invasion.
(D-Day), and served with the 1st Army and 9th Infantry Division in five campaigns in Belgium, Germany and France. In 1946 Metcalf was released from the army, and was once again able to continue to pursue his political ambitions.

Metcalf returned to Montana in 1946, and ran on a non-partisan judicial ballot for the position of Associate Justice of the Montana Supreme Court. He won the election, and remained an associate justice until 1952, when he was elected to Congress as the United States Representative from Montana's 1st Congressional District. Metcalf retained that position in the House until 1960, when he was elected to the United States Senate, replacing the retiring Senator James E. Murray.2

Throughout Metcalf's career, he was a politician ahead of his time with respect to conservation and environmental protection. Metcalf championed those areas because he understood the need to protect this nation's wilderness, wildlife, natural resources, and environment for future generations. Time after time during his tenure in Congress, Metcalf either sponsored or cosponsored legislation that supported his strongly held principles. For example, Metcalf cosponsored the Clean Air Act of 1963, the Water Quality Act of 1965, the Clean Water Restoration Act of 1966, the Air

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Quality Act of 1967, the Water Quality Improvement Act and the Resource Recovery Act of 1970, and the Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1975. Those were by no means all of the environmental-oriented pieces of legislation in which Metcalf played an important role, but they do point out the fact that he was dedicated to all facets of environmental protection.

Metcalf also constantly fought against the exploitation of natural resources, as well as people, by industry and government. For example, in the litigation surrounding S. 393 an allegation was made by the timber industry that the bill would have an adverse effect on Montana's economy. Metcalf expressed his strong convictions for wilderness and the people of Montana when he responded:

(The timber) industry is all hopped up about any sort of program which will keep them from exploiting every bit of national forest everywhere in America. . . . Industry has no concept of doing anything in the national forests except cut, cut, cut, slash, slash, slash, clear cut and go away.3

Metcalf spoke as early as the late 1950s and early 1960s for conservation and wilderness protection. In 1956 he sponsored wilderness preservation legislation, much of which was later included in the Wilderness Act of 1964, before it was politically acceptable or profitable. As one senatorial colleague noted, "He was one of only a few national leaders

who foresaw this Nation's crisis in natural resources, environmental protection and energy.  

During the early and mid-1970s, Metcalf turned much of his attention specifically toward wilderness preservation because he believed that wilderness was being exploited by the Forest Service despite clear congressional directives.

In 1975 Metcalf summed up his feelings when he said:

> It is my sincere conviction, born of an overview gained from many years in Congress, that the Forest Service has been transformed by the Nixon-Ford administrations into an arm of the timber industry. The downgrading of recreation and upgrading of timber removal, despite the express mandate of the Multiple Use - Sustained Yield Act of Congress, is the cornerstone of a far-reaching policy of maximum commercial exploitation of our forests.

As a result of the conservative, business-oriented presidential administrations that this country faced from 1968 to 1976, Metcalf felt that action had to be taken to preserve not only wilderness areas themselves, but also wilderness legislation that he had fought so long to attain.

Another aspect of the man, Lee Metcalf, was his reputation for becoming angry on occasion. He was the type of individual who could be very diplomatic if the situation

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warranted it; however, if he felt that a person was out of line, he never hesitated to forget diplomacy and tell that person exactly what he thought. Metcalf was especially quick to act when an opponent to a Metcalf piece of legislation was ill-informed or foolish. One such example of Metcalf's toughness occurred when an industry forester complained that Metcalf did not know the intent of S. 393. In his blunt manner Metcalf replied:

You are a professional forester skilled in making trees for harvest, and probably work for a timber operator. If you are like other foresters working in private industry, you regard trees as first and foremost a cash crop. You enjoy their preharvest beauty, recognize their watershed and wildlife habitat value, but still regard them as destined for removal and replacement. But I do not share it, and it is presumptuous of you to suggest that I have misconceptions about the intent of my own bill. I know very well what I intend.6

A good example of the pragmatic side of Lee Metcalf was the way in which he dealt with the wilderness issue in Montana with S. 393. Although Metcalf was strongly supportive of wilderness designation he realized the fact that the issue directly affected the lives of many Montanans. For this reason he did not introduce a bill that asked for instant wilderness, but rather one that called for a study of certain lands in Montana. As one concerned Montanan said, "The bill's underlying theme is not to take as much land as possible for wilderness inclusion but to determine if some

6Ibid., p. 37.
areas are better left as they are."\(^7\) The original intention of S. 393 was to provide Montanans with an opportunity to voice their opinion. This was to be accomplished through the public hearings that would be held in Montana. Thus, Metcalf hoped that S. 393 would eliminate his personal biases from the issue, as well as act as a catalyst for public participation.

The language itself in S. 393 was simple. The bill instructed the Secretary of Agriculture to study, over a period of five years, nine areas in Montana as to their suitability or non-suitability for preservation as wilderness. The proposed areas totaled approximately 971,000 acres of land in seven Montana national forests.

S. 393 was not intended by Metcalf to be a normal wilderness bill. Metcalf explained this in his opening remarks in 1972 before the Subcommittee on Environment and Land Resources of the United States Senate, when he said, "S. 393 is not a wilderness bill in the usual sense. It does not create wilderness. It simply says that the Forest Service will study nine beautiful areas in Montana to determine if they have wilderness characteristics."\(^8\) Before discussing S. 393 in more detail, a brief description of the wilderness concept during our country's past is necessary.

\(^7\)Great Falls Tribune, June 18, 1977.

\(^8\)U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Environmental and Land Resources of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on S. 393. 94th Cong., 1st sess., 1975, p. 29.
**FIGURE 1**

**ACREAGE AND AREAS OF S. 393**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area*</th>
<th>National Forest</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Pioneer</td>
<td>Beaverhead</td>
<td>151,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor-Hilgard</td>
<td>Gallatin and Beaverhead</td>
<td>289,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluejoint</td>
<td>Bitterroot</td>
<td>61,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapphire</td>
<td>Bitterroot and Deer Lodge</td>
<td>94,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Henry</td>
<td>Kootenai</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten Lakes</td>
<td>Kootenai</td>
<td>34,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Fork-Judith</td>
<td>Lewis and Clark</td>
<td>81,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Snowies</td>
<td>Lewis and Clark</td>
<td>91,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn</td>
<td>Lewis and Clark</td>
<td>151,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>973,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Areas and acreage of the nine areas designated for study in the Montana Wilderness Act as of November 1, 1977.

** As a result of changing boundaries of areas, the total acreage for the areas will vary from 971,000 to 974,000 acres.
FIGURE 2
MAP OF AREAS IN S. 393
CHAPTER I
THE WILDERNESS CONCEPT

The concept of wilderness itself and its relationship to man has been viewed differently at various times during this country's history. When the early colonists landed on our eastern shores they necessarily viewed wilderness as a threat to their very survival. Although the wildness and vastness were the very things that attracted Europeans to America, they were the same things that made everyday life a struggle for survival. During the 18th and early 19th centuries people viewed life as an ever-increasing battle against wilderness and for civilization, because the environment was insecure, uncomfortable, and perhaps most important, alien to those who lived in it.

Throughout this period, Americans viewed wilderness as land to be tamed and cultivated. This was transformed into the use of land for the growth of both civilization and economic might. This view of wilderness was described vividly by Robert McHenry in his book, A Documentary History of Conservation in America. McHenry wrote that:

The early Americans did not consider their actions as wasteful. They did not see, and could not possibly have seen, this country as it exists today. Today's treasures were not wasted, they were traded for safety and progress.
These pioneers had no corner supermarket; they had no knowledge of scientific farming. The "too much land" they plowed was their assurance that they would have ample food for their families during the coming year.

The "too many birds" the pioneers killed were birds that were eating their grain.

The "too many trees" they cut down were forests where dangers constantly lurked in the form of wild animals or bands of marauding Indians.

To the early Americans, buffaloes were a vile, filthy menace. They would attack humans and they were killed to provide food for the thousands of workers who built the railroads across the nation's frontiers.1

Anglo-Americans believed that wilderness had to be conquered if man was to prosper in North America. The development of land, or better, the destruction of wildlands, was considered progress and something men looked upon with pride. The mere thought of wilderness protection was mocked in such an atmosphere.

During the last decades of the 19th century, America's vast regions of unspoiled wilderness were, for the most part, civilized. Previous attitudes toward the uncivilized soon began to change as Roderick Nash points out in his book Wilderness and the American Mind. He wrote that, "By the end of the 19th century, however, enough doubt had arisen about the beneficence of civilization's achievements to make

possible a widespread popular enthusiasm for the uncivilized." But a national concern for the conservation of our remaining areas of unexploited wilderness was beginning.

Although some doubt had arisen at this time concerning the rapid growth of America, most Americans still valued wilderness for its natural resources and wealth, rather than for any form of aesthetic value. Richard Bartos tied this mentality to the past and the present in his thesis, "To Save the Wilderness," when he pointed out:

The men and women who developed this nation came to regard the wilderness not only as an obstacle, but also as a repository of resources, land and wealth. Pioneers, colonists, exploiters, loggers, miners, railroaders and captains of industry drew from it to fashion the most powerful and wealthiest nation ever known to mankind. The American dream was and still is to this day, fostered and fed heavily on economic growth, always upward and onward with the simple faith that technology, innovation, exploitation or discovery would certainly sustain more material gain. Even with growing ecological awareness, this myth perpetuates itself, continuing to deceive us. But by so doing, we have destroyed the very thing that nurtured us physically and emotionally—the wilderness.

Thus, the early attitudes of development of the wilderness for economic might influenced Americans throughout the end of the 19th century, the beginning of the 20th century, and perhaps, up to and including the present.

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2Great Falls Tribune, June 18, 1977.

During the next fifty years, 1900-1950, the conservation movement took shape. The conservation policies of the period were formed slowly by a handful of dedicated individuals. No action was taken to establish a formal wilderness at this time, but several resource policies were adopted and reinforced with administrative machinery. The reason that there was no great push for congressional action

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4 Robert Marshall and Aldo Leopold were two examples of men who influenced conservation policy during this period. The latter, Aldo Leopold, was instrumental in making wilderness protection a matter of scientific necessity as well as sentiment in his many writings. He developed a land ethic in which he called man to study his environment in terms of what was ethically and esthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. Leopold was essentially a pragmatist. Robert Marshall appealed to people to realize the esthetic value and tranquility that our rapidly diminishing wilderness areas provided, that an urban setting could not provide. Marshall felt that it was necessary to organize people to fight those interests that would invade the wilderness for purposes of exploitation. As a result, he helped lay the foundation for what was to be known as the Wilderness Society. Thus, these two men, Marshall and Leopold, played a large role in making Americans realize the many-faceted values of wilderness. For further background information see Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind; Aldo Leopold, "The Wilderness and its Place in Forest Recreational Policy," Journal of Forestry, 1921, pp. 718-21.

5 Although no action was taken to establish a formal wilderness system at this time, there were a few scattered and unrelated instances of wilderness preservation. The first large area that was preserved as wilderness was established on March 1, 1872, when two million acres of northwestern Wyoming were set aside as Yellowstone National Park. In 1885, New York State itself also set aside 750,000 acres as wilderness in the Adirondacks. Even though these two milestones in wilderness protection did prove that people realized that some wilderness must be preserved, they were not protected for the reasons that conservationists would have hoped for. First, Yellowstone was protected only to prevent private exploitation of the many natural curiosities the park had to offer. Similarly, the Adirondacks were set aside only to ensure New York State a forested land in the
during this period was clear.

In 1940 timber harvests were still small, and mineral developments were few. In the national parks and wildlife refuges, management attention was devoted to mission-oriented resource development-serving the growing tourist boom on the parks and managing game species of fish and wildlife on the refuges. Land acquisition for these purposes progressed steadily, reflecting steady congressional support for parks and wildlife. The prevailing system protected some areas as wilderness or rather pseudo-wilderness, but only because the demand for resource-oriented development in the areas was limited. This status quo lasted only until the end of the 1940s.

By 1950 those areas that were protected by the Forest Service were subject to adjustment as demands for timber, other natural resources, and recreation grew. For instance, the end of World War II led to a resurgence in the housing industry which caused an unprecedented boom in the lumber and plywood industry. As the demand for lumber grew, the boundaries of existing wilderness areas were redrawn to provide highly profitable timber harvests. Conservationists became convinced that administrative discretion was not a future which would provide the state with an adequate water supply. During the first half of the 19th century there were other scattered instances of wilderness preservation; however, areas were preserved for economical and practical reasons rather than esthetic or ethical reasons. This was due in part because the wilderness preservation concept simply did not gain enough national credibility during this period. For further background information see Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind.

reliable protection for the wilderness in the national forests and parks. They responded by promoting new protective legislation, and by adopting new tactics.
CHAPTER II
THE FIRST WILDERNESS LEGISLATION

The first wilderness bill was introduced in Congress by Senator Hubert Humphrey. The bill as originally written called for immediate protection of certain areas as wilderness, and a wilderness commission which would study areas as additions to the wilderness system. This bill, though considerably altered, received congressional approval in 1964 as the Wilderness Act. The Act provided a system through which proposed areas could become part of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS).¹

The process which Congress prescribed had three mutually exclusive parts: instant wilderness designation; a study process for possible additions to the NWPS; and management guidelines.

Before looking at what the Act provided, it is important to look at what it did not provide. First, it did not include an agency that could manage the established wilderness areas or promote the inclusion of new areas. Also, roadless areas that were previously designated as primitive were not incorporated in the study process. (Primitive

areas were those areas that had been treated as de facto wilderness, but were not officially designated as wilderness up to this time.) Finally, those areas chosen as instant wilderness were selected only from the existing national forest wilderness. These limitations were a result of political compromises proposed by the opposing interests. In summation, Lloyd C. Irland stated, "... /the Wilderness Act/ is in fact a grudging concession to conservation by the interest groups who then dominated public land policy." More explicitly the shortcomings of the Wilderness Act told wilderness advocates that the process to expand the NWPS would be long and complicated.

The initial establishment of the NWPS designated 9.1 million acres as wilderness. Another 5.5 million acres of existing primitive areas were to be studied by the Forest Service. The results of these studies were to be given to the President, who would present them to Congress within ten years. Within the guidelines of the study process the Forest Service was to hold open hearings in which public input would be sought. For the first time the growing public interest was recognized.

The Wilderness Act simply did not address all of the issues. It was not a total victory for conservationists, nor a great concession on behalf of industry. The compromises contained in the Act have since led to many unresolved

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2Ibid., pp. 33-34.
questions, problems, and disputes. For instance, the forest industry soon began a letter-writing campaign against Congressmen who opposed the industry's view concerning wilderness legislation. Lee Metcalf was often the recipient of such rhetoric. On one occasion Metcalf responded by writing:

You state that you are not opposed to responsible wilderness legislation and never have been and then proceed to demonstrate that you do not understand what wilderness is. Wilderness is not what you say it is. It is what the framers of the Wilderness Act of 1964 intended it to be. You make repeated reference to "visual aesthetics." The Act does not mention visual beauty once in listing the criteria for wilderness.3

One can see that differing interpretations of the Act often resulted in either intentional or perhaps unintentional misunderstandings which often led to open disputes over the original meaning of the Act.

The Wilderness Act did not even begin to solve America's land-use problems. Yet as one observer has noted, "It established a study process that became the model for subsequent laws, and it placed wilderness preservation on an equal footing with other objectives of federal land-use planning."4 The Wilderness Act was a platform from which conservationists could build.

3 Burkh, "The Legacy of Lee Metcalf," The Living Wilderness, pp. 36-37.

CHAPTER III
ROADLESS AREA REVIEW AND EVALUATION (RARE)

One deficiency of the Wilderness Act was its failure to review all roadless areas in the national forests. In 1967 the Forest Service finally began a national roadless area review and evaluation (RARE). The nine regional foresters in the country were to review all roadless areas and report to the Chief of the Forest Service by June 30, 1970. In their reports they were to point out areas that might warrant further consideration for inclusion in the NWPS.

From the outset, there was confusion over how much time was needed for the Forest Service to carry out these RARE studies. The original deadline for the completion of RARE was set for June 30, 1970. However, it soon became apparent that more time was needed. In May 1969, the deadline was pushed back to June 30, 1972. Even then, RARE did not get underway until mid-1971. All of this helps to illustrate the rather haphazard manner in which these dates were set, as well as the government's lack of understanding concerning the proper amount of time necessary to study these areas in a detailed manner.

In June 1972 the regional foresters submitted 1,448 areas comprising a total of approximately 56 million acres to the
Chief for further consideration. During the next four months the Chief and his staff reviewed the proposals and recommended 274 areas comprising more than 17 million acres. The recommendations of the Forest Service were criticized at a Senate hearing on S. 393 in 1975, when a representative of the Montana Wilderness Association stated:

Four months to make a critical, meaningful analysis and evaluation of 17 million acres with limited staff, limited time for field work ... yet consider that it has taken the Forest Service ten years to review the 54 million acres in primitive status following the passing of the wilderness bill. ¹

In Montana the problems related to RARE were similar to those on the national level. Within the state, 5.2 million acres were proposed and only 36 areas totaling 1.5 million acres were selected for further study.

Many of the areas were left out of RARE for obscure reasons. For instance, the Forest Service gave several areas a lower wilderness quality rating simply because they contained commercial timber. This was a policy adopted by the Forest Service, but not designated in the Wilderness Act. Also, the Forest Service broke up large roadless tracts into smaller areas. This lowered the wilderness-quality rating given to an area by the Forest Service for solitude. Examples of such tracts were the Taylor-Hilgard, Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn, Sapphire, and West Pioneer areas that were included in S. 393. "Specifically, the scoring system used

¹U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Environmental and Land Resources of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on S. 393. 94th Cong., 1st sess., 1975, pp. 28-29.
for 'wilderness' quality during the 1972 RARE review... adopted a 'purity' definition and concept of wilderness so stringent as to preclude most 'de facto' wilderness from further wilderness study."^{2}

In his opening remarks before a Senate subcommittee on S. 393 in 1977, Metcalf made it clear that as a result of these inadequacies more than anything else, he introduced S. 393. Metcalf remarked:

"The bill was made necessary by the question-able practice of the Forest Service of dividing large pristine areas into smaller areas for study purposes. The very act of making units smaller diminishes their attractiveness for wilderness because one of the criteria used for wilderness is size.

At the same time the administration was arbitrarily dividing these areas, it was slashing the Forest Service budget and diverting the remaining resources to timber production. Mr. Chairman, it does not take a genius to discern the connection between the headlong rush of the administration to cut timber and the reluctance to conduct the studies mandated by the Wilderness Act. The net effect is to subvert the intent of Congress in both the Wilderness Act and the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act.

The bill, S. 393, is an attempt to pull the administration back on the course originally intended by Congress."^{3}


\(^{3}\)U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on S. 393. 95th Cong., 1st sess., 1977, p. 11.
Metcalf felt that both the Forest Service and the Nixon Administration were no longer capable of carrying out objective wilderness study and consideration, as Congress had directed.

Also important was the lethargic effort by the Forest Service to entice public participation in the review process for roadless areas. Unfortunately, the public was not notified about the review until August 1971. This gave concerned citizens less than one year to prepare their arguments for or against a subject enormous in size and complexity.

At any rate, this hasty, questionable method of evaluating a most important natural resource led to howls of anguish. . . . It led to such citizen dissatisfaction that relief via the legislative route was sought, hence, S. 393.4

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4U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Environmental and Land Resources of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on S. 393. 94th Cong., 1st sess., 1975, p. 29.
In 1975 when hearings were first held for S. 393 the widespread interest in the issue became apparent. S. 393 was introduced to encourage public participation on the issue and to correct the inadequacies resulting from the Forest Service's RARE. S. 393 did not bring an end to the issue, but rather it began a long and complicated fight. Those involved were: the Forest Service trying to guard its administrative powers; the mining and timber industries striving to protect their commercial investments; the wilderness-advocate groups devoted to saving a non-replenishable natural resource, wilderness; and finally, the people of Montana attempting to decide whether they wanted to save a wilderness heritage for future generations and/or protect their local economies.

From the different viewpoints of these groups, it can be understood why wilderness designation in Montana was and still is an emotional issue. It is also possible to see why it is important for the public to participate in the decision-making process.

Since it was the inadequacies of RARE that led to a public outcry and the introduction of S. 393, it is not surprising that the Forest Service opposed the bill in 1975.
It did so for several reasons. To begin with, the Forest Service felt the bill would circumvent the established wilderness procedures. For example, the Forest Service was concerned that the Montana focus on S. 393 might lead to similar legislation in other states. This fear was illustrated in a letter to the Chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, Senator Henry M. Jackson. The department spokesman wrote, "We are concerned that S. 393 represents an area-by-area approach to selecting roadless areas for study as to wilderness suitability, without benefit of an overview of the end result of such an approach."\(^1\) We should remember, however, that had the Forest Service not overlooked huge tracts of possible wilderness in RARE and had RARE been conducted properly in the first place, a local approach might not have been necessary.

Also, during the Senate hearings in 1975 the Forest Service pointed out the many non-wilderness characteristics that were involved in the nine areas. As a result of these findings, Metcalf requested that the Dean of the School of Forestry at the University of Montana (UM), Robert Wambach, review the wilderness quality of the areas. When the UM study was completed it confirmed the testimony of the Forest Service. Some of the items included in the areas were microwave stations, privately owned land, waterlines, hundreds of acres of clearcuts, dozens of cases of ongoing timber sales,

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\(^1\)U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Environmental and Land Resources of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on S. 393. 94th Cong., 1st sess., 1975, pp. 9-10.
a power line right-of-way, and approximately 260 miles of various types of roads. The UM study stated:

The boundaries of the areas proposed for wilderness study in S. 393 were drawn in an unreasonable and indefensible way. This has the effect of seriously weakening the case for wilderness study. . . . An objective observer is forced to question the motivation and judgment of the wilderness advocates that would press for such poorly conceived boundaries. It would appear to be a case where a good cause was hurt by over-enthusiastic support.²

The UM study went on to recommend that a new land designation be placed on the areas. The study suggested that the areas be referred to as pseudo-wilderness, back country, or pioneer areas. On October 1, 1975, covering Metcalf's first press conference since he came to the Senate in 1960, the Great Falls Tribune reported:

Metcalf . . . said he would redraft his Montana wilderness bill to adopt the UM studies that call for a new land classification broader than wilderness, but tougher than the only present alternative, unbridled development.³

The attacks made by the Forest Service against S. 393 were concrete. As a result, Metcalf withdrew the bill from the 94th Congress for redrafting of boundaries.

S. 393 was also constantly opposed by the timber and mining industries in Montana. They were more critical

²U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on S. 393. 95th Cong., 1st sess., 1977, p. 183.

³Great Falls Tribune, October 2, 1975.
opponents of the bill because they had capital investments and the jobs of many Montanans tied up in the areas. The industries not only attacked the validity of S. 393 but Metcalf as well. At one point the President of the North-west Mining Association asserted, "Senator Lee Metcalf is catering to a few hardy backpackers at the expense of vital national needs for minerals in sponsoring the proposed Montana Wilderness Study Act." This illustrates the predicament that Montanans faced. They had to determine whether they wanted a study in which Montana's wilderness quality might be preserved, or provide the country with needed natural resources. The viewpoint of the timber industry also followed these lines.

S. 393 was presented at a time when Montana's timber industry was in desperate straits. It felt that S. 393 would lock up prime forest lands in Montana. Some timbermen went so far as to say that the passage of S. 393 would threaten the very survival of the forest industry in Montana. The timber industry thought that the five-year study period would disrupt timber sales planned by the Forest Service and companies with lands inside the proposed areas. The Forest Service was correct because even though S. 393 would not designate one acre of land as wilderness, the areas would be treated as de facto wilderness during the study period. In effect, the timber industry felt that the Forest Service's

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RARE had already evaluated the areas and another evaluation would be redundant and costly to the industry and taxpayers.

While the UM study reinforced the Forest Service's statements against S. 393, it discounted the remarks made by the timber industry. The study pointed out:

The timber growing potential on most of the land designated in S. 393 is very low. Some commercial timber does exist in several of the areas as a gift of nature; but it is old, small in size, generally of poor quality, and it occurs in small volumes per acre in remote areas where access is difficult. . . . If prices for wood products go up, it might be economically feasible to remove some of the timber, provided that the costs of roading, logging and sale administration were kept to an absolute minimum.5

It is not surprising that the timber industry had its own set of facts and figures that made timber harvesting in the areas more desirable. These discrepancies should only have furthered the case for a wilderness study.

As the plight of the forest industry became worse in Montana, so did the statements by its spokesmen. In March 1977, a time when the forest industry in Montana was facing financial ruin, Richard Schimer of Evans Products Company in Missoula said while referring to S. 393 that "We have passed the point when supply exceeds the demand. Further

5U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on S. 393. 95th Cong., 1st sess., 1977, pp. 182-183.
reduction in land base and allowable timbering will mean the end of another mill."\textsuperscript{6} The timber industry felt that it was being strangled by the amount of land being set aside for wilderness. It is interesting to note, however, that seventy percent of Montana's 23 million acres of forest have been set aside for commercial use. Therefore, S. 393 was hardly the reason for the problems of the timber industry, but perhaps it came at a time when a scapegoat was needed. The inconsistencies in the facts presented again reinforced the need for a detailed study of the areas to set the facts straight.

Finally, the citizens of Montana would be affected if S. 393 were to pass and if the areas were to be studied for five years. To some it would mean the beginning of a study process that might lead to the preservation of a wilderness heritage, and to others it would mean the locking up of needed natural resources and unemployment for a study that was already completed. These mixed emotions of Montanans were expressed repeatedly in letters to congressmen during deliberation on S. 393. In April 1977 a concerned resident of Darby, Montana wrote Senator John Melcher saying:

I wish to register my opposition to S. 393 which calls for yet another study of 974,000 acres of Montana forest lands, which seems to aim at a still further "lock up" of productive forest lands from multiple-use. . . . It seems the aim of some to add more areas to the "locked up" wilderness at a time

\textsuperscript{6}Great Falls Tribune, March 3, 1977.
when we need more lumber for housing, and recreation for our citizens through "multiple use." As I see it we already have enough wilderness areas and can't afford to set aside any more unused areas. There is already too much unemployment, as it is.

There were many similar letters included in the official hearing record. One must remember, however, that these attitudes expressed what might occur if, after the study period was concluded, the areas did in fact become wilderness.

Another letter addressed to Senator John Melcher embodied a feeling of fear, as well as irony. A Dillon citizen wrote:

I am opposed to bill S. 393 because my job depends on these areas included in this bill. I'm 27 and a lumber grader and have been in the lumber industry since I was 18. I'm married now and have two little girls, and if this bill passes, my job and future, and that of my wife and children will be greatly affected. If at all possible, I would like to see public hearings in this area so that the people involved can state their views.

The fear of unemployment was common among many timbermen.

The demand for public hearings, however, was ironic because S. 393 was designed for people concerned about or affected

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7 William Vogel to Senator John Melcher, as included in U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on S. 393. 95th Cong., 1st sess., 1977, p. 206.

8 Lon Lindroth to Senator John Melcher, in ibid., p. 207.
by wilderness designation to express their views.

A somewhat different viewpoint often taken by citizens was that the wilderness must be saved, if for nothing else, for future generations. This concept of wilderness was expressed by Mrs. Jeanette Nolan McIntyre before a Senate subcommittee hearing on public lands concerning S. 393 in 1975, when she said:

I wish to defend the rights of children to come. I oppose the practices which have been allowed to desecrate the beauty of wilderness and which have robbed generations of one of their most important birthrights. We who have grown up have seen and been nurtured by all aspects of nature in her present forms, do not have the right to deprive others, born or unborn, of those gifts, those influences, those inherent necessities.

Montana is not only for Montana's sake. Montana is unique because it still has primitive areas. . . . I know that thrill because I felt it. I felt the vital link of pride in my forebearers when John (McIntyre) brought me from New York to Montana for that first time.9

Mrs. McIntyre felt that wilderness should be saved so other generations could enjoy and appreciate the aesthetic value of wilderness, as she herself had done.

Another group of citizens that felt a need to voice their opinions were wilderness advocates. Their opinions were not tied directly to their income, and therefore provided a completely different viewpoint. In a letter to Senator Mike Mansfield, a Hamilton resident wrote:

There is much danger at this time of wholesale industrial exploitation without adequate control. I feel that most Montanans are proud of the beauty of their state, and wish to preserve certain areas for their special beauty, wildlife habitat, stream flow, environmental health, and other values for which Montana is famous. We must do this before rapid growth of population and industrial pressure make such preservation more difficult.\(^\text{10}\)

There were also groups of people in Montana that opposed S. 393 because the study period would "lock up" the areas to off-road vehicle use. This issue was addressed by Congress in 1977. The Wilderness Act prohibited off-road vehicles on land designated for wilderness. Congress, however, felt that off-road vehicle use was appropriate in lands designated only for study. The House Report accompanying S. 393 stated, "...it is the intention of the committee that the areas in S. 393 (and other wilderness study areas) remain open to off-road vehicle use unless and until they are formally designated as wilderness."\(^\text{11}\)

The final group to be mentioned were cattlemen. They were concerned that the study and possible designation of areas for wilderness might hinder their grazing rights. The same House Report on S. 393 that made the concessions to off-road vehicles, made concessions for cattlemen. The Report pointed out that:

\(^{10}\)Dorothy H. McConnell to Senator Mike Mansfield, as included in U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Environmental and Land Resources of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on S. 393. 94th Cong., 1st sess., 1975, p. 272.

Section 4(d)(4) of the Wilderness Act states that grazing in wilderness areas, if established prior to designation of the areas as wilderness, "shall be permitted to continue subject to such reasonable regulations as are deemed necessary by the Secretary of Agriculture." To clarify any lingering doubts the committee wishes to stress that this language means that there shall be no curtailment of grazing permits or privileges in an area simply because it is designated as wilderness.\(^{12}\)

In so doing, Congress accommodated those groups which might have been affected unnecessarily by the study period.

It is clear that Montanans themselves had different reasons for opposing or supporting wilderness designation. It is important to remember, however, that S. 393 itself would not designate one acre of land as wilderness. It was simply an attempt to bring the many different views together, and make a rational and utilitarian decision.

Since the bill was designed to attract the public, some people might question whether Montanans would actually get involved in the decision-making process. Robert Eyestone in his book \textit{From Social Issues to Public Policy} explained why things like public hearings attract concerned citizens. He noted that, "Most basically, they offer an opportunity for 'pure' self expression, or for expressing frustration with social events beyond individual control. When this is the case, outsiders join for essentially non-political reasons."\(^{13}\) In other words, Montanans would become involved

\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 5.

in the hearings simply because they were a means by which Montanans could express themselves.

Mrs. Doris Milner, president of the Montana Wilderness Association, best justified the need for participation through public hearings, when she said:

In spite of claims that Montana is essentially wilderness, you can see there is precious little. . . . We represent the public, this is our desire. We feel there are areas under the Forest Service procedure that simply do not get their day in court. The citizen has the right. These are our lands, your lands, and we have a right to legislative routes of appeal to get relief from them.\textsuperscript{14}

The number of people that would be willing to become involved in a wilderness study was reflected in an article in the \textit{Billings Gazette} prior to a House hearing in June 1977. "Some 260 persons representing 30 groups from 42 communities have registered to testify at the upcoming House Interior Committee hearing on Sen. Lee Metcalf's Wilderness Study Bill. . . ."\textsuperscript{15} This is a significant number of participants for a hearing on any subject. Some of these people spoke for a specific cause, others represented their own beliefs. Therefore, it is evident that a study period, incorporated with public hearings, would bring the different interests together, and hopefully a final decision for wilderness would result.

\textsuperscript{14}Doris Milner, as quoted in Bartos, "To Save the Wilderness: A Political and Historical Analysis of the Wilderness Preservation Movement," p. 24.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Billings Gazette}, June 17, 1977, sec. B, p. 4.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

On May 18, 1977, S. 393 was passed unanimously by a voice vote in the United States Senate. Action taken upon S. 393 in the House was more complicated. It was first brought to a vote under suspension of the rules in the House on September 17, 1977, but was defeated. Under suspension of the rules, a two-thirds majority vote was required, 274 yes votes; however, only 256 representatives voted yes and 155 voted no. It was finally given approval in the House as a result of a national letter-writing campaign which was instigated by the Wilderness Society and directed at Congressmen who opposed S. 393.¹ In the chart below it is important to note the breakdown of the vote along partisan lines.

S. 393 became the Montana Wilderness Act on November 1, 1977.² A field representative from the Wilderness Society summed up the bill's passage when he said, "Twenty years from now, people are going to be real pleased that the bill passed. The bill's passage indicates there is a need for those people who have been opposing and supporting wilderness


²For a complete copy, see Appendix, herein.
FIGURE 3

VOTE BREAKDOWN FOR S. 393

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote Breakdown in House of Representatives</th>
<th>Sept. 27, 1977</th>
<th>Oct. 18, 1977</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>256*</td>
<td>315*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Democrats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Democrats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* On both occasions (September 27 and October 18) S. 393 was voted on under a suspension of the rules which requires a two-thirds vote for approval. On September 27, two-thirds was 274 yes votes for approval (motion failed). On October 18, two-thirds was 279 yes votes for approval (motion approved).³

information rather than emotionalism."⁴ The resulting act does not bring an end to the wilderness issue in Montana. It does, however, entice public participation and, for that reason, alter the outcome of wilderness designation, whatever it may be.


⁴Great Falls Tribune, October 19, 1977, p. 1
The role that Lee Metcalf played in S. 393 and in every significant piece of wilderness designation in Montana cannot be overemphasized, and will not be soon forgotten.

To put Lee Metcalf's wilderness contributions into perspective, consider that he figured strongly in the designating of every acre of wilderness now existing in Montana. The 12 areas total 3.2 million acres and, if areas in his S. 393 are added along with certain key RARE II areas that he championed, the total will swell to a remarkable 4.3 million acres.5

Thus, the legacy of the wilderness issue continued in Montana, even after Metcalf's death, as he had planned. What Metcalf did not foresee was that his name would be connected with the wilderness of Montana as well. Metcalf will surely be remembered as the man who championed wilderness in Montana.

Arguments for and against the bill were voiced in Washington, D. C. and Montana from October 1974 until November 1977. They were the forerunners of what the bill was intended to provide in the first place—public hearings in which both sides of the issue could be heard and a rational decision made. In the end a decision may favor one interest or another, but it will hopefully be one that reflects the true beliefs of Montanans. The political and economic climate of the state and nation may influence opinions, but this must be considered as an integral part of the decision-making process.

APPENDIX

MONTANA WILDERNESS STUDY ACT OF 1977

To provide for the study of certain lands to determine their suitability for designation as wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Montana Wilderness Study Act of 1977."

Sec. 2. (a) In furtherance of the purposes of the Wilderness Act (78 Stat. 890; 16 U.S.C. 1132), the Secretary of Agriculture (hereinafter known as the "Secretary") shall, within five years after the date of enactment of this Act, review certain lands designated by this section, as to their suitability for preservation as wilderness, and report his findings to the President, as follows:

(1) certain lands in the Beaverhead National Forest, Montana, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "West Pioneer Wilderness Study Area" and dated April, 1976, comprising approximately one hundred and fifty-one thousand acres, which shall be known as the West Pioneer Wilderness Study Area;

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1U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Montana Wilderness, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on S. 393. 95th Cong., 1st sess., 1977, pp. 3-6.
(2) certain lands in the Beaverhead and Gallatin National Forests, Montana, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Taylor-Hilgard Wilderness Study Area" dated April 1976, comprising approximately two hundred and eighty-nine thousand acres, which shall be known as the Taylor-Hilgard Wilderness Study Area;

(3) certain lands in the Bitterroot National Forest, Montana, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Bluejoint Wilderness Study Area" and dated April 1976, comprising approximately sixty-one thousand acres, which shall be known as the Bluejoint Wilderness Study Area;

(4) certain lands in the Bitterroot and Deerlodge National Forests, Montana, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Sapphire Wilderness Study Area" and dated April 1976, comprising approximately ninety-four thousand acres, which shall be known as the Sapphire Wilderness Study Area;

(5) certain lands in the Kootenai National Forest, Montana, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Ten Lakes Wilderness Study Area" and dated April 1976, comprising approximately thirty-four thousand acres, which shall be known as the Ten Lakes Wilderness Study Area;

(6) certain lands in the Lewis and Clark National Forest, Montana, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Middle Fork Judith Wilderness Study Area"
dated April 1976, comprising approximately eighty-one thousand acres, which shall be known as the Middle Fork Judith Wilderness Study Area;

(7) certain lands in the Lewis and Clark National Forest, Montana, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Big Snowies Wilderness Study Area" and dated April 1976, comprising approximately ninety-one thousand acres, which shall be known as the Big Snowies Wilderness Study Area;

(8) certain lands in the Gallatin National Forest, Montana, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area" and dated April 1976, comprising approximately one hundred and fifty-one thousand acres, which shall be known as the Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn Wilderness Study Area; and

(9) certain lands in the Kootenai National Forest, Montana, which are generally depicted on a map entitled "Mount Henry Wilderness Study Area" and dated April 1976, comprising approximately twenty-one thousand acres, which shall be known as the Mount Henry Wilderness Study Area.

(b) The Secretary shall conduct his review, and the President shall advise the United States Senate and House of Representatives of his recommendations, in accordance with the provisions of subsections 3(b) and 3(d) of the Wilderness Act, except that any reference in such subsections
to areas in the national forests classified as "primitive" shall be deemed a reference to the wilderness study areas designated by this Act and except that the President shall advise the Congress if his recommendations with respect to such areas within seven years after the date of enactment of this Act: Provided, however, That the Secretary shall give at least sixty days' advance public notice of any hearing or other public meeting concerning such areas.

(c) The maps referred to in this section shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Chief of the Forest Service, Department of Agriculture.

Sec. 3 (a) Except as otherwise provided by this section, and subject to existing private rights, the wilderness study areas designated by this Act shall, until Congress determines otherwise, be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture so as to maintain their presently existing wilderness character and potential for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

(b) Nothing in this Act shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction of responsibilities of the several States with respect to wildlife and fish in the national forests.

(c) Nothing herein contained shall (1) limit the President in proposing, as part of his recommendation to Congress, the alteration of existing boundaries of any wilderness study area or recommending the addition to any such area of any contiguous area predominantly of wilderness value, or (2) limit the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to
establish, protect, study, or make recommendations to the President and Congress with respect to additional wilderness study areas within national forests in the State of Montana.

Sec. 4. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated after October 1, 1977, such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Approved November 1, 1977.

Legislative History:

House Report No. 95-620 (Comm. in Interior and Insular Affairs).
Senate Report No. 95-163 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
Congressional Record, Vol. 123 (1977):
May 18, considered and passed Senate.
Oct. 18, considered and passed House.
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