

# Travel in Wilderness

## Wilderness and Etymology

- ▼ In the English language, a good place to start is the Old English word “wildoer.” Wilde, meaning untamed. Doer, meaning beast. David Henderson in his essay “American Wilderness Philosophy.”

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/am-wild/> Even today, wilderness is valued highly because it is a place for wild animals, some of which are “keystone species,” animals that play a crucial role in an ecosystem, who are indicators of the health of the ecosystem. Many times keystone species are like the beasts of yore, predators, like the mountain lions. The term keystone species was coined by zoologist Robert T. Paine.

- “A single mountain lion near the Mackenzie Mountains in Canada, for example, can roam an area of hundreds of kilometers. The deer, rabbits, and bird species in the ecosystem are at least partly controlled by the presence of the mountain lion. Their feeding behavior, or where they choose to make their nests and burrows, are largely a reaction to the mountain lion’s activity. Scavenger species, such as vultures, are also controlled by the activity of the mountain lion. A keystone species’ disappearance would start a domino effect. Other species in the habitat would also disappear and become extinct.” National Geographic Magazine.  
(<http://nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/keystone-species/>)
- Beowulf was one place where the word appears, but its use there brought together many legends of wilderness being filled with monsters and half-man, half-animal creatures. Roderick Nash in his classic *Wilderness and the American Mind* makes this statement. Beowulf solidified the idea for an English speaking population that wilderness was filled with wild beasts, but also that wilderness was forested. This may be why some of the first designated wildernesses in America were forested. Today, wildernesses can be deserts, tropical forests, coral reefs, oceans, and even outer space.
- This distinction is important, because it sets up the binary that plagues discussions of wilderness, that between culture and nature, civilization and wildness.

## Wilderness as Symbol

- Wilderness in the new world, in the first accounts by Europeans landing in the U.S. carried the idea of physical challenge. William Bradford landing from the Mayflower said it was a “hideous and

desolate wilderness” (Nash 24).

- Wilderness also became a symbol for something spiritually sinister. (Hindee 10). The wilderness was a spiritually cursed place. Adam and Eve were sent out of the Garden into the wilderness. The Israelites were sent to wander the wilderness for forty years as punishment. It was also a place of temptation. Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness.
- The symbolism of wilderness as a dangerous place bled through to the literature, particularly Hawthorne’s *Scarlet Letter* (Nash 39). “The primeval forest he creates around seventeenth-century Salem represents and accentuates the “moral wilderness” in which Hester Prynne wandered so long. The remote meant freedom from social ostracism, yet Hawthorne left no doubt that such total license would only result in an irresistible temptation to evil. The illegitimate Pearl...is the only character at home in the wilderness. For Hawthorne and the Puritans a frightening gulf, both literal and figurative, existed between civilization and wilderness.” (40)

## ▼ Bertram and Romantic Wilderness

- ▼ William Bartram often considered American nature writer, coming from his wilderness expeditions.
  - Born in 1739, he grew up helping his father in Pennsylvania in a botanical garden and was later hired by wealthy patron, Dr. John Fothergill, to travel the wildernesses of the American southeast to find useful and economical plants. Bartram’s *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* written between 1773 and 1777 and published in 1791 came out of that mission.
  - Bartram’s insights helped set the tone for three ideas about wilderness travel in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: it was idealized beauty; it was terrifying; it was profitable and there to be used. (Bartram, William. *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida*. 1791. Ed. Thomas P. Slaughter. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1996.)
- ▼ Bartram admires the beautiful scenery he walks through, so that wilderness is valued for its aesthetic properties.
  - QUOTE.
- ▼ But the wilderness qualities he finds are ones that will stay with wilderness travel for good. But his purpose was to find plants for economic and utilitarian purposes.
  - Terrie writes: Bartram is “hopeful of finding useful discoveries in the wilderness” (Terrie 18, Phillip C. Terrie’s article “Tempests and

Alligators: The Ambiguous Wilderness of William Bartram”). Bartram himself says his purpose is be “instrumental in discovering, and introducing into my native country, some original productions of nature, which might become useful to society” (81).

▼ **Still he has moments of terror in the wilderness.**

- At one point, he sees two alligators fighting, and then he is threatened:

I was attacked on all sides, several endeavouring to upset the canoe. My situation now became precarious to the last degree . . .

They struck their jaws together so close to my ears, as almost to stun me, and I expected every moment to be dragged out of the boat and instantly devoured (115).

▼ **Wilderness, Manifest Destiny, Indian Removal**

- In seeing the wilderness this way, Europeans newly arrive to the U.S. were ignoring the native peoples, casting them in the same light as the dangerous and untamed wilderness. It became an excuse for Manifest Destiny. The attitude was ubiquitous. George Catlin's 1833 call for a "nation's park" where tourists could come and see the Indian "in his classic attire, galloping his horse ... amid the fleeting herds of elk and buffaloes." [3] (Mark David Spence. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.) **Manifest Destiny combined with the Indian wars of the nineteenth century** “erased the human history of western North America and replaced it with an atemporal natural history that somehow prefigured the American conquests of these lands” (29). Tourists no longer romanticized the wilderness. They wanted an Indian-free natural landscape. The Indian removal in Yellowstone Park is a blatant "example of removing a native population in order to 'preserve' nature.'" Untamed and unsettled nature became the ideal both within the United States and abroad from the founding of the first National Park to the Wilderness Act of 1964 (70).
- ▼ (transition) William Bartram: passing through East Florida near Mount Royal and Lake George, Bartram comes upon a striking scene. He writes: “What greatly contributed towards completing the magnificence of the scene, was a novel Indian highway” (100). Indians give the wilderness the right aesthetic.
  - ▼ In fact, as scholars and historians of Native American culture have shown, travels through forests and across plains had long been undertaken by first peoples. No matter how extensive a landscape

might be, Native Americans used a network of trails. The Native Americans, then, had already domesticated what Anglo travelers called “wilderness.”

- In West, Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the Forest Service, wrote about encountering evidence of Indians burning the wilderness of the Bitterroot Mountains in 1896, which perturbed him greatly. (find quote)

▼ **Indians also showed how uncomfortable white people were in wilderness.**

- ▼ Thoreau engaged Joseph Polis to guide him and his companion into the Maine Woods. Polis is a “The ‘Domestic Air’ of Wilderness: Henry David Thoreau and Joe Polis in the Maine Woods.” Thomas P. Lynch. *Weber Studies* 14.3 (1997): 38-48. “Polis's ability to straddle the divide between white and Penobscot culture challenged Thoreau's ideas about the place of humans in nature” (39). In the “Alleges and East Branch” from the Maine Woods collection, Thoreau recounts the time he spent in the company of Joseph Polis, a Penobscot Indian. He hired Polis as a guide.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1034&context=englishfacpubs>

- Thomas Lynch argues that Polis upset Thoreau’s ideas of wilderness, which were predicated on the nature/culture binary, which was to define much future thinking about wilderness. Comparing “Thoreau’s notion of the Maine woods as wilderness with Polis’s notion of it as home illustrates even more clearly how Polis effaces the nature/culture (or wild/civilized) duality that serves as a basis for both Thoreau’s and, by extension from him, contemporary wilderness ideology” (39).

▼ **Thoreau**

▼ **Wilderness is always about walking.**

- ▼ Thoreau is often cited as the forbear of the American environmental movement and the touchstone for the focus in the U.S. on wilderness land.

- “It is no exaggeration to say that today all thought of the wilderness flows in Walden’s wake (Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, page 171).
- “Walking” is often cited as a defense for wilderness, especially the line, “In wildness is the preservation of the world.” *The Atlantic*, May 1862.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1862/06/walking/304674/>

- ▼ But what isn't emphasized as much is that walking itself is the point of Thoreau's piece. Walking and wildness together make up the defense.
  - "I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least—and it is commonly more than that—sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements." (The Atlantic, May 1862, online)
  - "When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods" (The Atlantic, May 1862, online)

## ▼ Walking

### ▼ Sierra Club and John Muir

- Political - Rebecca Solnit, page 150. John Muir walking tramping across Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada in 1870s. "English mountaineers founded the Alpine Club in 1857" for the purpose of social and pleasurable walking through wild landscapes. The Sierra Club was different. It was formed for the purpose of defending wild land as well as the pleasures of traveling through it. It had a political purpose. On Jun 4, 1892, the Sierra Club was formed with Muir, friends and like-minded people. "Walking in the landscape had long been considered a vaguely virtuous act, but Muir and the club had at last defined that virtue as defense of the land. This made it a self-perpetuating virtue, securing the grounds of its existence, and made the club an ideological organization. Walking—or hiking and mountaineering, as the club tended to call it—became its ideal way of being in the world: out of doors, relying on one's own feet, neither producing or destroying. The club's mission statement said its purpose was "to explore, enjoy, and render accessible the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast; To publish authentic information concerning them; To enlist the support and cooperation of the people and the government in preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada Mountains."
- Land use has always been about excluding people, and this is true of wilderness as well: "But accessing the land has been something of a class war. For a thousand years, landowners have been sequestering more and more of the island for themselves [England], and for the past hundred and fifty, landless people have been fighting back....The commons were usually privately owned land to which locals retained rights to gather wood and graze animals, while the traditional rights-of-way—footpaths across the field and woods that the public had the right to walk no matter whose property they

traversed—were necessary for work and travel.” Solint 160.

- Jonathan Gros, 93: Thoreau actually walked close to home. “He did undertake a few long excursions in the forests of Maine, in Quebec and New Hampshire. But the experience of walking he writes about, which nourished his discourse, never concerns anything but his long daily strolls around Concord, setting off from home. . . . Walking is setting oneself apart: at the edge of those who work, at the edges of high-speed roads, at the edge of the producers of profit and poverty, exploiters, laborers, and at the edge of those serious people who always have something better to do than receive the pale gentleness of a winter sun or the freshness of a spring breeze” (Gros 94).
- Bob Marshall as a walker through Wilderness.

### ▼The Wilderness Society

- If Thoreau laid the philosophical groundwork for the place of wilderness in the American mind, the Wilderness society was the political and organizational impetus behind that.
- ▼The Wilderness Society was the main force behind the 1964 Act, and walking as a mode of travel was essential to that quest. The idea that wilderness should not have roads—that lack of roads were a defining feature—arose at the same time as the concept of making that same land protected by law. The founders of the Wilderness Act, the Wilderness Society, and the modern wilderness advocacy grew from the belief that cars and roads were ruining America’s last wild spaces. Aldo Leopold, Bob Marshall, and the other founders were bothered by consumerism, tourism, mechanization, advertising, landscape architecture, and many other forces that were going to change the large stretches of roadless land in the West.
  - “In 1916, Congress allocated the first significant funds for federal road-building” Sutter writes, at the same time that “Henry Ford refined assembly line production, which made the automobile affordable to middle-class Americans.”
  - “In the years between the two world wars, the modern wilderness idea emerges as an alternative to landscapes of modernized leisure and play, and it was preeminently a product of the discordant internal politics of outdoor recreation.” Driven Wild
  - “Nature was an place where Americans confronted their anxieties about consumption.” In 1900 there were 8000 registered cars in the U.S; by 1906, there were 100,000; by 1913, there were over a million, and by 1922 over ten million. The automobile was associated with leisure – in 1916, the U.S. government saw it needed to build roads—infrastructure—for the public good. These progressive years were also—historians agree—the time when the

culture of consumption and mass production rose. The original wilderness advocates—Bob Marshall, Aldo Leopold, Benton MacKaye—were less interested in saving pristine land than in protecting large areas from roads, cars and other modern technologies.

▼ **Bob Marshall and Aldo Leopold**

- Aldo Leopold attended a 1926 National Conference on Outdoor Recreation and brought up wilderness conservation. Said people need wildlands to play in—they were already coming in cars to National parks. Outdoor recreation – he changed it to re-creation.
- October 9, 1934. That day, Bob Marshall and a group of like-minded men started the Wilderness Society on a car trip between Knoxville and Lafollette. The Wilderness Society was the first national group dedicated solely to finding ways to preserving wilderness. Marshall’s earlier article “The Problem with Wilderness” was the foundation for this group. Paul Sutter, a historian of Wilderness, points out the irony that the first and most important group dedicated to preserving Wilderness began as a car trip. Wilderness as they conceived of it was, first and foremost, a place without roads and cars.
- In 1930, Marshall wrote: The word wilderness . . . denotes a region which contains no permanent inhabitants, possesses no possibility of conveyance by any mechanical means and is sufficiently spacious that a person in crossing it must have the experience of sleeping out. The dominant attributes of such an area are: First, that it requires any one who exists in it to depend exclusively on his own effort for survival; the second, that it preserved as nearly as possible the primitive environment. This means that all roads, power transportation and settlements are barred. But trails and temporary shelters, which were common long before the advent of the white race, are entirely permissible.
- What Leopold meant by wilderness was preservation from certain forms of recreational development—road building and term permit facilities.” “By wilderness, I mean a continuous stretch of country preserved in its natural state, open to lawful hunting fishing, big enough to absorb a two-week pack trip, and kept devoid of roads, artificial trails, cottages, and other works of man...The majority undoubtedly want all the automobile roads, summer hotels, graded trails, and other modern conveniences that we can give them... But a very substantial minority, I think, want just the opposite.” (From his article “The Wilderness and Its Place in Forest Recreation Policy.”) “For Leopold, the essential quality of wilderness was how one traveled and lived within its confines.” But he was also adamant that

primitive forms of travel and living were better ways of knowing nature...than motorized forms. 'If we think we are going to learn by cruising around the mountains in a Ford, we are largely deceiving ourselves.'”

- Roadlessness and wilderness value were brought together in the true in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. In 1934, Elers Koch, a long time Forest Service Supervisor of the Lolo National Forest and a close friend of Bob Marshall, found himself at the center of controversy over how many roads to allow through areas that had up until that time remained roadless. Koch, who wavered between being a road builder and being an opponent to road building, wrote an essay about Highway 12 called “The Passing of the Lolo Trail,” a wistful piece about the conversion of an ancient road into a highway for motor vehicles.
- Marshall, especially, argued that walking in wilderness was an antidote to civilized life. In Marshall’s most important book, the 1933 *The People’s Forest*, he refers repeatedly to the “dreary, monotonous labor” of civilized life with its “grime and sordidness, with its almost unbearable cacophony of nerve-wracking noises.” It’s the human psyche Marshall seemed concerned about. He predicted the modern psyche could only find peace and solace in what he called “the primitive” — large pieces of land left undeveloped. In the Rocky Mountain West, he saw the only big chunks of land left that were roadless and could be set aside and accessed by Americans for their psychological well-being.
- Leopold was really the “Father of the National Forest Wilderness System.” His ideas came when he started to write about wilderness in the abstract. “It was to stem the growth of road building, to control the automobile, and to temper recreational development of America’s public lands that Leopold first suggested the need for wilderness preservation.” He was critiquing consumerism. So it was the recreational and scenic values that were part of the early definition of wilderness. Forest recreation would grow to rival timber extraction as the highest use. This was a time of intense road building. Forest Service roads went from a few thousand miles to in 1916 to almost 90,000 miles in 1935. Leopold’s “love of hunting and his fears about its modernization shaped his percolating wilderness idea.”
- Here’s what he said: “surely this is not the same world as that of twentieth century machinery, squalid tenements, subways, concrete roads, country clubs, and 23 million automobiles. [Essentially, what’s he’s describing is the East Coast] For one night at least, upon this

mystic mountaintop, I had left that existence completely, and was living in a universe beyond the influences of civilization” (55). So that’s Marshall’s romantic spirit.

- But Marshall was also very social, and he was aware people were there before him. When he hiked Grave’s Peak, on the Montana side of the Bitterroots, he had tuned into the human history of the place. In September of 1929, he was on the Lolo Trail and nostalgic about the path, “trampled by generation of Nez Perce ponies during the annual pilgrimage to and from the buffalo country.” He got lost in the fog and the snowstorm, and the harsh elements of the natural world reminded him of Lewis and Clark who were camped at the same spot. He found a log house and the owner, Hank Shipman, invited him in to sit by the fire and fed him fried grouse, hot biscuits, and “cup after cup of scalding coffee.”
- But he acknowledged that wilderness was something that mostly elites traveled through. In his article, “Wilderness as a Minority Right,” Published in the Forest Service newsletter called The Service Bulletin, Aug 27, 1928. Arguing against the idea that only one half of one percent of all people desire to use wilderness. The minority he’s talking about is the small percentage of people who actually use wilderness for recreation, especially in a democracy, with their motto, the greatest good for the greatest number. He puts wildernesses alongside museums, art galleries, universities and libraries. Again, he emphasizes the most vital aspect, for him: people need to get away—and he pits the natural world to the artificial. But he recognizes this is an atavistic desire. The minority he’s describing here, though, is an elite minority, and he names some of America’s founding politicians and thinkers in the list: Jefferson, Thoreau, Emerson, Melville, Mark Twain, Henry Adams, William James, Washington, Morgan, Gallatin, Jackson, Scott, Lee, Thomas, Grant, Sherman, Johnston, Hancock, Sheridan, Cleveland and Roosevelt. “The issue is whether those of similar desire have a right to a minor portion of America’s vast forest area for the nourishment of this peculiar appetite.”

## ▼ Wilderness Act

- ▼ A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent

improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

- Howard Zanhiser specifically chose the word “untrammled.” Trammel is not a form of trample, and does not involve the idea of walking. It means to bind up, constrain or fetter, not simply touch or influence. Trammel can also be a noun, referring to a kind of fish net or to rope shackles tied on a horse’s legs to keep it from galloping. You can and should walk, but you can’t shackle the land.

- Rolston points out that:  
Neither the Wilderness Act nor meaningful wilderness designation requires that no humans have ever been present, only that any such peoples have left the lands ‘untrammled’. Rolston III, H. (2001) Natural and unnatural: wild and cultural. *Western North Amer. Nat.* 61(3): 267-276.
- But the new conservationists, such as Reed Noss and Dave Foreman, are clear that their sense of wilderness is largely about securing the wildlife habitat necessary to mitigate the extinction crisis (Foreman 1995, 1998 and Noss 1991). Which does, in a sense, and ironically, bring us back to the original meaning of the word, a place for wild beasts.

## ▼ The Anthropocene

- ▶ Smithsonian: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/what-is-the-anthropocene-and-are-we-in-it-164801414/?no-ist> The Anthropocene puts the whole idea of wilderness into a different framework. In this sense, we are all walking through wilderness all the time.
- ▼ Defining the Anthropocene. *Nature* **519**, 171–180 (12 March 2015).
  - A team of geologists is still considering (as of this writing) whether or not the term will be codified as a formal geological term and when would be its starting point. The Holocene began about 11700 years ago. The idea came about in the mid-nineteenth century, but was really brought to prominence by Paul Crutzen, a chemist at the Max Plank Institute for Chemister in Mainz Germany. He was the one who

made major discoveries about the ozone layer and how pollution from human activity could damage it. He won a Nobel prize. “Industrial Revolution. Between then and the start of the new millennium, he noted, humans had chewed a hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica, doubled the amount of methane in the atmosphere and driven up carbon dioxide concentrations by 30%, to a level not seen in 400,000 years.” (145)

## ▼ William Cronon & Wallace Stegner

- This is William Cronon’s idea. In his famous essay “The Trouble With Wilderness,” Argued that wilderness denies “the long and extensive human influences on the North American landscape, and thus continuing the denial of the humanity of Native Americans. Wilderness thinking presupposes a pre-Darwinian dichotomy between people and nature by treating only people-less places as real or pristine nature. The result of this dualism is misanthropy and a tendency to see the removal of people as the solution to every environmental problem. Holding wilderness to be the ideal form of nature, they argued, is an obstacle to a responsible environmentalism, which must help us live in harmony with nature in the places we inhabit and work not just the places we visit and play in. Cronon in particular worried that caring for pristine nature far from home makes it easier to tolerate the abuse and destruction of mundane nature close to home. Wilderness thinking, they alleged, also tends to treat nature as static, seeking to preserve a place in a particular form, instead of recognizing the dynamic processes at play in nature.” (From his book *Uncommon Ground*)
- Cronon is arguing for the idea of wilderness from the Romantics through the Frontierism of Frederick Jackson Turner, that thing that is against civilization. He argues: The combination of sacred wild nature from Wordsworth and the Romantics and Thoreau combined with the idea of the vanishing frontier, and the masculine virtues wild land ensured, along with the disgust with the new technologies and crowded cities, combined with the fact that the movement coincided with the last of the Indian wars, meant that wilderness was always a human construct. “There were other ironies as well, The movement to set aside national parks and wilderness areas followed hard on the heels of the final Indian wars, in which the prior human inhabitants of these areas were rounded up and moved onto reservations.” “The removal of Indians to create an “uninhabited wilderness”— uninhabited as never before in the human history of the place— reminds us just how invented, just how constructed, the American

wilderness really is.” But, in fact, the idea of wilderness from the Wilderness Society members always included the fact that humans had been part of the landscape.

- “For many Americans wilderness stands as the last remaining place where civilization, that all too human disease, has not fully infected the earth. It is an island in the polluted sea of urban-industrial modernity, the one place we can turn for escape from our own too-muchness. Seen in this way, wilderness presents itself as the best antidote to our human selves, a refuge we must somehow recover if we hope to save the planet.”
- Appreciating wildness in one’s own backyard, because the middle ground between wilderness as defined by the Wilderness Act, and civilization is realizing that we are part of nature and we are responsible for not wrecking it. “What I celebrate about such places is not just their wildness, though that certainly is among their most important qualities; what I celebrate even more is that they remind us of the wildness in our own backyards, of the nature that is all around us if only we have eyes to see it.”
- “Just as problematically, our frontier traditions have encouraged Americans to define “true” wilderness as requiring very large tracts of roadless land—what Dave Foreman calls ‘The Big Outside.’ Leaving aside the legitimate empirical question in conservation biology of how large a tract of land must be before a given species can reproduce on it, the emphasis on big wilderness reflects a romantic frontier belief that one hasn’t really gotten away from civilization unless one can go for days at a time without encountering another human being. By teaching us to fetishize sublime places and wide open country, these peculiarly American ways of thinking about wilderness encourage us to adopt too high a standard for what counts as “natural.” If it isn’t hundreds of square miles big, if it doesn’t give us God’s eye views or grand vistas, if it doesn’t permit us the illusion that we are alone on the planet, then it really isn’t natural. It’s too small, too plain, or too crowded to be authentically wild.”
- Quotes Stegner: “Wallace Stegner once wrote of the special human mark, the special record of human passage, that distinguishes man from all other species. It is rare enough among men, impossible to any other form of life. It is simply the deliberate and chosen refusal to make any marks at all.... We are the most dangerous species of life on the planet, and every other species, even the earth itself, has cause to fear our power to exterminate. But we

are also the only species which, when it chooses to do so, will go to great effort to save what it might destroy. (39)

- And Gary Snyder: “As Gary Snyder has wisely said, “A person with a clear heart and open mind can experience the wilderness anywhere on earth. It is a quality of one’s own consciousness. The planet is a wild place and always will be.” (43)

## ↳ Protected Areas around the world

- Many countries have protected areas, and the number of such areas are increasing. These include national parks and wilderness areas, national preserves, national monuments, game preserves, safari areas, and cultural lands protected by national governments. Some include: Lake Gairdner National Park in Australia, Kahuzi-Biega National Park in the Congo, Nahuel Huapi National Park in Argentina, Pechora-Ilych Nature Reserve in Russia, Vatnajökull National Park in Iceland, Kerinci Seblat National Park in Indonesia, and so forth.
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) definition that wilderness was:  
A large area of unmodified or slightly modified land, and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.  
[https://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap\\_home/gpap\\_biodiversity/gpap\\_wcpabiodiv/gpap\\_wilderness/](https://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/gpap_home/gpap_biodiversity/gpap_wcpabiodiv/gpap_wilderness/)
- But a specific designation made by an Act of Congress is specific to the U.S., which has been imported to other countries where it doesn’t do much good.
- More critics soon followed, drawing out the imperialism, colonialism or ethnocentrism latent in the preservation project. Many of the criticisms were clearly grounded. Frontier nostalgia requires a certain blindness to the perspectives of Native Americans, and western style parks have been implemented in Africa in ways that are brutal to the indigenous inhabitants.
- Ramachandra Guha, an environmental and political historian from India (1989). Guha argued that the radical environmental movement in America had an unhealthy focus on biocentrism and wilderness, which are largely irrelevant to the problems he claims are at the root of the environmental crisis: overconsumption and militarization. Environmentalism in India has largely been a class struggle between the rural poor, who depend on the forests for their subsistence, and the over-consuming urban industrialists, which threaten to destroy the

forests and poor alike. Western environmental organizations coming into India and working to establish wilderness-like reserves, such as the tiger reserves, are further displacing traditional subsistence economies to make playgrounds for the wealthy. Wilderness, according to Guha, was not appropriate in densely and long inhabited places like India. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/am-wild/#H4>

## ▼ Plant/Animal Agency

- ▼ The Wilderness Act gave preference to plants and animals, to their needs and agency, although such respect for the agency of the natural world was part of Native Americans' interaction with the land all along.
  - Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act just two months after he signed the Civil Rights Act. The two pieces of legislations could not have been more different: one was about disenfranchised humans in inner cities, one about plants and animals in untrammelled expanses. But at their core they were the same: rights—agency—for beings that before had little or none.
  - David Abram. *The Spell of the Sensuous*.
- ▼ Animal Agency
  - Donna Haraway, *The Contact Zone*
  - Val Plumwood
- ▼ Plant Agency
  - *The Intelligent Plant*, Michael Pollan - *Intelligent Plant Biology* -
  - *Brilliant Green* <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/radical-conservation/2015/aug/04/plants-intelligent-sentient-book-brilliant-green-internet> (an introduction by Michael Pollan).
  - Nalini Nadkarni, *Between Earth and Sky: Our Intimate Connections to Trees*, shows how the life of a tree extends for years beyond what it has when it is rooted.

## ▼ One Wilderness Walker: Terry Tempest Williams

- *Refuge-birds, lake levels, refuge for people. Social and environmental justice, and personal. Clan of the one-breasted woman.*
- *Finding Beauty in a Broken World* - international
- *The Hour of Land* - social and environmental justice. Talking with people who are essential to these wild places within the National Park System.

## ▼ Wilderness Travel in Urban Areas

- *Urban Exploration* - Focusing on the quality of an experience rather than its location can turn even city spaces wild. Consider Gary

Snyder's ruminations on wildness in his book *Practice of the Wild*. He explains that in theory “Wilderness is a place where the wild potential is fully expressed, a diversity of living and nonliving beings flourishing according to their own sorts of order.” However, Snyder is quick to point out that “Wilderness is now – for much of North America – places that are formally set aside on public lands – Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management holdings or state and federal parks [...] the last little places where intrinsic nature totally wails, blooms, nests, glints away. They make up only 2 percent of the land of the United States.” To address this lack, he suggests that we recognize a distinction between wilderness and wildness.

- Urban exploration (UE) is, put very simply, the exploration and documentation of forgotten, abandoned, and typically unexplored urban spaces – such as condemned factories, empty warehouses, steam tunnels, sewer systems, and the like – often undertaken in the name of “remapping” such places for the benefit of the larger UE community. Ninjalicious, author of UE's de facto handbook *Access All Areas*, describes the practice as “a sort of interior tourism that allows the curious-minded to discover a world of behind-the-scenes sights.” (3) Though such explorations often necessitate trespassing on private land, Ninjalicious insists that any lawbreaking should end there, encouraging explorers to treat their favorite haunts as public land instead of private secret by pointing out that “the broader urban exploration community has quite wisely adopted the Sierra Club's motto of 'take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints'.” (20) Ninjalicious suggests that exercised within these strictures, UE “is an incredibly enlightening hobby, and the world would be a better place if more people thought of themselves as urban explorers.” (4) Convinced myself of the uniqueness of UE's land ethic and that ethic's importance to current critical discourse on ecology and the environment, I set about collecting the following oral histories with the intent of discovering why UE matters.
- Wild in Built Environments - Jourdan Keith:  
<https://orionmagazine.org/article/desegregating-wilderness/>

## ↳ Rewilding

- ↳ Rewilding: “According to Soulé and Noss, rewilding demanded, in addition to predators, the establishment of large, strictly protected “core” reserves, and migratory corridors linking one to the next. They summarized their formula as “the three C's: cores, corridors, and carnivores.” These ideas are now considered mainstream by

conservation biologists, even those who would not necessarily describe themselves as proponents of rewilding.” Kolbert article.

- Michael Soule and Reed Noss coined the term “rewilding.” The idea was to take the focus solely away from preserving what already exists as so-called pristine. Instead, they thought of rewinding as scientifically practical. Soule explains that: With rare exceptions, such as in the former Soviet Union ... wilderness areas do not exclude human uses. Fishing, bushwalking, and low impact recreation and camping are usually permitted in wilderness. Soule, M. (2002) Debating the myths of wilderness. In: The Wilderness Society (Aust) calendar 2002 (introduction).

- Wild Places Robert Macfarlane (Kindle)

## ▼ Wilderness not just about white males

### ▼ African Americans and Wilderness.

- “Black Women and the Wilderness” - this essay from Evelyn C. White (Norton Book of Nature Writing ed Robert Finch and John Elder WW Norton 1990, 1063-1067) led a woman’s writing workshop in a wilderness area near the MaKenzie river in Oregon’s Cascade Mountains.
- Supporting and extending this point: Cassandra Y Johnson and J.M. Bowker, in The Wilderness Debate Rages on: Continuing the Great New Wilderness Debate ed. Michael P. Nelson and J. Baird Callicott. “African-American Wildland Memories.” This essay is about slaves and wildlands. “The the pre-movement environmental ear began around 1820, there were approximately 1.5 million slaves in the United States. There have been numerous accounts written of slavery and the ‘nightmare of drudgery’ under which most blacks lived. Some skilled slaves worked in sorter cities as domestic servants, artisans, or factory workers, but the majority worked on various sized plantations where their primary task was toiling on the land....Though slaves lived close to nature like other racial/ethnic groups of the period and extracted sustenance from the land (when permitted) they could not explore the wider environment. The slave stood as antonym to the American myth of unrestricted wilderness exploration....The ambiguity black appear to have with wildland environments may have begun with the slave experience....slaves assigned multiple meanings to wilderness.” (page 332) Wilderness could be a place of escape - literally, from the bonds of slavery. But it was also associated with fear and danger. It was also associated with lynchings which sometimes, though not always, took place there.
- There is also a push to return blacks to their rural origins in the south.

In *A Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South* by Stack. “The black return to rural landscapes again highlights the paradoxical relations of blacks towards wildland environments.” (342) “Because the mostly urban, black population is farther removed from the land than its rural predecessors, present generations of African Americans may also be farther removed from negative images of wildlands.”

- Carolyn Finney *Black Faces White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors*. “Race and class biases plague our notion of the wilderness, and to exclude black Americans from the landscape of the great outdoors, she writes, is to deny us our sense of identity.” Interview in *Guernica*. <https://www.guernicamag.com/interviews/landscapes-of-exclusion/> Landscapes of Exclusion, interview of Carolyn Finney by Hope Wabuke.
- "A Cripple in the Wilderness" - this essay shows that wilderness is not just for the able bodied. In fact, the disabled body was often a part of the wilderness mythology.
- *Carolina Sandilands Queer Ecologies*

## ▼ New Nature Wildernesses

### ▼ Oostvaardersplassen

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/12/24/recall-of-the-wild> A constructed wilderness, almost 15000

- “This area was originally designated for industry; however, while it was still in the process of drying out, a handful of biologists convinced the Dutch government that they had a better idea. The newest land in Europe could be used to create a Paleolithic landscape. The biologists set about stocking the Oostvaardersplassen with the sorts of animals that would have inhabited the region in prehistoric times.”
- Vera, the man who is responsible for the Oostvaardersplassen, thought that Europe’s large grazers had been hunted to oblivion. “If they could be restored, then nature could take care of itself.” It was born out of the idea of overgrazing, and the idea that wilderness should not have to be managed.
- He brought on animals that resembled those that had been there in earlier times. For example, Konik horses from Poland, that were thought have descended from tarpans, one of the last species of wild horses. Other animals like foxes came on their own.
- And the place does not do to the original meaning of wilderness, since one of its main priorities is large, wild animals. “That is probably

unimaginable for people in the United States—having wolves in the Netherlands,” Vera said. “But it is the future.”

- Took the idea of rewilding and extended it to “Pleistocene rewilding.” Finding substitute animals that could serve in place of those that would have been there originally. This idea has not caught on in the U.S. But there is a Pleistocene Park in Russia. There is a group called “Rewilding Europe” to create such preserves as Oostvaardersplassen over Europe.
  - “We try to avoid too much discussion of wilderness,” he observed at another. “For us, that is not the most important thing—at the end will this be a wilderness or not? It will be wilder than it was, and that’s what matters.” Wouter Helmer, one of the directors of Rewilding Europe.
  - “One of the appeals of rewilding is that it represents a proactive agenda—as Josh Donlan and his Pleistocene rewilding colleagues put it, a hopeful alternative to just sitting around, mourning what’s been lost. In a rewilded world, even extinction need not be considered irrevocable; the aurochs will lie down with the lynx, and the deer and the elephants will roam. On a planet increasingly dominated by people—even the deep oceans today are being altered by humans—it probably makes sense to think about wilderness, too, as a human creation. The more I saw, the more I understood why Europeans, in particular, were attracted to the idea, and the more I wanted to be convinced that it could work.”
- ▼ **Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge**  
<http://www.denverpost.com/2013/01/14/rocky-mountain-arsenal-national-wildlife-refuge-offers-free-wildlife-drive/>
- Just outside Denver, Colorado. 5,000-acre site where the U.S. Army made mustard gas during World War II was once on the Superfund list of high-priority hazardous-waste sites. Chemical factories were torn down and contaminated soil moved. Native grasses have been restored. The site was used to stockpile weapons during World War Two, but the weapons were never deployed.
  - Deer, owls, coyotes, hawks, bald eagles and other wild animals live there, including bison.
  - The refuge is “wild,” but you can drive through it as well as hike. It is one compromise in bringing back wild areas to ones that humans have wrecked. And it is an acceptance of the fact that we cannot, and never could, produce a pure wilderness, one that existed before humans came along. It is, in effect, a sense of hope.