

Contested Landscape: The Politics of Wilderness in Utah and the West

By Doug Goodman and Daniel McCool

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Wilderness means many things to many people across the United States, but in Utah it is only a slight exaggeration to say that it means one thing to almost everybody: political warfare. If the impression conveyed by this multi-authored history of the wilderness debate in Utah is correct, the controversy over how much of the state's millions of acres of unspoiled public lands should receive wilderness designation from Congress is more of a contest between political ideologies than a debate over the wild character of this vast labyrinth of rugged canyons and soaring sandstone mesas.

If the reader is looking for a political history of the long, drawn out, vitriolic battles that have highlighted a 30-year policy war, *Contested Landscape* is the primer. Fourteen clear, concise chapters expose the political anatomy of the key issues constituting the *corpus* of opposing political strategies regarding the designation of wilderness areas in Utah's expansive public lands administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Nowhere else could a curious reader find intelligible explanations of the tactics that have generated the convoluted rhetoric and resulting animosity that define this wilderness debate. The authors address arcane issues such as the demographics of public opinion-shaping; "hard" vs. "soft" release language that would open to development lands not designated as wilderness; the relationship between mining claims and wilderness study areas; facts and figures regarding livestock grazing; and the complexities introduced by the interspersion of BLM and State Trust Lands. Each chapter lays out one aspect of the debate in crisp prose, and the relevant statutes and legal precedents are clearly referenced. The book also explains how opposing political interests have exploited the intricacies of federal wilderness policy to draft a succession

of opposing wilderness bills, none of which has yet garnered enough support to break the political logjam in Washington or Salt Lake City. *Contested Landscape* is a great book for wilderness scholars and newcomers to the Utah political scene. It should help battle-weary wilderness advocates and their opponents avoid the repetition of past failures and smooth the path to more productive debate in the future.

If the reader is looking for information on the contested landscapes themselves, however, she will be largely disappointed. This political history of Utah wilderness, it turns out, has little to do with the wilderness itself. Spare mention is given to specific places, although interesting analyses of roads and mining issues are more grounded. The lack of specifics about the wilderness study areas themselves suggests that the wilderness debate no longer focuses on the evaluation of lands and recommendations for their disposition. Instead, wilderness designation has become a political contest that pits local communities against conservation groups and states rights advocates against federal land managers.

The authors address issues emanating from the differing ways that humans experience, value, and conceive of wilderness. However the cultural divide separating interest groups could be discussed in more detail, especially because Utah's unique history of European settlement has much to do with the seemingly irreconcilable differences in the wilderness debate. The tightly knit rural communities of southern Utah, mostly founded by persecuted Mormon pioneers, developed resource-based economies that nourish perspectives on land use and the purpose of nature that are defiantly different from the preservationist views of many recent settlers and observers from outside the region. Does the primary value of wild places still lie in the natural resources that are extracted to support human communities, or does greater value lie in their very wildness and the outstanding opportunities for solitude and recreation? This question, the authors suggest, is pivotal in the debate about wilderness designation, *per se*, but the perennial issue of state vs. federal authority in setting policy for public land management lurks menacingly in the shadows.

Strangely absent from *Contested Landscapes* is a detailed analysis of national perspectives, political strategies, and public opinion, despite the fact that the political impasse has turned Utah wilderness into a national issue. The authors do address many of the national political issues resulting from the legislative action, such as Congressional wrangling over guidelines for the reviews of roadless areas undertaken in the 1980's, but their analyses might have benefited from a more detailed look at the role of national organizations that are weighing in with increasing political leverage.

Environmental groups feature Utah wilderness issues on their national web sites, while fax machines in the Washington offices of anti-wilderness organizations launch press releases decrying “wilderness land grabs” across the West. Members of Congress from eastern states introduce wilderness-friendly bills, while the Utah delegation counters with subtly different bills with vastly different intent. With the battle lines drawn nationally, it is difficult to see how the resolution of bitter local disputes would lead to a broader political consensus on Utah wilderness. The debate over BLM wilderness in Utah might have been resolved many years ago if the political contest had not been so fiercely polarized within the state. However, the lack of progress over a 25-year period has raised the stakes considerably and invited much broader participation. This may no longer be a question of community or state-wide consensus, but rather a national contest in which the rural communities of southern Utah become pawns, rather than the focus of the debate. In the end, the contest is about jurisdiction over federally-administered public lands, not over the characteristics of wilderness or the human ecology of the canyon country. Resolution is unlikely until there is some healing of the wounds inflicted by battles between state and federal government over the management of public lands and resources, a battle that has polarized virtually every aspect of rural life in the intermountain West, from water rights to strip mining, from education to grazing.

The federal vs. state conflict has been etched, as if in stone, through the wilderness debate in Utah. Is it reasonable to hope that the cultural and political divisions might fuse into a new consensus, cracking the policy impasse the way the roots of an ancient juniper tree fracture the red Utah sandstone in which it grows? The editors of *Contested Landscape* advocate a hopeful, community-based process for conflict resolution, guided by a national Wilderness Management

Commission, a multi-agency, multi-state organization that would “take some of the politics out of the decision-making process.” This admirable goal, which the authors suggest might include new economic incentives for rural Utahns adversely affected by wilderness designation, is developed in some detail in the book’s concluding chapter, but the potential pitfalls of regionalizing the bitter, polarized debate are not considered, and it is unclear how trust might be established among factions that have battled for almost three decades.

In the end, the swelling inflow of newcomers, drawn from other regions by the natural beauty and new economic opportunities related to expanding tourism, may swamp the opposition of rural communities to wilderness designation. The traditional rural West, comprised of communities struggling to sustain economies dependent on agriculture and resource extraction, may be overwhelmed at the ballot box and on the tax rolls. If the editors’ hopes for community-based solutions are not realized soon, demographic and economic trends may soon tip the balance against rural communities, in favor of the tourism and service-based economy of the “New West.” Can both wilderness and rural communities be conserved in southern Utah? Ironically, the answer to this question may be determined by how many people see these pristine wildlands. As Utah’s natural wonders are appreciated by more Americans, there will be an increased demand for the legal protection that political contests have stalled. *Contested Landscape* suggests that the fate of both wildlands and rural communities hinges on whether the people who care most about the region remain locked in the myopic political contests that have precluded resolution of the wilderness debate, or whether they will be able to identify a shared vision of the future, then demand the support of state and national public servants to help realize that vision.

Ecological Economics and the Ecology of Economics

By Herman E. Daly

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This book should be on many people's secondary reading list as an example of how intelligent and otherwise well-informed, educated people miss the point. It is obvious that Professor Daly is well read in the field of economics and in the area of environmental economics. His references to both historical and current authors attests to his broad reading, however his comments and conclusions can lead one to the judgment that he either reads selectively, or doesn't fully understand some of his readings. His acceptance of the trendy economic concept of "sustainability", coupled with his embarrassing use of the biologist's notion of "carrying capacity", leads him to the conclusion that doom is just around the corner. Doom has always been just around the corner. Throughout history, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and prophets have performed various forms of entrail-readings to reach conclusions similar to those of Professor Daly.

Professor Daly weaves his solutions to the predicted doom through-out the book which have a ring similar to utopia peddlers of the past. Sharing the wealth or redistribution of resources is repeatedly suggested. A steady state economy with no growth is advocated as if an optimal level of happiness can be determined. He doesn't bother to inform us how society will solve the incentive problem of production if wealth is distributed on some method other than production, or how the level of optimal happiness will be established. In fact, his examples, when thought through, reveal his weak logic. Consider his discussion and preferences concerning growth and development where he equates growth with quantity increases and development with quality increases. Standard economic jargon agrees with these where growth is equated with more, while development equates with better. However when he employs a library to demonstrate that economic development and not growth should be the goal, his logic for his preferences does not hold up. Daly suggests that the library (a model of the economy) should be "constant but not static" in a developing but not growing state. That is, the total number of books would not change while the composition would be in perpetual motion through time, constantly replacing books with better ones. Who decides which ones are the "better" books? Does this mean

that through time the library would eventually replace the Greek classics as better books come along? One shudders to think of the book burnings that would result.

Searching for the "optimal size" of the economy occupies much of Professor Daly's thoughts as he ponders the lack of such a concept in economic theory on the macroeconomic side of the discipline, as is found within microeconomics. Perhaps he did not get to the end of the intermediate microeconomics text-book which explores the subject of general equilibrium. As resources become scarce (a relative term indicated by relative price) their price increases and hence less will be demanded in the market. This process of increased relative scarcity sends incredibly strong signals to both sides of the market to search for substitutes. In the production arena, the marginal rates of substitution (MRS) determine the rate at which one input can replace another. These rate schedules can be considered fixed in the short run, or while holding constant a particular level of technology and scientific understanding. However, as price pressures caused by scarcity build, the MRS schedules can dramatically change as the human mind modifies these MRS schedules via new scientific and technological advancements. In the consumption arena, relative scarcity works through the invisible hand via price cross elasticities as consumers substitute goods or services for those that are become relatively scarce. As these forces are brought to bear on a particular input (e.g., the environment which can be thought of as being "part of the loop") then limits are included in the model. Scale limits, which Professor Daly is overly concerned with, are thereby determined for particular resources used in the economy; however, the overall economy is not limited as it perpetually attempts to generate greater levels of consumer satisfaction. It's a mystery why this point is lost on Professor Daly. Of course there is a scale limit to particular inputs or whole group of inputs as their relative scarcity increases. However, an attempt to limit the overall level of goods and services that generate consumer satisfaction by an economy is a concept that economist have, as a group, not pursued. Most find no fault with mainstream economists avoiding this topic.

It is amusing to read the terms "empty world" and "full world" to describe the economy. Neither capital nor "nature" is a limiting factor for the economy. Rather, for a particular production process given a given set of technology, one or the other will most likely be more difficult to replace with some substitute. However, again, as knowledge increases, these rates of substitution can change. Attempting to label broad categories of inputs for the entire economy as either substitutes or complements seems a futile effort. This is especially true when one starts with an incorrect premise as does Professor Daly: "If man-made capital were a near perfect substitute for natural capital, then natural capital would be a

near perfect substitute for man-made capital.” There is no *a priori* reason why substitutability in either production or consumption must be the same both ways especially when one allows for differences in production or consumption. In fact, it would be unlikely that the rates of substitution measured either by the price cross elasticity or the MRS would be the same. In addition one can think of production processes where one input would substitute for another in one process, but would not substitute at all in a different process. Substitution is a microeconomic concept and does not lend itself to macro-analysis because it is generally assumed that the economy is perpetually moving toward general equilibrium in the numerous micro-markets.

Julian Simon, the author of *Ultimate Resource 2*, (one of the most important economic books published in our times) has passed on. Professor Daly has directed a pointed criticism at one part of his work. This may be the proper place to offer a rebuttal for Professor Simon. In particular, Professor Simon observed that as a whole, mankind builds more than he destroys. With more people, the chances of more creativity in all forms increases, and hence we can expect a higher likelihood of seeing another Einstein or Mozart in the near future

with more people. Professor Daly counters that an increased population would also increase the probability of getting another Hitler or Caligula. Again he missed the point. On NET, mankind is a builder, and the rate that man will build will be greater with more people. Even a casual observer of history would grant the number of builders that lived in the past millennium as been greater than the number of “destroyers.” As evidence, notice that the two examples of builders both lived in the latter half of the past millennium while Daly’s second example of an infamous destroyer came from the first millennium.

As a closing thought, consider Professor Daly in an early society, one in which stone tools constituted the current technology. Would he have cautioned against the rate at which the tribe was mining the supply of flint that made the best projectile points? Given his current thinking, it would be easy to see him insisting that the rate of extraction should be limited in order to provide for the tribe’s descendants into perpetuity. Less flint would have been extracted and fewer arrowheads produced meaning that less meat would have been available. The tribe might not have grown, maybe not even survived, however, the flint mine would have been preserved.

Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West

By Hal K. Rothman

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Tourism is viewed by many people, including many community leaders and international development specialists, as an effective strategy for promoting sustainable economic development among peoples and communities whose economies are in need of development. Tourism offers the lure of economic prosperity without the environmental costs associated with extractive and manufacturing economies. In addition, two specific types of tourism — heritage tourism and ecotourism — promote conservation. Heritage tourism increases the profitability of conserving historical resources while ecotourism promotes the preservation of natural resources by turning them into marketable commodities whose value is based on their preservation rather than their consumption. However, in this lucid and insightful analysis of the development of tourism in the American West, Hal Rothman, a professor of western and environmental history at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, offers a cautionary tale about too readily accepting tourism as a panacea for community development. Tourism, he argues, is in reality a “devil’s bargain” in which local communities gain economic development, but only through the loss of their soul, that is, the loss of what makes them a community. Rothman maintains that local community leaders are myopic in believing that they can use tourism as a way of preserving the integrity of their communities. He argues instead that tourism functions as a form of colonialism through which local communities and places become transformed aesthetically into marketable caricatures of themselves. At the same time, native inhabitants become marginalized in their own communities as these become transformed into constructed environments that serve the interests of outsiders over natives. Indeed, Rothman, perceives tourism as “the most colonial of colonial economies” (p.11).

Rothman provides interesting, provocative and highly readable accounts of the development of several major tourist destinations in the American West, including the Grand Canyon, Santa Fe, Jackson Hole, Aspen, Vail, Sun Valley and Las Vegas. Together, these case studies illustrate a recurring evolutionary pattern. Local communities in need of income and employment accept the new economic opportunity pre-

sented by “neonatives”, those individuals who, while being outsiders to a local community, consider themselves more enlightened in defining the significance of the local place than the locals who live there and better resourced to promote their newly adopted locale as a tourist destination. In the end, however, both the locals and the neonatives lose out. As the local tourist economy develops, they become displaced by outside capital and large bureaucratic enterprises that define the local community or place in increasingly non-local terms and are even more responsive to external market conditions. Ultimately, both the natives and neonatives become victims of the very market forces they themselves had hoped to exploit. While Rothman specifically examines the development of tourism in the American West, his analysis suggests that the American experience is not unique. Rather, inasmuch as the developments he outlines are a product of tourism itself, they should emerge wherever tourism occurs.

The power of tourism to transform local communities, according to Rothman, lies in the very nature of what, borrowing Edward Abbey’s phrase, he defines as “industrial tourism.” Industrial tourism in Rothman’s analysis is a distinctly postindustrial activity created by the wealth and leisure that has accompanied industrialization. In postindustrial societies, experience has emerged as *the* commodity to be packaged and marketed to those who have replaced the accumulation of wealth with the possession of experience. The industrial tourist, according to Rothman, gains self-fulfillment as the member of the right crowd, of being intellectually and morally above other tourists. Rothman sees this “conceit” as common among elites concerned to maintain their distinct status, academics and environmentalist included, and as one of the more important force driving the competitive marketing of tourist destinations.

The devil’s bargain associated with industrial tourism is that, by catering to outsiders who bring outside values and resources to the community, local communities and places are transformed from first to third nature as defined by William Cronon, that is, from a world of authentic ecological and social relations through which individuals and communities gain sustenance and survival into a world in which “nature” and “community” are created in order to serve as a source of identity and emotional fulfillment. In the process, communities and locales replace their authenticity with “constructed” or “bottled” authenticity as they become economically dependent on outsiders and external marketing strategies that not only define the community differently than local residents, but which repeatedly modify the definition of a locality in response to changing consumer demand.

Living, according to Rothman, is replaced by “lifestyle” as one tourist community after another transforms itself into the mythic perception that outsiders have of the town or

place. Locals must increasingly fit visitors' definition of "authentic". In the process, distinct functioning local communities are replaced by carbon-copy, pseudo-villages. Local buildings are replaced with faux Victorian houses or faux Pueblo architecture, quaint winding streets and increasingly upscale businesses that cater almost exclusively to outsiders. As Rothman illustrates in great detail, Aspen, Sun Valley, Santa Fe, Jackson Hole and other tourist destinations throughout the American West, including even the Grand Canyon and other national parks, have repeatedly remade themselves in response to changing external economic, social and cultural forces. Aspen transformed itself from a former mining town containing many local skiers into a pseudo-community that serves skiers from the eastern U.S. and elsewhere in the same way and for the same reasons that Santa Fe changed from a remote and poor territorial capital into a quaint and colorful multi-ethnic festival.

Even the Grand Canyon has undergone a series of makovers. Over time it has served as a repository of the positive spiritual values associated with American imperial grandeur and destiny, as well as a symbol of the wilderness experience and of an environmentalist ethic. Moreover, in an attempt to promote and market the Canyon as a place of mythic grandeur, the Fred Harvey Company has exercised considerable editorial control over the very definition of authenticity associated with the Canyon. The Company, for example, has reduced the visibility of those Indians, such as the Havasupai, that don't measure up to the image it wishes to project while promoting the visibility of those peoples, such as the Hopi, that do, even though the former have a much stronger claim to being indigenous to the Canyon than do the latter.

However, the tourist-induced changes that take place are not just aesthetic; they are also social, political and economic. Locals have not only had to accommodate tourist aesthetic expectations, they have also had to accept the economic and political control of their communities by outside interests. In many cases, due to rising real estate costs and the predominance of low paying service jobs, local inhabitants have even lost the ability to continue to live in their own towns. In the end, Aspen and Vail have become up-scale, tourist-oriented shopping centers with faux Victorian architecture, while Santa Fe has become an up-scale tourist-oriented shopping center with faux Pueblo architecture. Few businesses remain in any of these towns that serve local needs. In fact, major conflicts have developed between tourists and locals throughout the West as the locals who work in the tourist towns press their interests, such as the recent conflict over affordable housing in Vail and the anti-tourist backlash that led to the election of Debbie Jaramillo in 1994 as the mayor of Santa Fe.

Rothman dispels the notion, however, that the negative effects of tourism on local peoples and communities can simply be attributed to the greed of distant corporations or of local businesses. The effects of tourism, he argues, are the social and ecological consequences of industrial tourism itself. As Rothman so eloquently states, "we are all industrial tourists. Physically we can take only pictures and leave only footprints. Psychically, socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally, we inexorably change all we touch. (p. 377)." Anyone who visits Aspen, Vail, Jackson Hole, Grand Canyon or Grand Teton National Parks, the Amboseli National Game Reserve in Kenya or the Costa Rican rain forest are tourists and contribute to the impact that tourism brings. Even those who hike or river-raft into the Grand Canyon or who backpack into the Bob Marshall Wilderness are, by definition, tourists and have an impact. Indeed, even those who pay tens of thousands of dollars to ascend the K2 are, according to Rothman, tourists. All tourists participate in the transformation.

Tourism is, thus, a powerful social force with far reaching economic and political implications. It may be seen as a new form of global colonialism through which those with disposable incomes seeking experience impact the lives of those throughout the world who are under economic pressure to perform the services that tourists demand and expect in return for the money they spend. We, thus, have Maasai warriors resentfully dressing up and performing "traditional dances" for international tourists for the same reason that many Native Americans put aside those parts of their lives that would not be considered "native" to outsiders in order to produce "indigenous wares" and perform "traditional dances" for the tens of thousands of tourists who overrun the Southwest every summer in order to see "authentic" American Indians. We thus have the ultimate "devil's bargain" associated with tourism, according to Rothman: those with money control the lives and communities of those without money. Through their purchasing power, tourists control the behavior of the locals and the public definition of local culture.

Rothman's analysis raises important issues regarding the public perception of tourism, most notably the generally accepted view that tourism is a benign and even desirable vehicle of economic development. The issues he raises are important given that such perceptions underlay public policy, as evidenced by the widespread promotion of both cultural tourism and ecotourism domestically and internationally. Rothman effectively raises questions in the reader's mind regarding the extent to which the development of tourist economies truly serves the interests of local communities rather than the interests of the outsiders who promote tourism as a strategy of development.