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## Paper trails: The Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission and the rationalization of recreational resources

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines the history of the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission (ORRRC) in the United States between 1955 and 1963 and efforts to make recreational resources legible for federal governance. By drawing on insights from Critical Resource Geography, I highlight the ways that the ORRRC systematically accounted for and categorized recreational resources, creating a “patchwork landscape” that zoned outdoor recreational resources and promoted efficient use and rational resource conservation. I argue that these efforts required a negotiation between abstraction and an awareness of the situated nature of recreational landscapes.

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### 1. Introduction

*The nation's outdoor recreation demands will be met only through wise decisions on resource allocation, sound planning and effective development of facilities. These all require the support of thorough knowledge and extensive data (Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission, 1962b, p. 183).*

Morris Udall once praised the Conservation Director of the Izaak Walton League, saying that “Joe Penfold was the creative genius and driving force behind the most important and far reaching conservation legislation in American history” (Lorenz, 2005). Among Penfold’s primary achievements were the successes surrounding the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission (ORRRC). Under Penfold’s guidance and the sponsorship of Senator Clinton Anderson and Representative Stuart Udall, the ORRRC was established in June 1958 to answer three questions: “What are the recreation wants and needs now and what will they be in the years 1976 and 2000? What are the recreation resources of the Nation available to meet those needs? What policies and programs should be recommended to ensure that the needs of the present and future are adequately and efficiently met” (Establishment of a National Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission, 1958)?

The findings and policy recommendations of the ORRRC released in 1962 have had a lasting impact on conservation policy and recreation planning on the nation’s public lands. These recom-

mendations removed significant obstacles to the passage of the Wilderness Act, the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Brown, 2002; Siehl, 2008) and led directly to the establishment of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, later part of the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (Fitch and Shanklin, 1970). The ORRRC solidified recreation as a key component of Multiple Use management, granting it a permanent place in resource planning across the nation’s public lands (Public Land Law Review Commission, 1970). Due to the success of the ORRRC subsequent commissions have adopted the bipartisan, citizen-led structures of the ORRRC to deal with a myriad of public land concerns, most immediately the Public Land Law Review Commission of 1970 (Public Land Law Review Commission, 1970, p. 197; Siehl, 1981, p. 41, 2008). Perhaps the most lasting and important policy initiative proposed by the ORRRC has been the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) established in 1964 at the same ceremony that celebrated the creation of the Wilderness Preservation System. President Johnson assured the country that through the LWCF “we will begin, as of this day, to acquire on a pay-as-you-go basis the outdoor recreation lands that tomorrow’s Americans will require” (Johnson, 1964). The LWCF established a permanent fund for improving federal recreation resources and continues to provide matching funds for state and local recreation and conservation projects. The LWCF’s critical role in securing and developing outdoor recreation resources continues today as President Obama encourages more robust dispersal of LWCF funds to support conservation efforts across the country (Simon, 2009).

In this paper I trace the history and work of the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission in the United States between

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1957 and 1962. I begin by establishing more firmly the Critical Resource Geography frame around concepts of “statistical picturing”, the emergence of ecosystem services as resources, and the geographic complexities of situated resources. I then examine debates surrounding the formulation of the ORRRC in 1958, especially the tensions between outdoor recreation and the extractive understandings of Multiple Use dominant among timber, mining, and grazing interests at the time. Through an assessment of the findings and recommendations of the Commission as they emerged in 1962, I address the recommendations and policy proposals put forward by the ORRRC. I argue that these recommendations sought to alleviate tensions between the abstract spaces of resource planning at the federal level and the situated implementation of those planning decisions as they furthered commercial development and resource conservation. These findings have implications for critical resource geographers as we consider the material relationships between resources as they exist in the landscape and are regulated, produced, and conserved.

The release of the ORRRC reports in 1962 remains a key moment in post-war conservation and resource planning, establishing recreational landscapes as resources, protected under a rationalist resource planning and conservation umbrella. Those recreation resources support an outdoor recreation industry that contributed \$730 billion to the US economy in 2005 centered on recreational uses of public and private lands where people can camp, hike, fish, ski, kayak, hunt, or simply look at the scenery (Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2006, p. 3). These recreational landscapes are not merely beautiful pieces of nature, but part of an historical process of modernist, scientific planning that reproduced these landscapes as resources, rendering them legible for state management and commercialization – “efforts to introduce efficiency and standardize production and measurement” (Robertson, 2007, p. 504) – through a process of “statistical picturing” (Demeritt, 2001b). By producing a highly abstracted statistical landscape, conservationists, public land management agencies and policy makers involved in the work of the ORRRC reframed outdoor recreational lands specifically as natural resources, similar to timber, mineral, and forage resources. This statistical and simplified landscape for outdoor recreation privileged a set of policy, management, and planning options at the federal level that valued efficiency and use. It required seemingly contradictory but simultaneous steps toward abstraction and situatedness. On one hand it depended upon abstract quantification and resource management and on the other, a concern for the recreational resources’ specific material and ecological conditions.

This seeming contradiction calls attention to the tension between abstract federal resource planning and management, and the situated production of individual resources as they are embedded in complex relationships between public policy and private development, the contested valuation of different resources, and the frequent incompatibility of resource planning programs. These tensions emerge in the debates surrounding the development of the ORRRC. The balances found have shaped the ways we manage and develop recreation resources, but they have not eliminated the conflict associated with the development of those resources on the public lands. While the ORRRC recommended follow-up studies every 20 years, subsequent efforts to account for the nation’s recreational resources have become embroiled in political infighting and have had a less significant impact (Siehl, 2008). In 2008, “Resources for the Future” in collaboration with other conservation and recreational organizations initiated an updated inventory and analysis of the status and future need for recreational resources in the country and revitalized recreation planning across the country (Outdoor Resources Review Group, 2008). Increased demand for both recreational and traditional resources calls for a new critical understanding of out-

door recreational landscapes as resources, fully implicated in the conflicts associated with the process of resource production and development.

Under the umbrella of “Critical Resource Geography” geographers have demonstrated that natural resources are products of both their biophysical properties and the political, social, and economic institutions involved in producing them (Bakker and Bridge, 2006; Himley, 2008; Jonas and Bridge, 2003). The work of the ORRRC challenges us to consider the nature of situated resources – those resources that are geographically fixed and deemed valuable because of their specific geographic contexts, conditions, or histories. As the ORRRC set about producing a set of recreational resources, they set out to resolve the tension between the abstraction of landscapes in the production of resources, and those resources’ situated natures. This paper, therefore, challenges critical resource geographers to expand the scope of their analyses to consider not only the spatial extraction, production, and commodification of resources, but to query how entire landscapes are implicated in the process of regulation. Recreation resources are situated in complex and diverse cultural and political landscapes requiring equally intricate mechanisms of resource governance. In the United States, the ORRRC established a method by which resources were abstracted through accounting that aggregated information by census region and collapsed different landscapes into a categorization scheme, a patchwork landscape compatible with a wide variety of other resource uses of the public lands. Associated with this was a movement towards an awareness of the situatedness of recreational resources, through an emphasis on “effective acres” (ORRRC, 1962b, p. 5) that considered questions of access, the provisioning of amenities, and the role of localized, private commercialization in the larger recreational resource framework. To support a management program that sought to maximize efficient use, the ORRRC produced a patchwork landscape in which recreational landscapes were divided into categories based upon their potential to meet differentiated recreational needs. Through these situated resource spaces, the patchwork landscape simultaneously provided a public good while reinforcing a resource governance model that encouraged private development and capitalization of recreational resources.

## 2. Critical Resource Geography and outdoor recreation

The production of resources involves an evolving negotiation between natural processes, political economy, and institutions of environmental governance (Bakker, 2002; Bridge and Jonas, 2002; McCarthy, 2004; Prudham, 2005). Much of the research pertaining to the ways that natural entities become resources has been concerned with the historically contingent ways that individual resources have been re-regulated under new forms of commodification (see for example Bakker, 2004; Mansfield, 2003; Prudham, 2003; Swyngedouw, 2004). Analyses of these processes have been alert to the ways that state resource regimes simplify and rationalize complex cultural and natural processes to make them legible for governance, and the ways that local and regional government and non-governmental agencies negotiate such comprehensive state visions (Li, 2005; Scott, 1998). Those abstract state visions are not only negotiated or resisted by local actors, but also by the very complex and material processes of nature which consistently challenge state and market efforts to rationalize and control non-human nature and the provision of environmental services such as wetlands and wildlife refuges (Bridge, 2009; Langston, 1995; Robertson, 2000; Wilson, 2002).

Implicit in many efforts to rationalize resources in order to maximize production is an associated effort to manage their conservation. This tension, between maximizing use and preventing

overuse, lies at the heart of resource conservation planning programs and theoretical perspectives on capitalism and natural resources. For James O'Connor the tendency of firms to over-exploit their resource base represents a core component of the second contradiction of capitalism. This over-exploitation results in short term productivity gains and long term losses. It falls upon the state to establish regulatory rules and institutions responsible for curtailing the impulse of over-exploitation (O'Connor, 1997). These regulatory practices are based upon a particular production of state and scientific knowledge that has been a key component in negotiating the apparent contradiction between maximized use and resource conservation (Hays, 1999).

David Demeritt has argued that “statistical picturing”, – the quantification and representation of resources or natural phenomena – “helped redefine the basis for public trust in trained scientific experts whose technical practices lay people had to depend upon but could not fully understand” (Demeritt, 2001b, p. 455). By exploring the ways that Progressive Era foresters accounted for the scope of timber extraction across the country, and transformed that accounting into easily readable maps, he argues that quantification and simplification efforts were not simply a tool used by powerful interests to further their own economic and political standing, but became an important rhetorical device to help scientists gain credibility and further their argument in the public sphere (Demeritt, 2001a,b). Demeritt’s understanding of statistical picturing builds upon Mitchell’s (1991) articulation of “enframing”, through which “the forest was arranged to appear before viewing subjects as something graspable in terms of the distinction between reality (pictured as something external to the subject and in this sense ontologically ‘objective’) and its objective (in the sense of disinterested, aperspectival, and mechanically produced) representation” (Demeritt 2001b, p. 435). Many Critical Resource Geographers continue to explore quantification and the production of expert knowledge as key components of resource exploitation, privatization, and market oriented governance (see for example Bakker, 2005; Bear, 2006; Liverman, 2004). However, as Demeritt has argued, statistical picturing can also function as an important tool for conservation and environmental protection. Statistical picturing is as rhetorical and political as it is visual. It is both a way of seeing, of making legible (Scott, 1998), and a way to communicate complex information.

The “statistical picturing” of natural resources represents a critical moment in their commoditization and the processes by which they are brought to market, and in their conservation and regulation through the production of governable spaces (Kirsch, 2002). It is simultaneously a purportedly objective, scientific act, and a rhetorical, political one. The ORRRC produced a “scientific” account of the recreational resources of the United States that provided conservationists with a powerful set of arguments for the preservation of natural spaces and the conservation of outdoor recreation resources as a public good. At the same time it linked outdoor recreation conservation to extractive interests by reifying a set of resource planning practices that placed additional pressures on the landscapes recreationalists and conservations sought to protect. Further, the statistical picturing of outdoor recreation resources exposed the tension between abstract resource planning at the federal level and specific, diverse, and often conflicting uses of the public lands in practice.

By paying attention to the ways that ecosystems and people are disciplined, simplified, and rationalized, Robertson (2004) has examined the relationship between capital, nature, and regulatory institutions with attention to ecological and social processes as they are embedded in the landscape. Specifically, through tracing the process of “disciplining nature”, he is able to introduce a natural materiality to the broader question of the enframing of nature, and provide a critical perspective on

restoration ecology and the creation of hybrid landscapes and a new commodity. Robertson demonstrates that the emergence of a market for wetlands depends upon a tightly linked re-regulation of institutions under emergent neoliberal regimes of governance and the production and sale of an abstracted landscape-based commodity. Noel Castree describes this abstraction happening in two phases: first, an abstraction of the thing whereby it is “assimilated to the qualitative homogeneity of a broader type or process” (2003, p. 281), and second, a spatial abstraction that “involves any individualized thing in one place being treated as really the same as an apparently similar thing located elsewhere” (281). The processes of accounting and categorization of recreational landscapes resulted in a highly abstracted set of recreation resources more amenable to governance and commercialization.

My analysis of the ORRRC considers the ways that recreational resources are specifically situated, even as they are abstracted for the sake of legibility and scientific rational management which simultaneously seeks to maximize and conserve their use. The value of these geographically fixed resources depends upon a highly contingent set of relationships between other resource activities, potentially incompatible uses, aesthetic and economic valuation, and a diverse range of access issues and the private provision of local amenities. These amenities are valuable to the extent that they are not extractable, but that their situated use value (economic and cultural) exceeds the exchange value of their components. Their production, management, and incorporation into the market and systems of government are simultaneously a project of geographical and material abstraction and categorization, and of a profound geographic specificity in terms of their embeddedness within existing and potential programs of resource development and economic investment. Situated resources are not “coaxed or coerced” (Tsing, 2005, p. 51) from lived landscapes, but continue to be embedded in them. These situated resources, in the words of Bridge, help us to “ask why something is regarded as a resource, who benefits from prevailing patterns of resource production and consumption and who pays the price, the valuations of nature that facilitate these patterns and the valuations which can prove more resistive, and to query physical augmentation of supply as the default strategy for dealing with scarcity” (2009, p. 21). However, given their situated natures, they demand that we ask questions not only of the resources themselves, but of the relationships between resources and geographic embeddedness.

Demeritt and Prudham both understand the process of statistical picturing as “complicit in the production of ecologically simplified forests in the image of the abstraction, while also tending to downplay social contestation of access to and control of forests as social spaces” (Prudham, 2009, p. 131, see also Robbins, 2001; Braun, 2002). Understanding resources as situated provides an opportunity to more explicitly consider the ways that resources exist in complex and often incompatible relationships with other natural and cultural resources. This study of the ORRRC begins to answer those questions, to consider how the production and conservation of recreational resources required the production of an abstract space, a patchwork landscape compatible with other resource uses of the public lands. That abstraction necessitated a contradictory movement towards a greater understanding of recreational resources’ situated natures in order to maximize use and efficient development. This tension between abstraction and situatedness frames continuing debates regarding often incompatible aesthetic, cultural, and economic values of a specific landscape, questions of access and commercialization, as well as conflicts between the perceived public good and private resource development. Negotiating this tension plays a key role in the processes through which resource use might be maximized and conserved through efficiency and conservation.

### 2.1. Outdoor recreation in historical context

In the years immediately following World War II, the campgrounds in the National Parks and other areas became small cities during peak seasons and available campsites were “as rare as the bald eagle” (Rothman, 1998, p. 203). Youth groups, including the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and religiously affiliated groups, increased their efforts to bring children into the woods. These groups both implicitly and explicitly tied their trips to a discourse of freedom, resourcefulness, and preparedness designed to enculture children to specific gendered roles within democratic, corporate America (Mergen, 2003, p. 662). The decade saw an increase in the cultural value associated with time spent in the outdoors as people found in the mountains and forests a panacea for the pressures of urban life (Cordell et al., 2002; *Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission*, 1961). The back-country trails also become more developed as lighter backpacks, tents, and sleeping bags brought back from the battlefields made back-country hikers more self-sufficient (Turner, 2002). Technological developments opened up more of the mountains to more people and made highly skilled recreational activities easier to learn (Rothman, 1998; Coleman, 2004). Major recreational organizations led back-country trips to popular locations throughout the West, bringing hundreds of people at a time to hike, ride, fish, and climb.

While Americans headed to rural areas for outdoor recreation opportunities in the post-war years, they were also choosing to live in the cities and suburbs, producing a home building boom that applied greater pressure on the nation's timber resources. Many lumber companies had over-harvested their private timberlands to support the war effort. Seeking more timber to meet the housing demand, timber firms pressured the government to open even more public lands for timber leases (Rome, 2001; Robbins, 2004). Forest managers at the time advocated for ever more intensive scientific forestry practices to support increased timber production, but the very measures that might ensure continued timber production destroyed many aspects of the forests that recreational users found most valuable, exposing deep tensions between timber interests and the aesthetic and recreational expectations of recreational visitors to the forest (Burnett and Davis, 2002; Robbins, 2004, p. 183). A key challenge in recreation resource planning would be to find a way for recreation and extraction activities to coexist both on the landscape and within the regulatory systems under a broad policy of Multiple Use management. The Forest Service was making more land available for timber production just as many Americans were using those same forests for outdoor recreation and many firms and local communities were capitalizing on opportunities to provide access and amenities to recreation users. Recreation organizations argued that outdoor recreation was an appropriate use for the public lands that might supersede the values of timber, grazing, and mining interests (Rothman et al., 1998). By doing so they disputed a dominant interpretation of Multiple Use management even as they framed their own arguments along the same lines as extractive interests (Hirt, 1994).

As part of an effort to coordinate all resource management and to maximize efficient production of resources, the Forest Service implemented an agency-wide policy of “Multiple Use” management (Hays, 1999). While the term had gained a great deal of traction in debates about resource management by the late 1950s, its meaning spawned confusion more often than it prompted a clearly articulated planning policy (Hirt, 1994, p. 131–150). Originally the term was taken as a “directive [to the Forest Service] to manage tracts of land for some combination of uses” (Hagenstein 1992, p. 31). By the late 1950s, however, it had seemed more a rhetorical device than an established management practice. Arthur Carhart wrote to Hubert Humphrey of his

dissatisfaction with the term which at one time had meant an integrated approach to resource management: “It now has taken on more of the idea of ‘laminated’ use...of each specialty piled on top of the others by the ‘experts’ who do the Multiple Use planning, without regard to other uses and their all-use balance” (Carhart, 1958). The concept of Multiple Use and its application was never monolithic and, at least rhetorically, has included space for outdoor recreation (*Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act*, 1958; *US Forest Service*, 1960). At both the hearings surrounding the creation of the ORRRC and the debates surrounding the Wilderness Act, it became clear that extractive interests took advantage of the confusion surrounding the concept of Multiple Use to limit the scope of recreational uses of the public lands (*US Senate*, 1957; Burnett and Davis, 2002; Harvey, 2005.). Despite lip service to a literal interpretation of Multiple Use that included outdoor recreation, many foresters and their allies on Congress tended to see Multiple Use as a timber first policy in which other uses might be acceptable (Langston, 1995, p. 266).

Conservationists tended to disagree. David Brower, Executive Director of the Sierra Club, went so far as to define Multiple Use as “timber production plus anything else that is compatible with stumps” (Brower, 1959). Regardless, the concept of Multiple Use enjoyed a great deal of support in Congress and, in the midst of a push for documentation of the availability of recreational facilities, outdoor recreation was often seen as contradictory to a principle centered upon intensive and efficient exploitation and removal of natural resources. The increase in outdoor recreation would challenge long held beliefs about what constituted a natural resource, how those resources related to one another, and how the countryside might best be used “for the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run” (Gifford Pinchot, quoted in Steen, 2004, p. 75).

### 2.2. Outdoor recreation and Multiple Use: more fully enjoying the country

*Boating, fishing, camping, hiking, skiing and hundreds of other recreational opportunities can and must be wisely developed so that present and future generations of Americans can more fully enjoy their own country (Eisenhower, 1958).*

Much of the country's recreation infrastructure was built by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the interwar years. As part of a jobs program during the Depression, young men lived in camps to build trails, campgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches and other amenities designed to improve the user experience of the National Parks and National Forests. By the mid 1950s, many of these structures had become outdated, rundown, or simply irrelevant for the emerging needs of a recreating public (Maher, 2007). In 1956 the Park Service embarked on “Mission 66” in order to better understand and improve the state of the recreational infrastructure and to upgrade their facilities in time for their 50th anniversary (Appleman, 1958). In 1957, the Forest Service followed suit with its own infrastructure maintenance project, “Operation Outdoors,” modeled after the Park Service program (Hirt, 1994).

Both of these programs were primarily concerned with recreation facilities, the public infrastructure that supported outdoor recreational experiences, and were part of a wave of resource assessments in the early 1950s, which included the Forest Service's “Timber Resource Review,” an agency-wide assessment of the availability and accessibility of timber resources (*United States Forest Service*, 1958). These programs were limited to their representative agencies, accounting for facilities and resources in isolation. None of the programs made a concerted effort to account for the qualities of the landscape itself that were necessary to meet a

diverse set of needs. Further, each reflected the rancor that characterized the relationship between the Forest Service and the Park Service (Williams, 2000, p. 313).

Outdoor recreation depends upon specific types of landscapes. Whether a forest, a lake, a stream populated by fish, or a mountain covered in snow, outdoor recreationalists require specific natural landscapes and conditions in order to participate in and enjoy their activity. Writing to the Executive Board of the Izaak Walton League, Joe Penfold, the Conservation Director of the League compared recreation to farming, or, more specifically, to farm products: “like all other crops, outdoor recreation results from sound management and intelligent conservation of basic natural resources” (1956). Later, while sick in a hospital bed, Penfold recounted the reasons he thought a recreation resource inventory would be important in making the case for the preservation of wildlands.

The water developers could detail voluminous figures and down to the last quart the amount of water which the city of Denver would require in the year 1990. . . The timber people knew how much a cut off the National Forest would be required to keep their mills fully busy. . . The conservationist, recreationist, the outdoor enthusiast had nothing of this sort to portray to the public in the various meetings and hearings which we have attended (Penfold, 1966).

Penfold understood recreational landscapes as natural resources, amenable to rationalization and standardization under a system of modernist resource management. For Penfold, the quantitative logic of management could most effectively support the preservationist argument. Once quantified as resources, recreational landscapes could be mapped, managed, regulated and developed through the same or similar schemes that regulated more traditional resources such as hay, water, and timber. The efficient management of recreational resources across jurisdictional boundaries was deemed critical to their capacity to be conserved for extended beneficent use (US Senate 1957, p. 13).

Yet the question of just how outdoor recreation related to the production of other natural resources on the public lands remained unresolved. At the hearing introducing the ORRRC bill to the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Public Lands, Penfold attempted to preempt the arguments put forward by those who marshaled the Multiple Use arguments against recreational planning and use of public lands. In his opening remarks, he broached the relationship between outdoor recreation and Multiple Use. “Outdoor recreation” requires space and the use, but not necessarily the consumption of basic natural resources. Recreational use of resources may conflict with other resource uses, but they are seldom mutually exclusive. When they become so, it is usually “the result of poor planning or no planning at all” (US Senate, 1957, p. 37). For Penfold and the early advocates of the ORRRC, the link between Multiple Use and outdoor recreation rested upon rational resource planning and management. Rather than understanding outdoor recreation as incongruous with the Multiple Use concept, they simply gave existing recreational uses equal standing under the Multiple Use umbrella. They recognized that many other practices related to public lands management were also contradictory to a strict interpretation of Multiple Use (Salzer, 1957). Claiming a space for outdoor recreation within this concept had the auxiliary effect of placing outdoor recreation landscapes firmly within the modernist resource conservation and planning frame. Under a strictly governed conservation planning regime, space for outdoor recreation of nearly all types could be maintained, regardless of whether or not it was compatible with stumps.

Penfold had little difficulty communicating the need for an inventory of recreational resources to congressional leadership. It proved more difficult to convince them of his vision of the relation-

ship between outdoor recreation and Multiple Use. Throughout the debates surrounding the ORRRC bill, advocates of outdoor recreation tiptoed around the perception that recreational landscapes were single use landscapes, diametrically opposed to the concept of Multiple Use that governed most public land management decisions, arguments that would be echoed in debates that surrounded the Wilderness Act. W.F. McCulloch, a faculty member at the Oregon School of Forestry, gave a speech at the Forest Supervisor's meeting in Portland in 1956 in which he expressed his views, representative of many in the timber establishment, concerning the relationship between outdoor recreation and Multiple Use.

One situation which resource managers will find increasingly difficult to tolerate is the ascendancy of the urban bird watchers, the daffodil wing of nature lovers. These often well-meaning townfolk are self-styled experts in all phases of resource use, having rarely spent so much as a single day in actual resource occupation... The naiveté of the fanatic “preservers” is the frequent and often political outcry for preservation of recreation areas. The tracts of land dedicated to just one use nullifying the long established principle of Multiple Use (recounted in James, 1960).

Despite efforts to slip outdoor recreation into a Multiple Use system of management, it did pose a number of difficulties for planners that exposed significant tension with strict Multiple Use agendas. In the debates surrounding the creation of the Commission the concept of Multiple Use would play a critical role in the work of the ORRRC. Edward Crafts, Assistant Chief of the Forest Service, for example, testified that “the demand for all resources and needs of the national forests is growing each year. If Multiple Use is to work, it is necessary when considering recreation needs for example to also consider other needs and to maintain a reasonable balance between all National Forest resources and services” (US House of Representatives, 1957, p. 69). Few, however could establish a clear path towards the incorporation of an aesthetic understanding of the landscape as was often presented by recreationalists and extractive, commodity driven interests. David Brower, while recognizing the importance of Multiple Use in the work of the ORRRC was also wary of the ambiguity of the concept.

Loosely worded regulations, which were adequate for a loosely populated land largely free of conflict, will have to become specific—and must in turn be based upon more specific law if we are to avoid a dangerous concentration of discretion. For instance, there will need to be a clearer understanding of the full meaning of Multiple Use, and the limitations of Multiple Use. This has never meant a great number of cooks working over the same pot of broth, although many people have thought this was the meaning (US House of Representatives, 1957, p. 54).

Multiple Use planning, in an effort to maximize the efficiency of resource production on the public lands, relied upon an abstraction of specific land-uses that simplified the effects of individual uses on the ecological conditions of those lands. High intensity timber production, for example might frequently occur on lands that were also dedicated to watershed protection, a use which would be significantly hampered by intensive timber production.

In 1960, just as the ORRRC was beginning their hearings and gathering data, the relationship between Multiple Use, resource conservation and outdoor recreation become somewhat more clear, at least at the legislative level. The Forest Service introduced the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield (MUSY) Act in 1960 and many conservationists immediately viewed it as an attempt to scuttle wilderness legislation. While many leading conservationists were flatly against the bill (Brower, 1960; Marshall, 1960),

Howard Zahniser, Executive Director of the Wilderness Society and a leading architect of the Wilderness Preservation Act, saw the Multiple Use bill as an opportunity. Zahniser firmly believed that wilderness preservation could fit within an understanding of Multiple Use. He and Charles Callison succeeded in getting an amendment written into the bill at the last moment stating that “the establishment and maintenance of areas of wilderness are consistent with the purposes and provisions of this Act” (Callison 1960; Harvey, 2005, p. 2004). Many however, including the editors of the *New York Times*, cautioned that the “Multiple Use bill does not establish [protection] for the few remaining areas of primitive wilderness on the federal lands” (*New York Times*, 1960).

The final draft of the MUSY Act stated that Forest Service areas should be administered for “outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes”. Given the important role of recreation within the bill, the *Oregon Journal* assessed that it was an effort by the Forest Service to “stay in the recreation business” (*Oregon Journal*, 1960). In practice however, it did little to quash the debates as to the meanings and best ways to implement a Multiple Use policy. “Although the new law ostensibly gave equal statutory weight to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, range, timber, and watershed protection, no guidelines were established for establishing priorities” (Burnett and Davis, 2002, p. 207). With the concept of Multiple Use enshrined in legislation and outdoor recreation established as a significant part of the management concept, it was up to the ORRRC to determine just how outdoor recreation might coexist with timber, grazing, and mining resources, not to mention the broad range of recreational activities that occurred on the public lands and around their edges.

### 2.3. Accounting for recreation resources: recreationalists and recreational environments

*Recreation is a protean term meaning almost anything people do with their leisure time. It is not a resource, but an activity compounded of two parts, recreationalists and recreation environments. Resources such as timber, forage, water, or minerals exist in land, recreation exists in the mind and takes place in an environment based on the land (Wildlands Resource Center, 1962, p. 32).*

The initial findings and recommendations of the ORRRC were released in 1962, and accompanied by 27 supplementary reports which covered subjects ranging from the history of the idea of wilderness (Wildlands Resource Center, 1962), the current understanding of Multiple Use (Shanklin, 1962), the effect of foreign travel on domestic outdoor recreation (Martin, 1962), the detailed results of the ORRRC survey of outdoor recreation use (Ferriss, 1962), and the economics of outdoor recreation (ORRRC, 1962a). After almost 5 years of meetings, surveys, and data gathering, the ORRRC had produced a rich assessment of the facilities and needs. Even more than that however, they had constructed a statistical frame around a significant use of the nation’s public and private lands. The reports provided Penfold and other environmentalists the “voluminous figures” which they could use in their debates with extractive interests. The ORRRC firmly established outdoor recreational landscapes within the same resource frame as the timber, mining, and grazing interests with whom conservationists had fiercely fought.

While the ORRRC conducted a thorough and geographically specific inventory of recreation areas, the analysis of that data lost its geographic specificity and natural variation. For nearly all of the reports, the data collected for the inventory at the county level were aggregated for analysis by census region. A researcher or planner might learn much about recreation sites in the West, ranging from

the amount of developable acreage for winter sports, the capacity of campgrounds in the region, or the expenditures for construction by federal, state, and local governments. That researcher could not, however, learn how many of those acres, campgrounds, or expenditures pertain specifically to a given reservoir or within a specific county. The degree of aggregation certainly helped to elucidate broad trends in recreation use and changes in the resources, but did little to acknowledge the vastly different ecological or social characteristics of the different recreation areas. Such aggregation lends itself to the production of an idealized landscape that failed to account for the specific human and natural geographies of recreation areas and promoted a national scale planning regime dependent upon a great deal of simplification and abstraction (Scott, 1998).

Data pertaining to recreational users of the public lands were similarly aggregated geographically, focusing on recreation trends by census region. By simplifying the variation among individual users, the ORRRC again provided a significant amount of important and interesting data, but at a scale that made it all but impossible to make geographically specific arguments or recommendations. The aggregation of both the inventory and the survey data compounded the difficulty associated with making recommendations concerning the very specific and locally situated uses of recreational resources. The aggregation of the data into large geographic units provided the opportunity for the Commission to make broad policy findings and recommendations concerning the management and regulation of natural and cultural resources associated with outdoor recreation without necessarily involving themselves in their day-to-day management.

Despite the geographic aggregation of their study, the findings addressed a number of specifically geographic problems and each of these solidified an understanding of recreational landscapes as valuable and manageable natural resources. First, they found that while enough recreation areas existed to meet the demand in 1963, those areas were not located where they were most needed. While the US population had grown increasingly urban, outdoor recreation areas, almost by definition, were far removed from this urban population. This problem of distance and access operated at a number of scales. At the national level, the bulk of the population lived in the East while most recreational areas were in the West. Specifically, 16% of the acreage was in Alaska, 72% was located in the West, and just 4% of the recreational acreage existed in the Northeast, the most populous region of the US (ORRRC, 1962b, p. 51). At the regional and state level, the Commission found that “few places are near enough to metropolitan centers for a Sunday outing. The problem is not one of total acres, but of effective acres” (ORRRC, 1962b, p. 5). The abstraction and statistical picturing of the nation’s recreational resources through the ORRRC’s accounting processes enabled a more thorough alignment with a national Multiple Use policy, establishing the state of recreation resources and placing them squarely in a resource conservation frame. Ultimately, however, the ORRRC would need to devise a plan to implement the planning objectives and policies that flowed from the inventory. This forced them to reconsider the geographically situated management of those resources, resulting in a new landscape of recreation that went beyond the specific resources to include the broad set of infrastructure, demographic, and political economic contexts of those resources while simultaneously devising a system within which recreational use and development would be compatible with continued timber, mining, and grazing production. In essence, the demand to make recreational resources effective – to maximize their use within the larger geographic context of outdoor recreation—resituated those natural landscapes as resource landscapes deeply embedded in their geographic and political economic contexts.

#### 2.4. Making “effective acres”: resituating recreational resources in the patchwork landscape

*Well, the sustained yield idea... really was a timber concept. While Congress, in the Multiple Use, Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and presumably in FLPMA also, seemingly applied it to all other resources, it was never clear how it would work (Perry Hagerstein at the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Workshop, 1992, p. 84).*

A recreational experience, as Penfold told the Subcommittee on public lands, was more than simply the pounds of fish caught or “checkmarks on a bird-list”.

The stream fisherman wants the sound of the running water, the feel of the smooth rocks under his feet, the overhanging willows which give shade and cool the water, and intercept his backcast. He wants the chance to outwit the trout, and to enjoy the impertinent camp robber for being part of his lunch. On Granby he wants the sun rising over the Front Range and absorbing the early morning mists, the slap of waves against the prow of his boat, the purr of his outboard, the leisurely lunch cooked on shore and righteous wrath when he hooks bottom and loses his Pop Geer, leader, and length of line (US Senate, 1957, p. 39).

The resource, for the recreationalist, encompasses the entire landscape not just one component of it. Outdoor recreation planning necessitates that entire landscapes be brought under a resource management regime in such a way that includes not only their biophysical components, but also their aesthetic qualities and their relationships with communities and landscapes beyond any administrative borders. These landscapes are explicitly placed in relationship to the landscapes around them through the production of access, amenities, and wide view-sheds. The increased scale of management and the diverse ecosystems and potential uses within individual jurisdictions increases the complexity and variation within the resource and its use (Hanley et al., 2002). Any effort to inventory recreational resources would need to do more than simply count fish in a stream, acres of water in a reservoir, or miles of trail. Rather, the ORRRC was charged with cataloging, classifying, and proposing plans for managing broad acreages and the built, ecological, and aesthetic features within recreational landscapes and on their fringes so that they might be enjoyed despite ever increasing pressures of use and efficient development.

Towards this end the ORRRC recommended the implementation of a classification system that would categorize recreational landscapes according to their potential uses. This system would act as a framework for management and development across bureaucratic boundaries and support national scale management in the midst of the situated nature of recreational resources. The Commission believed that such a land classification would not only ensure the continued availability of recreational resources, but also facilitate their orderly development across jurisdictional boundaries and in the midst of preexisting resource activities, providing a Multiple Use management frame for the aesthetic and cultural complexities of recreational management (Public Land Law Review Commission, 1970, p. 206).

This classification scheme separated recreational areas into one of six classifications, ranging from Class I, high-density recreation areas to Class V primitive (wilderness) areas and Class VI, historic and cultural sites. Individual sites would fit within one of these classes depending upon the size of the area, the degree of development and use, and its capacity to comply with a variety of other public land-uses. Areas compatible with more than one classification would be managed according to the classification that would

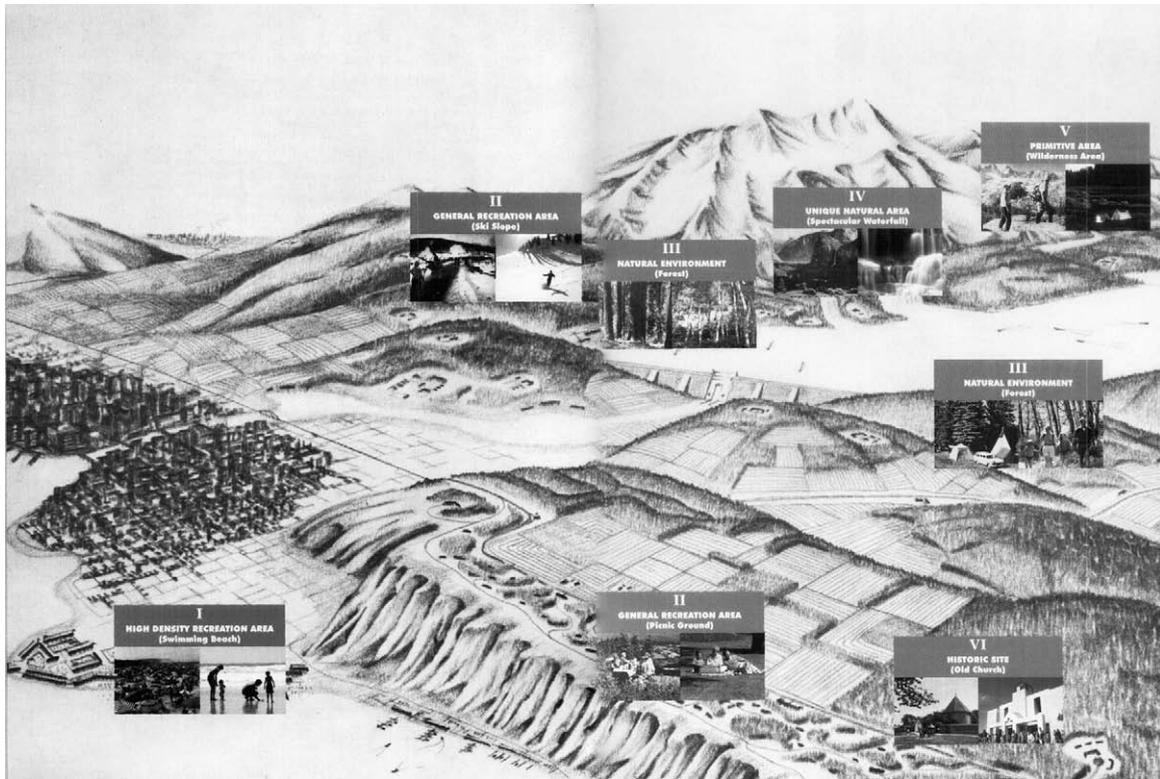
have the greatest use. The classification scheme effectively established a zoning of outdoor recreation resources depending upon their natural and social characteristics with an emphasis on the orderly development and increased utilization of the resource. In effect, they created an abstract landscape, composed of standardized recreational classifications, and legible recreation resources and uses (see Fig. 1). This scheme simplified and made legible the complex social, political, and natural relationships of the landscape (Scott, 1998, p. 80). It enframed diverse recreational landscapes and reconfigured material landscapes for optimized rational Multiple Use management, conservation, and commercialization of access and amenities associated with those resources.

This move towards a bureaucratic abstraction and classification however was accompanied by a move in the opposite direction. The demand for “effective acres” necessitated a simultaneous shift toward an understanding of their relationship with the areas that surrounded them, their aesthetic values, preexisting resource uses, and the potential for private investment and the provision of amenities and concessions. “The problem is not one of number of acres but of effective acres – acres of land and water available to the public and usable for specific types of recreation. For reasons of location or management, much of the vast acreage nominally designated for recreation is not available for general public recreation use” (ORRRC 1962b, p. 49). The potential value of recreational acres, or recreational resources, depends upon a functioning relationship between the abstracted patchwork landscape, the specific landscapes in which they are situated, their proximity to (or distance from) other kinds of resources, infrastructure, urban areas, water, historic sites, and other geographic features.

The patchwork landscape—recreational resources suitably enframed—reconstituted a relational space of resource production even as it is guided by abstracted and simplified quantifications. The negotiation between abstraction and situated geographic specificity glosses over differences between traditional resource extraction and rational planning. At the same time it establishes a framework in which outdoor recreation might be placed squarely in a commodity driven resource portfolio guided by Multiple Use management. Indeed, just seven years after the publication of the ORRRC’s reports, the Public Land Law Review Commission “considered all the resources and uses of the public lands to be commodities. Accordingly, in addition to the traditional resources of minerals, timber, forage, intensive agriculture, water, fish, and wildlife, there were included outdoor recreation and the various spatial uses such as for residential commercial, and industrial purposes” (Public Land Law Review Commission, 1970, p. xi). The efforts by the ORRRC to categorize recreational resources were critical steps towards making recreational resources compatible with Multiple Use management in practice, not just in legislation.

The ORRRC’s emphasis on the production of “effective acres” helped to place recreation planning squarely within larger projects of modernist rational resource planning dominant at the federal level throughout the 1960s (Hays, 1987). The emphasis on effective acres, coupled with the abstracted patchwork landscape shifted debates about the carrying capacity of recreational landscapes—about the capacity of landscapes to continue to provide a public good—away from a neo-Malthusian concept towards one that set about finding ways to provide more resources through efficient planning and conservation (Haas, 2002). The summary report argued that:

*Management decisions can increase the supply of outdoor recreation without an increase in acreage. If a given area is transferred from low-density use emphasizing natural to high-density use emphasizing facilities, more recreation opportunities are made available. At the same time, intelligent concentration of*



**Fig. 1.** The ORRRC classification scheme (ORRRC, 1962b, p. 90–91). In order to maximize effective acres, the ORRRC developed a classification scheme which established different regulatory goals for different landscapes depending upon their relationship to existing resource practices and geographic conditions.

*use in this way can protect other natural environments by diverting mass pressures from them* (ORRRC, 1962b, p. 42).

The members of ORRRC realized that the provisioning of effective acres was not only a matter of designating recreational landscapes in areas where they were needed or of providing services only on the public lands. They realized that the production of both effectiveness and efficiency revolved in large part around the relationships between private concessionaires, firms, and communities on the fringes of the public lands, and on the provisioning, packaging, and commercialization of access, services, and infrastructure that supported the recreational experience. The development of private enterprise was a key component of the recommended Outdoor Recreation Policy devised by the ORRRC. “Individual initiative and private enterprise should continue to be the most important force in outdoor recreation, providing many and varied opportunities for a vast number of people, as well as the goods and services used by people in their recreational activities” (ORRRC, 1962b, p. 7). In constructing a plan for the conservation of outdoor recreation resources, the ORRRC was conserving a public good for efficient public use and rational conservation even as it created opportunities for private entrepreneurialism in capitalizing on those public resources. Indeed, the model of efficient use and expanded capacity produced under the umbrella of the patchwork landscape necessitated the involvement of private capital in the commercialization of access, nature-based tourism, and commercial goods involved in recreational activities.

When Joe Penfold pushed for a thorough inventory of outdoor recreation resources, he set in motion a process that would solidify outdoor recreation landscapes as resources to be managed, produced, and conserved under the larger umbrella of natural resource management. The ORRRC established specific policy and regulatory guidelines for the implementation of the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield paradigm as it was legislated in 1960.

The emphasis on “effective acres” essentially linked Sustained Yield Forestry and Progressive Era conservation ideals with emerging resources that were valuable as a public good and open to commercialization due to their situated characteristics. By stressing the importance of effective acres, the ORRRC could simultaneously simplify and categorize recreational landscapes for governance under a regime of modernist efficient use while accounting for their local embeddedness and commercialization, aesthetic characteristics and sensibilities, and the interactions between those characteristics and the broader resource uses of the same set of public lands. Effective acres only become valuable in their geographic, material, and aesthetic specificity, but their efficient use and planning is rooted in the abstraction of those resources, in their statistical picturing. By enframing recreational resources through their capacities for diverse uses and searching for ways to maximize their use within a conservation agenda that valued modernist efficiency, the ORRRC produced new spaces for outdoor recreation that were simultaneously abstracted through statistical picturing and reinscribed through the situated nature of recreational resources.

### 3. Conclusions

Outdoor recreation activities and the resources upon which they depend emerge at a nexus of environmental and cultural change associated with nature-based tourism and a global boom in amenity development (McCarthy, 2008; Buckley, 1999; Walker, 2003). By turning a critical lens onto the production and regulation of recreational landscapes we can contribute to debates concerning development based upon tourism and outdoor recreation that might more fruitfully explore the changing ways recreational resources are used, managed, and commercialized across the range of production and consumption. The history of recreational

planning in the United States demonstrates the ways that the quantification processes of the ORRRC established an abstract lens for planning and development while simultaneously providing a framework for making the situated nature of recreational landscapes governable through the provision of “effective acres”. This understanding allows us to consider the ways that we might establish a critical recreational and tourism geography that takes seriously the resources upon which the industry depends and the ways those resources are produced, made legible and governed. In the case of the ORRRC, this means a careful examination of the paradox implicit in the abstraction and statistical picturing of recreational resources and consideration of their situated nature. The quantitative inventory of recreational resources demonstrated the need for a strong conservation regime and provided a frame through which recreational resources could be regulated. At the same time the categorization and emphasis on effective acres opened the door and encouraged local land managers and concessionaires to maximize the use of those resources in so far as they were compatible with existing uses of the landscape.

Production of outdoor recreation resources at the federal scale in the 1950s and early 1960s demonstrates that the process of producing natural landscapes as resources requires a simultaneous movement towards abstraction and specificity. On one hand it necessitates an abstraction of those resources, and on the other it demands an increased awareness and governance of their situatedness, their relationship to existing geographic, economic, and political contexts. This negotiation produced new resource spaces dependent both upon the abstract space of governance and the relational space of their situated nature (Smith, 1984). Henri Lefebvre, in exploring the implications of the production of space has argued that “if space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production” (1991, p. 36). The work of the ORRRC was fundamentally an effort to produce knowledge about recreational space to promote their conservation and development as resources. In this analysis of the ORRRC I have attempted to demonstrate the ways that the production of knowledge about recreation resources was a pivotal moment in their production as resources, as quantifiable and governable spaces simultaneously abstracted from and discretely placed within existing natural, political and cultural landscapes.

The first piece of legislation to emerge from the findings of the ORRRC was the Outdoor Recreation Act of 1963 which established the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. President Kennedy praised the Commission for their work at the signing ceremony with language that could have been applied to the conservation and development of any resource. Kennedy recognized that the work of the ORRRC filled in any gaps between use, protection and utilization, bringing them squarely within the modernist, utilitarian resource governance frame: “The bipartisan Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission established by the Congress in 1958 has submitted a valuable report demonstrating in a most persuasive manner the need for an affirmative program to ensure the best possible use of those resources which will rapidly be swallowed up for other uses unless adequately protected and utilized” (Kennedy, 1963).

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