AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Abstract approved:

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Similar to other spectacular scenic areas in the American West, Idaho’s White Cloud Mountains have been a contested landscape since the beginning of the 20th century. Although, legislation was introduced in Congress as early as 1913 to protect the towering mountains of south-central Idaho as a national park, the issue did not generate significant interest until the 1960s. When American Smelting and Refining Company began exploring molybdenum deposits at the base of Castle Peak in the White Clouds in 1968, conservationists rallied around the call to ‘Save the White Clouds.’ Idaho Senator Frank Church proposed legislation to protect the mountains with either a Forest Service administered national recreation area or a national park. The issue found the national spotlight in January 1970 as Life magazine published an article on the land-use controversy. In November of the same year Cecil Andrus took over the governor’s office from incumbent Don Samuelson largely because Andrus opposed mining in the White Clouds. Despite all of Idaho’s congressional delegation supporting a national park and recreation complex, the legislation was modified in 1971 to create only a national recreation area under Forest Service management. Congress passed the bill and President Nixon signed the measure in 1972. The years between 1968 and 1972 offer an interesting
glimpse into the conservation struggle in Idaho and how the emerging environmental movement reached even the highest peaks of central Idaho. The controversy highlights public concern over federal land use, reveals tensions between the Forest Service and National Park Service, and explores the dynamic relationship between politics and land management decisions.

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

_____________________________________________________________________
Erica Jensen, Author
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DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad,
for support,
encouragement,
and love,
always.
Contested landscapes are nothing new in the American West. In fact, they are part of what define the West as a dynamic, beautiful, and sometimes volatile place. From pre-European contact to the present, it is hard to find a time when the West was not contentious terrain, especially in the twentieth century. As Americans moved west in the nineteenth century they carved out lands for settlement, development, resource extraction, and by default, lands that were hardly used at all. Much of the land was left in the hands of the federal government; according to political scientist James Foster, in these regions, “individual property rights and public interest often are at odds.”¹ As populations and cities grew and more people ventured into previously unused lands, boundaries defining land use became less clear, and clashing ideas surfaced about what the best use was for particular landscapes. Although there are many well known examples of land use battles in the West, such as Hetch Hetchy in California at the beginning of the twentieth century or Echo Park in Colorado in the 1950s, there are numerous other landscapes whose stories are just beginning to be told. One such landscape is Idaho’s south central mountains, the focus of a land-use controversy that has spanned nearly a century.

At the center of Idaho’s controversy was Castle Peak, a magnificent mountain in the White Clouds Range of south-central Idaho at an elevation of 11,815 feet, the highest in the range. The White Clouds range and the adjacent Sawtooth range directly to the west are the picturesque mountains of south-central Idaho that have been at the center of a debate for a national park throughout the twentieth century. The effort to protect the area gained momentum when New York mining giant American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) announced plans to build a road into the White Clouds to do exploratory mining at the base of Castle Peak in 1968. The mining company had found what it believed to be significant molybdenum deposits in the Sawtooth National Forest. Earlier efforts to protect the Sawtooths and White Clouds with a national park had all failed, but the proposed road into the largely undeveloped area was enough to ignite the call to “Save the White Clouds.” The mining controversy was ultimately resolved in 1972 with the creation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

Although Idaho has some eighty mountain ranges that define the landscape and much of Idaho life, the White Clouds and Sawtooths occupy a special place in the hearts of many Idahoans. The area is approximately seventy-five miles northeast of the state capital of Boise and forty miles north of the famous resort town of Sun Valley. The Sawtooths are appropriately named for the jagged, sharp ridges that define the range. The White Clouds, on the other hand, are so named because their limestone peaks give the appearance of lofty clouds perched upon the mountain tops. Although Idaho’s

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highest peak, Mt. Borah (12,662 feet), is in the Lost River Range, just east of the White Clouds, there is no shortage of magnificent peaks in the Sawtooths and White Clouds.\textsuperscript{4} The Sawtooth area alone includes forty-two peaks that tower above 10,000 feet, as well as more than 500 mountain lakes.\textsuperscript{5} The Sawtooth Range is the more expansive of the two, occupying almost 900 square miles. The White Clouds range covers only an eight by ten mile area.\textsuperscript{6}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map.png}
\caption{The Sawtooth and White Cloud mountains in central Idaho. Although the White Clouds are not labeled on the map, they are directly to the east of the Sawtooths. Source: www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/idaho.html}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{5} Wilderness Society newsletter, 1971 April 23, Frank Church Papers, Boise State University Library, 1.1/93/11 (hereafter cited as Church Papers).
\textsuperscript{6} Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” see note 4 and 51.
The geological history of the central Idaho mountains can be traced back 150 million years ago to the subduction of the Pacific oceanic crust underneath the continental crust of North America. As the continent moved west, forced by the creation of new crust at the mid-Atlantic ridge, the collision between the continent and the oceanic crust caused the land to break up into massive chunks of continental rock. The result was a broad welt along the western edge of North America. This welt was the beginning of the formation of the Rocky Mountains.\(^7\) As the oceanic crust slid underneath the continent, it heated the continental crust above it, eventually creating temperatures hot enough to melt the rock above creating granite magmas. These molten rocks rose to the earth’s surface and cooled to create massive slabs of granite, the main feature in the central Idaho mountains.\(^8\) Some of this eastward moving magma, migrating underneath the continent, eventually erupted in what is now southwestern Montana, but geologists believe that none of it erupted in Idaho. The mass of magma crystallized forming the massive Idaho batholith that covers most of central Idaho, with an area of 20,000 square miles.\(^9\) Additional granite was added to parts of the area during the Eocene period, roughly 50 million years ago.\(^10\) The igneous activity of 50 to 80 million years ago is

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\(^8\) Alt and Hyndman, *Roadside Geology*, 94.


\(^10\) Alt and Hyndman, *Roadside Geology*, 105.
largely responsible for the various metallic ores that can be found in the central Idaho mountains.\textsuperscript{11}

The Sawtooth Range is classified as a fault-block mountain.\textsuperscript{12} It is this fault that created the dramatic Sawtooth Ridge that rises almost vertically from the valley floor on the basin’s western boundary.\textsuperscript{13} The mountains are the fault block that was thrust upwards, called a horst, while the valley floor is the sunken block, called the graben. Many geologists consider the Sawtooth range to be the best example of this type of geologic activity in the Northern Rocky Mountain region, another feature of the area that fueled calls for its protection.\textsuperscript{14}

Some of the highest mountains in central Idaho also bear the marks of two periods of glaciation. The Sawtooth range, characterized by jagged, sharp peaks, is made up of granite that was carved by glacial activity.\textsuperscript{15} Glaciers carved out the valleys of the high mountains but probably did not reach all the way to the Sawtooth Valley floor. The moraines the glaciers left in their wake form the forested hills below the range. Many of the larger lakes in the Sawtooth range occupy moraines left at the Sawtooth fault on the front of the range. Although the White Clouds range lies just to the east of the Sawtooths, only its highest peaks appear to have been marked by glacial activity. Both in

\textsuperscript{11} Alt and Hyndman, \textit{Roadside Geology}, 115.
\textsuperscript{12} National Park Service, “Proposed Sawtooth National Park,” 30.
\textsuperscript{13} Alt and Hyndman, \textit{Roadside Geology}, 226.
\textsuperscript{14} National Park Service, “Proposed Sawtooth National Park,” 30-31.
\textsuperscript{15} Alt and Hyndman, \textit{Roadside Geology}, 121.
the geologic past and today, the Sawtooths probably trapped most of the precipitation as weather patterns moved east across the state.\textsuperscript{16}

The Sawtooths, White Clouds, and the surrounding area have varying climates and vegetation due to past geologic activity and the orographic affect of the mountains. The western Sawtooths and the Stanley Basin catch the most precipitation in the area, up to sixty inches per year. By contrast, the Pioneer Range, just outside of the southeast boundary of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, is the driest with only ten to twenty inches per year on its eastern slope. In the Sawtooth Basin and along various streams and lakeshores a wet meadow community of grasses, willows, and tall shrubs characterizes the vegetation. At higher elevations and lower moisture areas, sagebrush, forbs, and various grasses dominate the landscape. The rain shadow of the higher peaks affects these areas in the eastern part of the basin and in the eastern mountains.\textsuperscript{17} The forested areas are mainly populated by lodgepole pine, which thrive at elevations from the valley floor all the way to the tree line at 10,000 feet, although Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, and Engelmann spruce can be found as well.\textsuperscript{18} Due to cost restraints and difficult terrain, the timber harvest in the Sawtooth and White Cloud mountains has never been substantial. In the years before the creation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, the annual timber harvest averaged 1,525,000 board feet.\textsuperscript{19}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16] Alt and Hyndman, \textit{Roadside Geology}, 232.
\end{footnotes}
Various species of fish and wildlife also inhabit the area. Three species of anadromous fish find their way from the Pacific Ocean to the waters of Idaho each year: sockeye and chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Various other resident fish are found in the area as well, including four species of trout – brook, rainbow, cutthroat, and bull – and whitefish and grayling. Mountain goats, mule deer, elk, coyote, fox, and black bear are all present in the Sawtooths and White Clouds. Smaller animals include populations of beaver, lynx, bobcats, otters, and martens. In 1995, gray wolves were reintroduced to the area and now have a significant presence in and around the Sawtooths.

Although the 1968 mining proposal lent a new sense of urgency to protect the White Clouds, the battle over federal land has a long history. Almost as soon as national forest were created they were embroiled in controversy. Although the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 was actually a rider to the agricultural appropriations bill of that year and was unceremoniously and hurriedly passed through Congress, the Act was controversial. The bill gave the president, then Benjamin Harrison, the authority to withdraw lands from public entry and place them in forest reserves. Over the course of President Harrison’s term in office, he created fifteen reserves totaling more than thirteen million acres. While the act gave the president the power to create the reserves, it said nothing about how to manage them. When President Grover Cleveland added an additional 21 million acres of forest reserves before he left office, protests erupted in the West as miners,

grazers, and lumbermen were concerned how the designation would affect their livelihoods. Western politicians were also up in arms because the legislation limited lands available for settlement and development.\textsuperscript{23} Westerners believed that Eastern interests were threatening both their lands and their rights. Eventually tensions eased with the passage of the Sundry Act of 1897, which laid out the purposes of forest management and allowed public access to resources on the forest reserves.\textsuperscript{24} The Pettigrew amendment to the Sundry Act specified that reserves would be managed for watershed and timber resources only and became the basis for federal forest management policy until the passage of the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960.\textsuperscript{25}

With the coming of the twentieth century, a new kind of debate emerged over federal lands between resource development and preservation. Conservationists, typically associated with utilitarian resource use and development, squared off against preservationists who stressed the aesthetic and intrinsic values of nature. Conservationists gained substantial national influence when Theodore Roosevelt assumed the presidency in 1901 after the assassination of President McKinley. President Roosevelt and his chief advisor Gifford Pinchot, who later became the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, worked to manage resources for efficiency and productivity.\textsuperscript{26} On the other side were preservationists such as John Muir who founded the Sierra Club in 1892.

\textsuperscript{23} Robbins, Lumberjacks and Legislators, 25.
\textsuperscript{24} Robbins, Lumberjacks and Legislators, 26.
\textsuperscript{26} Alfred Runte, National Parks: The American Experience, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 70.
The first and probably the most infamous controversy between conservationists and preservationists took place in California’s Hetch Hetchy Valley. The battle for Hetch Hetchy began in 1900, a prescient way to usher in a century that would be filled with similar battles all over the nation. The story has been told and retold, according to historian Robert Righter, because even 100 years later it is still “a classic story in the ongoing debate over human land use.”

On one side of the struggle was the city of San Francisco’s water interest. Developers hoped to dam the Tuolumne River in the Hetch Hetchy Valley to ensure water for the residents of San Francisco for at least another century. On the other side of the debate were preservationists, particularly John Muir and the Sierra Club, who thought the city could go elsewhere – at least outside the boundaries of Yosemite National Park – to find an adequate water supply. Ultimately, the development interests won and completed O’Shaughnessy Dam in 1923.

The case of Hetch Hetchy has been revisited over the last century as “an example of what should not be done to a scenic mountain valley.” And in similar cases, most dam proposals in national parks have been defeated. But in a broader sense, looking back at Hetch Hetchy is telling because “it signaled the opening salvo of a century-long conflict over the ‘highest and best use’ of natural areas.” It also ushered in an era where local conflicts were issues of national concern. Forty-five years after the completion of the dam in the Hetch Hetchy Valley, a controversy raged over the “highest and best use”

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29 Righter, The Battle Over Hetch Hetchy, 4.
of a spectacular landscape in Idaho. Although the battle in Idaho’s White Cloud Mountains did not garner the amount of national attention focused on Hetch Hetchy, its brief time in the national spotlight shows that the issues raised at Hetch Hetchy were still alive and unsettled.

The late 1960s and early 1970s battle in the White Clouds pitted conservationists against pro-mining and pro-development interests and played a prominent role in state politics. The nation was exposed to the battle through various media outlets, especially after the hotly contested 1970 Idaho gubernatorial election. The race for governor featured Republican incumbent Don Samuelson, who strongly supported mining in the White Clouds, against Democratic challenger Cecil Andrus who opposed the mining. Cecil Andrus won the election, later saying that the battle over the White Clouds made him “the first Western governor elected on an environmental platform.”30 During the controversy, Idaho’s Congressional delegation was often divided on the issue, albeit on more subtle details. The ebb and flow of gubernatorial, congressional, and state legislative support for land protection is critical to understanding the development of land management legislation over the four years of the White Clouds battle.

The main controversy centered not on the question of protection itself, but rather on what kind of federal protection the mountains deserved. Most conservationists favored a national park under the more stringent protective management policies of the National Park Service. Those arguing for an alternative protective status favored a national recreation area managed by the Forest Service. The latter would allow more

permissive land uses including mining, timber harvesting, grazing, and hunting. Still others worked for a compromise protection status that would place the fragile peaks under the protection of a national park but place the more heavily used valleys in a national recreation area. This compromise measure was even more promising because of the successful creation of Washington’s North Cascades National Park and Recreation Area in 1968. Writers of the park-and-recreation area bill for the White Clouds in 1970 modeled their measure on the recent North Cascades legislation and hoped for a similar outcome.

Despite widespread support for a national park and recreation area complex, Congress resolved the Sawtooth and White Cloud issue in 1972 when it created the 754,000 acre Sawtooth National Recreation Area only. The Sawtooth National Recreation Area encompassed both the Sawtooth and White Cloud ranges as well as the Boulder Mountains, just east of the White Clouds. Long-standing Forest Service and Park Service tensions partly explain why the area remained with the Forest Service in the form of a national recreation area, but the final legislation is impossible to understand without attention to the intricacies of Idaho politics during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The chapters that follow tell the story of this remarkable area of Idaho that has captured the minds and souls of so many people. Chapter One examines some of the Forest Service history leading up to the creation of the Sawtooth National Forest and Sawtooth Primitive Area. The opening chapter also discusses early calls for protection of the Sawtooth landscape in the first half of the twentieth century. The 1960s witnessed countless events – political, social, and scientific – that lead to the development of the
modern environmental movement. Chapter Two addresses some of these developments, including the Wilderness Act of 1964, along with the renewed attempt to protect the Sawtooths with the efforts of Idaho Senator Frank Church. Chapters Three and Four examine the Castle Peak mining controversy beginning in 1968 with the ASARCO road proposal and ending with the creation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in 1972.

The landscape that emerges from the Sawtooth National Recreation Area might be seen as only a snapshot in a collage of similar landscapes around the country. But the national exposure of the battle between “hysterical preservationists” and “gouge-and-run bulldozer boys” shows that the issue tapped into national sentiments as well.\textsuperscript{31} During the late 1960s and early 1970s, different conceptions of place and different priorities for the land collided on numerous landscapes around the nation. By looking at just one of these places, it is possible to examine more closely what was happening in Idaho and the nation during such a dynamic period in American history.

\textsuperscript{31} Quoted from Jack Hope, “In Idaho’s White Clouds: Mines or a Park – or Both,” \textit{Smithsonian}, January 1971, 48.
2) The Sawtooths: History, Management, and Conservation

“Bathed in summer sunshine or locked in winter’s frigid cold, they await the adventurer who will explore their many moods. It is expansive country and holds interest and challenge for every wilderness visitor. Beauty abounds here, more than could be absorbed in a lifetime.”1

Because of the rugged and isolated nature of the central Idaho mountains, relatively little is known about the early history of the region. The earliest known humans to inhabit the area around the Sawtooth Mountains were the Tukudika, or Sheep Eaters, a group of Northern Shoshone Indians who moved with the seasons.2 Other bands of Northern Shoshone in Idaho and Montana called themselves Agaidika, or salmon eaters. Anthropologists refer to these groups as the Mountain Shoshone. When they traveled to different food sources, they identified themselves with what they were currently eating, so the self-references of the Mountain Shoshone were always changing and flexible.3

The Tukudika congregated into large groups of thirty or so families at lower elevations during the winter months. In the summer they broke into groups of two or

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2 National Park Service, “Proposed Sawtooth National Park,” 21; See also Lawrence L. Loendorf and Nancy Medaris Stone, Mountain Spirit: The Sheep Eater Indians of Yellowstone (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006). Tukudeka is the spelling used in the “Proposed Sawtooth National Park” publication by the National Park Service, but Loendorf and Stone use the spelling Tuku (meaning “meat”) dika (meaning “eaters of”).
3 Loendorf and Stone, Mountain Spirit, xii.
three families and traveled more widely to collect and hunt provisions. Although the early Mountain Shoshone did not have horses, they were excellent hunters, using dogs to successfully track the abundant big game in the mountains. Through trade networks that reached to the Spanish settlements in New Mexico, the Mountain Shoshone acquired horses around 1730. They were also skilled in working with furs and were able to create beautiful clothing from sheep, antelope, wolf, coyote, fox, badger, and elk hides. Due to their isolated location, the Tukudika enjoyed very little disturbance during the early years of America’s westward expansion. Although families traveled widely, their main village in the Sawtooth Basin was Pasasigwana, situated at a hot springs approximately thirty miles east of present day Stanley.

Hudson’s Bay Company trappers first moved into the area in the early nineteenth century and briefly explored the rugged mountains, although with little success. Beaver were not abundant in the area, as Alexander Ross and his Snake brigade discovered when they entered the Sawtooth Mountains in 1824. The party entered the Stanley Basin through the Wood River Valley and camped near present day Stanley. They were probably some of the first white men to enter the isolated area, although others had been close by. Following Alexander Ross’s advice, Peter

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5 Loendorf and Stone, Mountain Spirit, 13.
Skene Ogden’s six expeditions along the Snake River avoided the Sawtooth country. By the mid-1830s the brief period of trapping in the Sawtooth Mountains had ended and the next thirty years witnessed the retreat of the Sawtooth and White Cloud peaks back into lofty obscurity, at least as far as white exploration was concerned. Settlers traveling through Idaho on the Snake River plain destined for Oregon or California looked at the peaks to their north only in passing.

It was not until the early 1860s that miners entered the Sawtooth Mountains in search of gold and silver. Although trappers had explored the region earlier, virtually none of this information was passed along to the prospectors who were entering unexplored and uncharted territory. Idaho’s first major gold lode was found in 1860 on Orofino Creek in the Clearwater region of northern Idaho. Miners first came to the Stanley Basin four years later when the party’s leader, John Stanley, entered the area through Bear Valley. His name would thereafter be affixed to the basin and the place that would become its most significant town. Although the men found some placer deposits, it was not enough to entice many of them and most turned back. A few members of the party, however, headed west across the Sawtooth Range where

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they discovered the significant Atlanta lode on the southwestern edge of today’s Sawtooth National Recreation Area.\textsuperscript{16}

Initially the men in Stanley’s party were able to keep their find relatively secret, but by the fall of 1864 there was a considerable amount of placer mining in the region.\textsuperscript{17} Although the load was extremely large and profitable, Atlanta’s remote location meant the mines did not develop as quickly as they did in other, more accessible regions.\textsuperscript{18} Only after 1876 and the investment of considerable time and money by eastern investors did Atlanta’s technology and infrastructure improve enough to making mining more profitable. A road from Rocky Bar to Atlanta, completed in 1878, increased access to the district and for the next six years the mining camp experienced considerable success. But the low grade, refractory ore locked up among other minerals was still inaccessible with the technology available at Atlanta, and by the mid-1880s all of the high-grade ore had been processed. The region was generally unproductive until the Saint Joseph Lead Company was able to process the low-grade ore after 1932, and most of the success of the Atlanta mines has been since then.\textsuperscript{19}

After the initial Atlanta discovery, around seventy men set out from Boise to follow up on the placer claims near Stanley in the spring of 1864. After a slow start, mining finally became well established in the area by 1867 when Robinson Bar, east

\textsuperscript{17} Wells, \textit{Gold Camps and Silver Cities}, 64.
\textsuperscript{18} Wells, \textit{Gold Camps and Silver Cities}, 66.
\textsuperscript{19} Wells, \textit{Gold Camps and Silver Cities}, 74-76.
of Stanley, became highly productive.\textsuperscript{20} Other discoveries were made around the Sawtooth Range, including the 1869 discovery of gold on Loon Creek. Although transportation issues delayed the development of some of these mines, they attracted people to the area in sufficient numbers to support a general store in Stanley.\textsuperscript{21}

As mining camps grew, violent or criminal acts were frequently blamed on local Indians. Such was the case during an incident in 1878 when five Chinese miners were murdered on Loon Creek, north of Stanley.\textsuperscript{22} The \textit{Yankee Fork Herald} reported that the Chinese were tucked away in their cabins when “Mr. Sheepeater made a call, and not meeting with that hospitality he thought due him on his own land, and his stomach calling loudly for that which he had not to give it, he resolved to do something desperate.” The paper likened the attack to a cyclone, leaving no trace of the Chinese, “while the victors returned to the bosom of their families on the Middle Fork to make glad the hearts of the little Sheepeaters with the spoils of the heathen.”\textsuperscript{23}

Federal troops stationed in Boise and Grangeville were dispatched into the mountains to capture the offenders. With more reports of Indian attacks at ranches on the South Fork, military pressure intensified. The Sheep Eaters finally surrendered, insisting they had nothing to do with the murders that had started the conflict.\textsuperscript{24} The six month clash, now called the Sheepeater War of 1879, ultimately led to the removal of the Indians to the Fort Hall Indian Reservation near present day Pocatello in eastern Idaho. Around fifty members of the Sheep Eaters went to the reservation, mainly

\textsuperscript{20} Wells, \textit{Gold Camps and Silver Cities}, 60-61.
\textsuperscript{21} National Park Service, “Proposed Sawtooth National Park,” 23.
\textsuperscript{22} Loendorf and Stone, \textit{Mountain Spirit}, 167.
\textsuperscript{23} Quoted in Wells, \textit{Gold Camps and Silver Cities}, 100.
\textsuperscript{24} Peterson, \textit{Idaho: A Bicentennial History}, 86-87.
women and children. Some of the families likely escaped capture and joined other Shoshone bands in neighboring areas. The Sheep Eaters were later cleared of any lingering wrong doing, while white settlers in the area were blamed for the crime against the Chinese.\(^{25}\) The incident at Loon Creek caused the withdrawal of the Chinese from the area, and mining ceased for the next twenty years.\(^{26}\)

Mining at Yankee Fork, however, grew in the 1870s and by the end of the decade settlement had come to the southern end of the Sawtooth Range. The Vienna lode was discovered on June 4, 1879, and shortly thereafter miners established the towns of Sawtooth City and Vienna, both of which experienced brief mining rushes.\(^{27}\) A toll road from Ketchum helped in the development of Sawtooth City, which reached a peak of 600 residents between 1881 and 1884. Sawtooth City had a store, a meat market, two restaurants, three saloons, an assay office, and a blacksmith shop in the early 1880s. Vienna experienced even more growth, boasting six restaurants, a hotel, three general stores, and fourteen saloons among other things.\(^{28}\) The prosperity of the mines declined after 1886, however, and the Wood River Valley became a center of lead and silver mining activity after the arrival of the Oregon Short Line railroad to Hailey in 1883 and Ketchum in 1884.\(^{29}\) Although Idaho’s first railroad, the Utah Northern, arrived in 1874, it had little impact on most of the vast Idaho territory. It

\(^{25}\) For more about the Sheep Eater War of 1879, see Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 138; Peterson, \textit{Idaho: A Bicentennial History}, 87; Goodwin and Hussey, “Sawtooth Mountain Area Study,” 2; and Loendorf and Stone, \textit{Mountain Spirit}, 168.

\(^{26}\) Wells, \textit{Gold Camps and Silver Cities}, 100.

\(^{27}\) Wells, \textit{Gold Camps and Silver Cities}, 143; \textit{Stanley Basin and the Sawtooth Range}, 18.


\(^{29}\) Schwantes, \textit{In Mountain Shadows}, 92; Wells, \textit{Gold Camps and Silver Cities}, 146 and 154.
was the completion of a seventy mile spur off the Oregon Short Line into the Wood River Valley that brought the miners and technology necessary to make the mines productive. 30 The railroad was crucial to the success of commercial mining, making it possible to get mills, smelters, and other heavy capital equipment to the remote mountains. 31

After the mining rushes, ranching became the center of the mountain economy, with the high alpine valleys and their abbreviated summer season providing adequate seasonal grazing for livestock. 32 Cattle were introduced in the Boise Basin during the first mining rush in the 1860s, and by the 1880s there were a considerable number of cattle ranches in the Wood River Valley as well. 33 Some disappointed miners turned to ranching because of the high cost of meat and the relatively low costs associated with grazing. 34 Sheep herders entered the Sawtooth Basin as early as 1879, with Frank Gooding, who later became the seventh governor of Idaho, introducing the largest herd. 35 For a number of years, Ketchum shipped more sheep on its rail lines than any other place in the nation. 36 Although sheep herders enjoyed considerable success in the area, their large flocks resulted in overgrazing.

The federal government attempted to improve overgrazing on National Forest lands. Federal forest management in the Sawtooth Mountains dates to 1905 when

30 Schwantes, *In Mountain Shadows*, 83.
President Roosevelt set aside the Sawtooth Forest Reserve. The original Sawtooth reserve of 1,947,520 acres was increased to 3,340,160 acres a year later.\(^{37}\) The Interior Department managed the early forest reserves, even though the Department of Agriculture was the bureaucratic home of the Division of Forestry. Early federal foresters did not control federal forests and therefore could not practice forest conservation on public lands.\(^{38}\) Due largely to the efforts of Gifford Pinchot, Congress transferred the administration and management of the reserves to the Department of Agriculture in February 1905; the Bureau of Forestry was subsequently renamed the United States Forest Service, and the forest reserves became national forests in 1907.\(^{39}\) The 1907 act gave Congress the sole authority to create or change national forest boundaries in the six western states of Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Oregon.\(^{40}\)

The Forest Service changed the boundaries of the new Sawtooth National Forest many times and divided it into western and eastern divisions to make the area more manageable in 1908. Later that year, part of the eastern portion became the Challis National Forest, with the addition of land from the Salmon River and Lemhi national forests as well. The other part of the eastern division remained the Sawtooth

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\(^{39}\) Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service*, 74; For more about Pinchot see Char Miller, *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism*.

\(^{40}\) Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service*, 99-100.
National Forest, while the western division became the Boise National Forest.\(^{41}\)

Although the Sawtooth National Forest covered 1,211,920 acres and went through many additions and deletions between 1908 and 1953, the total land area of 1.2 million acres changed very little. The Sawtooth incorporated the lands of the Minidoka National Forest in 1953, but the addition was not contiguous with the Sawtooth lands. The new addition simply became the southern division of the Sawtooth National Forest, separated by the massive Snake River Plain.\(^{42}\)

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Calls for protection of the White Cloud and Sawtooth Mountains date back to the beginning of the twentieth century, with the first proposal for their protection as a national park in 1911. Jean Conly Smith of the Idaho Federation of Women’s Clubs spearheaded the first attempt to protect the Sawtooths under the banner of the “See America First” campaign. Although the grandeur of the Sawtooth region undoubtedly impressed the women’s group, the organization was simply searching for an area of Idaho to promote as a national park and did not set out to specifically protect the Sawtooths. The club met in 1911 to discuss seven possible landscapes across the state to promote as Idaho’s first national park. The Sawtooth area won out over Shoshone Falls on the Snake River in southeastern Idaho. Together with the Idaho State Automobile Association, the two groups formed the See Idaho First Association to promote tourism and road building in the state. Local commercial groups, particularly the Boise and Hailey commercial clubs, also joined the campaign. Although promoters wanted to see tourism increase in Idaho, they also hoped the park designation would prompt the federal government to finance and develop roads and infrastructure in the isolated area.

It should not be surprising that the first calls for a national park in Idaho were not inspired by aesthetic or preservationist ideals. According to historian Alfred

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44 Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 138.
45 Dodd, “Preserving Multiple-use Management,” 35.
46 Dodd, “Preserving Multiple-use Management,” 22.
Runte, since the establishment of the first national park, areas were set aside because they were otherwise “worthless lands.” He argued that “a surplus of rugged, marginal land enabled the country to ‘afford’ scenic preservation.”

Lands that were not valuable for agriculture, grazing, mining, or lumber were usually the only areas Congress was willing to protect; the Sawtooths fit this bill. Early park promoters focused on the Sawtooths, with their seeming absence of valuable resources, as Idaho’s first national park.

Prompted by the See Idaho First campaign, Idaho Representative Burton French introduced legislation in 1913 to protect the towering mountains of south-central Idaho. Despite the bill’s relatively permissive land-use regulations, it died in the House committee. French reintroduced the bill again in the next congressional session, but Forest Service opposition again sealed its fate.

The Idaho mountains gained national exposure at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, where an award winning, lighted model of the Sawtooths referred to them as “The Switzerland of America.”

Led by state senator Irvin Rockwell of Bellevue, the Idaho Legislature passed a memorial urging the creation of a national park. Following the publicity from the World’s Fair and the show of support by the state legislature, Idaho Senator William E. Borah and

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47 Runte, National Parks, 48-49.
50 Dodd, “Preserving Multiple-use Management,” 49.
Representative Addison T. Smith introduced national park legislation in Congress again in 1916, the same year that Congress created the National Park Service.\textsuperscript{51} Although national parks date to the 1870s with the setting aside of Yosemite and Yellowstone, various land agencies managed these early parks. There were sixteen national parks and eighteen national monuments by 1916, all operating independently.\textsuperscript{52} The creation of the National Park Service, however, meant that one bureaucracy within the Department of the Interior, with a single set of goals and management policies, would manage all national park lands. Stephen Mather was appointed the first director of the National Park Service after being instrumental in its creation.\textsuperscript{53} The early success of the Park Service and the growth of the national park system can largely be attributed to Mather’s talent and leadership, along with that of Horace M. Albright who assumed the directorship when Mather suffered a stroke in 1928.\textsuperscript{54} Not all Idahoans supported the new National Park Service or a national park for the state. Miners, loggers, and especially sheep ranchers spoke out against the 1916 bill. Still others were concerned that central Idaho did not have the roads or accommodations to support the tourist industry that would accompany national park designation. Finally, hostilities between the National Park Service and the Forest

\textsuperscript{51} Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 139.
\textsuperscript{53} Runte, \textit{National Parks}, 101.
\textsuperscript{54} For more about Mather, Albright and the early development of the National Park Service, see Swain, \textit{Federal Conservation Policy}, 126-143.
Service and the more pressing concerns over American entry into the First World War, lead to yet another failed attempt to protect the Sawtooths in 1917.\textsuperscript{55}

Ranchers and the Forest Service both resisted various attempts from 1921 through 1926 to reinvigorate the campaign for a Sawtooth national park. The Park Service also appeared less willing to fight for the Sawtooth Mountains in the 1920s. There were nineteen national parks by 1921. According to historian Donald C. Swain, the Park Service was “no longer interested in acquiring vast new territories” and was focused instead on “improving the scenic continuity” of the existing parks.\textsuperscript{56} Many of the new parks created during the 1920s were a result of Mather’s push to create parks in the eastern United States.\textsuperscript{57} Ultimately, nothing came of the efforts to protect the central Idaho mountains during the 1920s.\textsuperscript{58}

Despite the continued failure to establish a national park, Robert Limbert spent a great deal of effort promoting the idea. Idaho and its scenic wonders captivated Limbert, a Nebraska native. He moved to the state in 1911 after working for two years as a naturalist for the Smithsonian Institution. A taxidermist by trade, Limbert was also an avid outdoorsman – hunting, fishing, and photographing wherever he traveled.\textsuperscript{59} Although Limbert was interested in conservation, his fundamental motivation in promoting the state was economics.\textsuperscript{60} Because he believed tourism

\textsuperscript{55} Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 139-140; Dodd, “Preserving Multiple-use Manatement,” 64-65.
\textsuperscript{56} Swain, \textit{Federal Conservation Policy}, 134.
\textsuperscript{57} Swain, \textit{Federal Conservation Policy}, 136.
\textsuperscript{58} Dodd, “Preserving Multiple-use Management,” 68-71.
\textsuperscript{60} Casner, “Two-Gun Limbert,” 3.
would become an important industry in Idaho, Limbert tried to attract the rest of the nation’s attention to the Sawtooths. He was responsible for creating the much acclaimed Sawtooths display at the 1915 World’s Fair.\textsuperscript{61} Later in his life, after he took up residency near Stanley, he toured the nation with photographs and films of the Sawtooths. After a meeting with the president of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1927, he began writing promotional pamphlets for the company.\textsuperscript{62} He opened a dude ranch at Redfish Lake in 1928 in an effort to draw rich easterners to the rugged and rural area; his lodge remains there today.\textsuperscript{63}

Limbert’s promoting came at a time when wilderness protection had become a national issue. Arthur Carhart and Aldo Leopold spearheaded the first widespread calls for protection of national forest land in the 1920s. The Forest Service launched into wilderness preservation issues largely as a result of the newly created National Park Service and the rivalry between the two agencies. The Forest Service sought to protect some national forest land and focus more on recreational uses in order to avoid losing land and influence to the Park Service.\textsuperscript{64} In his \textit{Report of the Forester} in 1927, Chief Forester William B. Greeley addressed critics who thought the Forest Service only managed for resource use:

\begin{quote}
the national forests are rich in resources of very great value for other than purely material purposes. As our population grows and land use becomes more intensive, there will be an increasingly felt need for wilderness areas where refreshment of body and spirit may be obtained in the surroundings of unspoiled nature.\textsuperscript{65}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{61} Casner, “Two-Gun Limbert,” 4.
\textsuperscript{62} Casner, “Two-Gun Limbert,” 8.
\textsuperscript{63} Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 140; Casner, “Two-Gun Limbert,” 9.
\textsuperscript{64} Swain, \textit{Federal Conservation Policy}, 21 and 134.
\textsuperscript{65} Quoted in Swain, \textit{Federal Conservation Policy}, 138.
Aldo Leopold initiated the first Forest Service efforts to set aside wilderness areas when he helped to create Arizona’s Gila Primitive Area in 1924. Although there were additional primitive areas established shortly thereafter, the Forest Service still had no official policy to create and manage these areas. The Forest Service issued Regulation L-20 in 1929, creating two new land designations: the research reserve and the primitive area. There were sixty-three primitive areas by 1933, totaling 8.4 million acres. Within the designated areas, great variation existed in the types of land uses permitted, but over half of national forest primitive areas allowed timber harvesting and most allowed grazing. The primitive areas were meant only as a temporary classification until the Forest Service could decide the ultimate best use for the land.

Paralleling the desire to set aside protected primitive areas was the rise in recreation activity on these landscapes. Americans were becoming more mobile in the 1920s and both the Forest Service and the National Park Service were aware that automobiles had to be considered when making decisions regarding wilderness and park policy. There was already an organized group in 1920 promoting a loop highway connecting twelve western national parks. According to historian David Louter, in the

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67 Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service*, 156.
early twentieth century automobiles “did not seem to conflict with wilderness preservation; they provided a way to experience nature through leisure.”

With increased numbers of Americans having access to cars in the 1920s and the building of roads to support automobile travel, recreation began to have a presence in the Sawtooth National Forest. The number of recreational visitors to the Sawtooth National Forest exploded in the 1930s, especially in 1936, with the opening of Sun Valley Resort. W. Averell Harriman, owner of the Union Pacific Railroad, created Sun Valley as a European style resort. Although he developed Sun Valley as a winter ski destination, Harriman was also eager to advertise the year-round recreational opportunities of the area, which would include fishing, hunting, hiking, and riding.

Another set of developments during the 1930s enhanced recreational opportunities in the Sawtooth National Forest when President Franklin Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) as part of his New Deal program to offer depression relief. The CCC eventually had a huge presence in Idaho, with 163 camps – a number second only to the state of California. Although crews worked under various agencies, the Forest Service oversaw almost half of the CCC projects, with Idaho receiving the greatest Forest Service expenditures on CCC programs in the entire nation. Most of the men on the national forests worked to eradicate a white

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72 Schwantes, *In Mountain Shadows*, 205.
pine fungus that had spread throughout the forests of Northern Idaho.\textsuperscript{74} There were three main CCC camps in the Sawtooth National Forest, with men in the Ketchum Camp constructing campgrounds and roads and the men at Big Smoky Camp working on ranger stations and roads as well. Workers at the Redfish Lake Camp built ranger stations, worked on campgrounds and roads, and did general clean up work. During its later years, the Redfish camp also worked on fire suppression and bridges. The CCC worked in the Sawtooth National Forest for seven years.\textsuperscript{75}

Idaho Senator James P. Pope led the next serious attempt to protect the Sawtooths in 1935. Although some supporters saw the 1930s as an optimal time to create a national park and bring extra revenue to Idaho during the lean years of the Great Depression, others opposed such a move. Because it might limit prospective dam sites, farmers in the Boise Valley thought the park would endanger future water rights. The Park Service had also been adopting a more preservationist stance that resource users viewed as a threat to their livelihoods. With the bulk of Boise residents against the park, Senator Borah reversed his earlier support and Senator Pope found himself alone on the proposal. Without the support of Borah or Idaho’s two congressmen, another Sawtooth bill died.\textsuperscript{76}

When the Forest Service designated the Sawtooth Primitive Area in 1937, Idaho finally gained some protection for the mountains. The Frontier Club, a local citizen group, proposed the designation, and after an advisory committee reported the plan favorably to the governor, the chief of the U.S. Forest Service announced the

\textsuperscript{74} Schwantes, \textit{In Mountain Shadows}, 205.  
\textsuperscript{75} Godfrey, “Sawtooth National Forest Historic Overview,” 34-35.  
\textsuperscript{76} Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 140-141.
creation of the 200,042 acre Sawtooth Primitive Area set aside from the Boise, Challis, and Sawtooth national forests. According to historian Douglas Dodd, the Forest Service used the primitive area designation to assuage the call for a national park and protect its interests in the Sawtooth Mountains. Within the primitive area, grazing and mining were still acceptable uses.

Robert Marshall, head of the Forest Service Division of Recreation and Lands, significantly strengthened the move towards wilderness policy in the late 1930s and made land-use regulations stricter in the primitive areas. Marshall also established wilderness areas that prohibited road building and timber harvesting. Marshall’s wilderness areas, however, had no legal standing until Congress passed the Wilderness Act in 1964. The 1930s designation of a wilderness area was meant to be permanent, unlike the primitive areas, even though there was no statutory authority for protection. Meanwhile, the primitive areas were reviewed to see which should be reclassified as wilderness areas according to the stricter 1939 U Regulations that replaced the L-20 Regulation. The U Regulations would later be used as the basis for the 1964 Wilderness Act. With the Forest Service’s ability to shift with the political winds, advocates did not call again for a national park until the 1960s.

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78 Dodd, “Preserving Multiple-use Management,” 111.
82 Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 141.
During their early history, the Sawtooth Mountains witnessed the coming and going of many visitors – some by choice and others by force. Glaciers invaded then retreated, leaving the dramatic, razor sharp ridges that define the range. Early human inhabitants made their way into the area and thrived on the diverse flora and fauna that flourished in the mountain environment. Trappers explored the area, but finding the terrain rugged and unforgiving they retreated to the Snake River Plain. The Tukudika, on the other hand, were uprooted from their homelands and forced onto the Fort Hall Reservation when miners rushed to the mountains in the 1860s and 1870s in search of gold and silver. By the turn of the century, residents of the Stanley Basin had settled into mining and ranching – activities that were hardly disturbed by the coming of federal land management to central Idaho. In fact, there seemed to be few other economic uses for the mountainous, remote lands. Soon, however, some people began calling for their designation as a national park.

Officials within the Forest Service started proposing wilderness protection for federal lands in the 1920s, and alongside miners and ranchers, increasing numbers of visitors were taking advantage of recreation opportunities in the Sawtooths. The Forest Service created the Sawtooth Primitive Area in 1937, but the battle to protect the mountains had only begun. Although the Forest Service successfully deflected more calls for a national park for the next two decades, the 1950s and 1960s ushered in a new era in land management and changing public attitudes. The wilderness and environmental movements gained momentum and conservationists started calling again for the protection of the towering peaks of the Sawtooth Mountains.
There was a renewed effort in the 1960s to protect the Sawtooth Mountains in the form of a national park, and park advocates now had the support of a very influential political ally, young Idaho Senator Frank Church. Elected four years earlier at the age of thirty-two, Church was a liberal Democrat who represented an increasingly conservative state. Although Church defeated a Republican incumbent for his seat, the other Senate position had been occupied by a Republican since 1949 (and remains so to the present). Republicans had held the governor’s office since 1947 and would remain there until 1971. In the state legislature, Republicans have held a majority in both houses since 1961. But in Idaho politics, personality has often made all the difference, and Frank Church was able to gain the trust and admiration of his constituents.

Church was born in Boise in 1924 to a religious, middle-class family. His father owned a small sporting goods store and worked hard to provide the family a comfortable, secure life. At an early age Church explored the magnificent Idaho outdoors, fishing and camping with his family. His interest in politics also developed at an early age and he aspired to be a senator like his hero William Borah. Unlike Borah and Church’s own family, however, the budding politician did not find himself drawn to the Republican Party. He first researched the Democratic Party in order to

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1 Schwantes, *In Mountain Shadows*, 237-238.
3 Ashby and Gramer, *Fighting the Odds*, 11.
engage his father in debate, but Church remembered later: “I ended up by converting myself.” Church honed his debating skills, first in high school and then at Stanford University. After only two quarters at Stanford, however, Church entered the army in 1943 and served until mid-1946, spending a brief period in Europe before a more extended duty in the Pacific theater. Accomplishment marked his military career, although he never particularly liked military life. After completing his service, Church graduated from Stanford with a political science degree and later earned a law degree. Following completion of law school and a successful battle against testicular cancer, Church returned to Idaho “with a firmer sense of life’s possibilities and challenges.” He worked briefly for the Idaho Office of Price Stabilization before starting his own law practice.

Church made an unexpected move when he ran for the U.S. Senate in 1956 at the age of thirty-two. He had never held office and had been defeated badly just four years earlier when he ran for the Idaho state legislature. Church campaigned hard, with he and wife Bethine driving around the state shaking hands and using the relatively new campaign medium of television. The results paid off, and Church defeated the Republican incumbent Herman Welker by a vote of 149,000 to 102,781. The outcome was even more remarkable since Republicans dominated state politics.

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4 Quoted in Ashby and Gramer, *Fighting the Odds*, 12.
5 Ashby and Gramer, *Fighting the Odds*, 9 and 16.
7 Ashby and Gramer, *Fighting the Odds*, 37.
8 Ashby and Gramer, *Fighting the Odds*, 40.
and Republican Dwight Eisenhower was reelected to the presidency that year with huge public support.¹⁰

The same year that Church went to the Senate, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, a Minnesota Democrat, introduced two important land management measures in Congress. The first was multiple-use legislation that eventually evolved into the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act, passed in 1960, ushering in what proved to be a tumultuous and controversial decade for the Forest Service. The measure was a response to pressures in the 1950s to manage for a single use – either the booming timber industry or the growing preservationist and recreation interest in national forests. According to historian Paul Hirt, “when facing conflicts among users or situations that called for a choice between production and preservation, managers adopted instead the optimistic view that choices did not really have to be made yet if foresters simply applied more intensive management.”¹¹ The Forest Service responded to the multiple group pressure by seeking multiple-use legislation.¹² The multiple-use principle claimed to give recreation, grazing, wildlife, and fish management the same priority as timber and watershed management. The only previous act that had any bearing on Forest Service land protection policy was the

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¹⁰ Ashby and Gramer, *Fighting the Odds*, 47.
Sundry Civil Act of 1897 that explicitly addressed only management for timber and watershed issues.\textsuperscript{13}

Multiple-use had unofficially been the policy of the Forest Service for decades, but in the 1950s the concept was especially contentious when it came to recreation. Conservationists began opposing the policies of the Forest Service, an agency they had once strongly supported. Before World War II, conservationists were some of the Forest Service’s strongest allies, but after 1945 they were concerned about the agency’s policies, especially intensive timber harvesting. Paul Hirt argues that World War II was a “major transition period” for the Forest Service and marked a switch to intensive management and greatly increased production.\textsuperscript{14} More people were using the national forests for recreation, however, and these visitors saw first hand the results of timber harvesting. The destructive and ugly process ran counter to the agency’s long standing conservation image.\textsuperscript{15} Furthermore, according to historian Samuel Hays, during this time there was a shift in public values “as resources long thought of as important for their material commodities came to be prized for their aesthetic and amenity uses.”\textsuperscript{16}

When Senator Humphrey introduced multiple-use legislation in 1956, initially the Forest Service could not decide how to approach the measure. After considerable debate, the agency introduced its own bill in 1958.\textsuperscript{17} The multiple-use measure faced

\textsuperscript{13} Steen, \textit{The U.S. Forest Service}, 298.
\textsuperscript{14} Hirt, \textit{A Conspiracy of Optimism}, xxv and xxi.
\textsuperscript{15} Steen, \textit{The U.S. Forest Service}, 302.
\textsuperscript{17} Hirt, \textit{A Conspiracy of Optimism}, 177.
opposition from the Park Service because the agency saw the legislation as a threat to its preservationist mission and a criticism of its management.\textsuperscript{18} Most conservation organizations supported MUSY except the Sierra Club, which opposed the bill because it feared that its passage would endanger the pending wilderness bill.\textsuperscript{19} After the measure went through hearings before the House Agriculture Committee, it sailed through Congress in three months, and President Eisenhower signed the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield act into law on June 12, 1960.\textsuperscript{20} According to Hirt, “the main significance of the law proved to be its insignificance” and “management of the national forests went forward in a manner that was anything but wise, orderly, thoughtful, and sustainable.”\textsuperscript{21} Under the Multiple Use Act, all uses were supposed to receive equal consideration when the Forest Service made land management decisions; in reality, however, timber remained the dominant use on national forest land.\textsuperscript{22}

The second piece of legislation introduced by Senator Humphrey in 1956 was the wilderness bill. Debate over the wilderness bill proved more controversial and its passage was anything but swift. The Wilderness Society’s Howard C. Zahniser, the first person to champion the wilderness bill, drafted its early form. After wilderness advocate Aldo Leopold died in 1948, historian Dennis Roth argues that “Zahniser became the nation’s foremost wilderness advocate and assumed most of the burden of

\textsuperscript{18} Steen, \textit{The U.S. Forest Service}, 305.
\textsuperscript{19} Steen, \textit{The U.S. Forest Service}, 306; also see Hirt, \textit{A Conspiracy of Optimism}, 184-189 for more about the Sierra Club’s opposition.
\textsuperscript{20} Hirt, \textit{A Conspiracy of Optimism}, 187.
\textsuperscript{21} Hirt, \textit{A Conspiracy of Optimism}, 190.
articulating a philosophy and program of wilderness protection until his own death at fifty-eight, a few months before passage of the Wilderness Act.”

Zahniser’s warning that wilderness areas needed legislative protection came at a fortuitous time, because recent events had aroused public concern. In the late 1940s, the Bureau of Reclamation proposed a dam on the Green River inside Dinosaur National Monument on the border of Colorado and Utah. The dam would have inundated the beautiful valley of Echo Park along with other nearby valleys. For conservationists, the battle was not just about scenic or environmental protection. Historian Mark Harvey has argued that the core of the issue was the protection of lands within the national park system. Although conservation organizations such as the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society were able to stop the project in 1955, the event demonstrated just how little legal protection there was for unique areas, even those administered by the Park Service. According to Harvey, the successful effort in Dinosaur National Monument was a watershed event that “revealed the dawning of a new era in the nation’s environmental history, by signifying growing public support for parks and wilderness.” On the heels of that public support, Senator Hubert Humphrey introduced the wilderness bill.

Early drafts of the wilderness bill already included the two most controversial provisions that would hold up its passage for nearly eight years, issues that would be

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26 Harvey, A Symbol of Wilderness, 287.
of vital importance in the coming controversy over the Sawtooth Mountains: 1) how would existing primitive areas be incorporated into the wilderness system, (at this time the Sawtooth Mountains were still classified as a primitive area) and 2) what to do about mining claims in the wilderness system.²⁷

Mining interests have enjoyed almost unrestricted access to federal lands since passage of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1872. The act was primarily a summation of two earlier mining laws passed in 1866 and 1870, with the 1866 law stating: “The mineral lands of the public domain, both surveyed and unsurveyed, are hereby declared to be free and open to exploration and occupation by all citizens of the United States.”²⁸ The 1966 law only governed lode (hard rock) claims, but in 1870 Congress passed another measure to include the rights of placer miners as well.²⁹ Under the 1870 law, miners, or groups of miners, were able to patent up to 160 acres of public land and then to purchase the claims at a price of $2.50 an acre.³⁰ The 1872 law cemented these earlier provisions and still governs mining on federal lands to this day despite, as Charles Wilkinson has remarked, its “utter lack of any provision for environmental protection.”³¹

Zahniser’s first draft of the wilderness bill prohibited all mining in wilderness areas except on pre-existing claims. In response to calls that he was threatening

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³⁰ Klyza, Who Controls Public Lands?, 35.
³¹ Wilkinson, Crossing the Next Meridian, 49.
American national security and defense, Zahniser amended the bill to allow for new mineral entry with approval of the president in times of national need.\textsuperscript{32}\ However, Zahniser later retreated to his original position and not surprisingly found that the mining opposition proved to be the Wilderness Bill’s most significant hurdle.\textsuperscript{33}

When Senator Humphrey introduced the first draft of the wilderness legislation in the Senate in February 1956, he did so only as a study bill. His co-sponsor on the legislation was Oregon Senator Richard Neuberger. The Oregon lawmaker had joined the fight to protect wilderness as a result of the 1953 removal of 53,000 acres of old growth timber from the Three Sisters Primitive Area in central Oregon. The Forest Service aroused preservationist opposition with its policy of reducing primitive areas when the land proved valuable for timber harvesting. In 1950, the agency attempted to withdraw 75,000 acres from the Gila Primitive Area, the first of its kind in the nation, in order to harvest timber. The personal intervention of New Mexico Senator Clinton Anderson stopped the withdrawal, but only after a three year battle. When he later became chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, Anderson was able to champion the wilderness bill with the help of Idaho Senator Frank Church.\textsuperscript{34}

When Anderson, the bill’s sponsor, suffered a gall bladder attack just before the Senate floor debates were scheduled in September 1961, the senator asked Church to step in for him. Church believed in the bill, but he was nervous about alienating his constituents so close to his upcoming re-election bid in 1962. Despite these fears, he

\textsuperscript{32} Roth, “The National Forests,” 239.

\textsuperscript{33} Roth, “The National Forests,” 240.

\textsuperscript{34} Wilkinson and Anderson, \textit{Land and Resource Planning}, 342-343.
took charge and guided the two days of Senate debate. Church was instrumental in
getting the Senate version of the bill passed in 1961 by a vote of 78-8.\textsuperscript{35}

It took an additional three years for the House to pass the bill. Pro-
development Colorado congressman Wayne Aspinall’s dominating position on the
House Interior Committee made the mining issue more difficult. The presidential
authorization clause, which would allow the president to open areas for mining in
times of national need, did little to placate mining interests, and the issue remained at a
standstill because Aspinall stalled the bill in his committee. Aspinall’s House bill
allowed mining to continue in wilderness areas and also required that only Congress
would have the power to create and expand wilderness areas. The Senate was finally
forced to accept the House version of the bill, which passed in July 1964 by a vote of
374-1.\textsuperscript{36} The eight year battle over the details of the wilderness bill, Dennis Roth
writes, “can be summarized as a process of drawing together support for the
wilderness system and chipping away opposition through a series of compromises
aimed primarily at commercial users of the national forestlands.”\textsuperscript{37} The bill, rewritten
sixty-six times before it reached its final iteration, was finally signed into law in
September 1964 by President Lyndon Johnson. The measure allowed mining in
wilderness areas until January 1, 1984.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{35} Ashby and Gramer, \textit{Fighting the Odds}, 145-148.
\textsuperscript{36} Harvey, \textit{Wilderness Forever}, 244.
\textsuperscript{37} Roth, “The National Forests,” 240.
\textsuperscript{38} Roth, “The National Forests,” 237.
In the midst of the wilderness bill debates, Senator Church reintroduced the idea of a national park to Idahoans in the form of a feasibility study in 1960. He had been developing the national park idea even earlier, writing to one of his constituents in December 1959: “I have been working on the project quietly for some time, and I hope to have a bill ready for introduction in the next session of Congress.”

Church introduced the study to find out what the people of Idaho thought about creating a national park in the Sawtooths, which would include the existing Sawtooth Primitive Area, with the addition of some surrounding lands. Sara Dant Ewert argues that “the feasibility study was a shrewd coalition-building vehicle.” Church knew that many of his constituents still relied on natural resource occupations for their livelihoods and that many more saw Idaho’s vast backcountry as a place to hunt, fish, and recreate. One constituent wrote to Church in 1959 that removing the area from the management of “the existing agencies would reduce the land now available for multiple use. It would seriously affect the economy of communities which depend upon resources [sic] such as timber, gas and oil, minerals, water, grazing and recreational opportunities.”

Church’s first step in gauging public support involved mailing out 50,000 postcards to citizens soliciting opinions on the idea of the national park study. It is important to note that Church was not asking constituents whether or not they favored the creation of a national park, but only if they supported the national park feasibility

39 Frank Church to Glenn Brewer, 17 December 1959, Church Papers, 1.1/92/18.
40 Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 141.
41 Jim H. Freeman to Frank Church, 14 December 1959, Church Papers, 1.1/92/18.
study. When the 8,343 votes were tallied on March 3, 1960, more than 77 percent of respondents favored conducting the study. The only counties where the majority of respondents did not support the park study were Custer, Camas, and Lincoln – all sparsely populated counties in central Idaho.\footnote{“Tabulation by Counties of Responses to Post Card Poll of Senator Frank Church,” n.d., Church Papers, 1.1/93/1.}

Boise lawyer and conservationist Bruce Bowler laid out the reasons why the White Clouds deserved protection as a national park in a talk to the Bonneville Sportsmen Association in 1960. Foreshadowing the 1968 mining controversy, Bowler’s speech stressed the importance of preservation over commercial use of the land:

I cannot subscribe to the opposition that keeps insisting on leaving the door open for so-called multiple use that would include livestock grazing, mining, and lumbering. This relatively small area has too high a value in its scenic and recreational use to ever properly permit of such multiple use purposes, and we can view the National Park status as permanent insurance against such commercial encroachment.\footnote{Bruce Bowler, “Why a Sawtooth National Park,” 11 March 1960, Bruce Bowler Papers, Box 37/Folder 13, Idaho State Historical Society (hereafter cited as Bowler Papers).}

Idaho and Nevada were the only states in the West that did not have a national park and Church believed the Sawtooth Primitive Area was worthy of that status:

no scenic grandeur anywhere in the United States that excels the jagged peaks of the Sawtooth Mountains. A national park would preserve the natural beauty and the wildlife of this lofty wilderness, while at the same time enabling many more people to come and witness it. The park would act as a magnet in drawing the nation’s attention to Idaho as a vacation wonderland.\footnote{Frank Church, “Regarding a Feasibility Study for a Sawtooth Wilderness National Park,” statement, 18 January 1960, Church Papers, 1.1/92/18.}
Church was also quick to point out that the proposed area was mainly composed of the jagged peaks already within the primitive area where relatively little timber harvesting or grazing took place. The area had “little cover for grazing and even less commercial timber,” and “would pose no threat to the sheepmen, cattlemen, or the lumber industry of the basin.” The senator was trying to walk a fine line, pleasing park proponents, while abating the fears of the natural resource users as well.

Senator Church faced opposition and concern from his constituents as well as from his fellow Idaho politicians. Only days after Church had announced his support for the creation of a national park, Idaho state senator Don Fredericksen wrote a stern warning to the senator:

I sincerely believe that sponsoring this proposed legislation would be political suicide in Idaho. I not only think that it will adversely affect your political future in Idaho, but that it will also affect the future of the Democratic party here, too as we consider you the standard bearer of the Democratic party in Idaho.

The controversy did not surprise Church, who wrote to Bruce Bowler that “the park proposal has stirred up a hornets nest, as I knew it would.” Church’s supporters around the state also warned him of the potential fall-out of the national park legislation. Ben Plastino, editor of the Post-Register in Idaho Falls, warned Church that “from comments I’ve heard in the powerful places I feel it highly unpopular.” Although Plastino admitted that “average people” may support the national park, he warned that “when you find such pressure groups as chambers of commerce,

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46 Frank Church, “Regarding a Feasibility Study for a Sawtooth Wilderness National Park,” statement, 18 January 1960, Church Papers, 1.1/92/18.
47 Don G. Fredericksen to Frank Church, 21 January 1960, Church Papers, 1.1/92/19.
48 Frank Church to Bruce Bowler, 27 January 1960, Church Papers, 1.1/92/19.
sportsmen, newspapers, livestock groups and farmers arrayed against it, it would
seem to me that it is a hot potato.” In a state famous for its potatoes, this was one
potato that Church should avoid. Plastino concluded, “the proposal is generally
harmful to you.”49

Despite these dire warnings, on the heels of the substantial public support
demonstrated by the postcard poll, Church introduced legislation in the Senate in April
1960 calling for a joint Forest Service and National Park Service study to consider the
area for national park status. Although the public had indicated support for the study,
the opposition was quick to voice its resistance to the park because it threatened to
limit access to Idaho’s natural resources. As a result, Church decided that it was not
the right time to fight the battle for the Sawtooths and he let the bill die in
committee.50

Frank Church ran for re-election in 1962 against challenger John T. Hawley, a
Boise lawyer.51 Church had introduced the national park study and championed the
wilderness bill within the past two years, and he knew both stands had been unpopular
among many of his constituents. Church’s father-in-law put the issue bluntly:

How do you expect to win? All the organizations that count are against you:
cattlemen, the woolgrowers, the mining association, the forests products
industry, the newspapers, the chambers of commerce . . . and for what? For
wilderness.52

Church understood the ramifications, and during the Senate debates on the Wilderness
Bill he “felt that he had thrown a shovel of dirt on his political grave every time he

49 Ben J. Plastino to Frank Church, 10 February 1960, Church Papers, 1.1/92/20.
50 Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 142-143.
51 Ashby and Gramer, Fighting the Odds, 150.
52 Quoted in Ashby and Gramer, Fighting the Odds, 149.
spoke.\textsuperscript{53} He seemed to have an ability to take risky stands in a conservative state, however, and still remain popular with the voters. In his autobiography, Cecil Andrus characterized Frank Church as a “politician of conscience who took unpopular stands.”\textsuperscript{54} His re-election campaign was undoubtedly helped by a national crisis that diverted attention away from wilderness issues. As the Cuban missile crisis hit the press in October, 1962, Church maneuvered himself within important political circles in Washington, D.C., where he received the media spotlight for appearing to help resolve the threat of nuclear war. While his accomplishments may have been limited, he was seen working diligently in Washington while his opponent continued campaigning around the state.\textsuperscript{55} Church’s popularity remained high, and he was re-elected to a second term, with 55 percent of the vote.\textsuperscript{56}

In the midst of the controversy surrounding wilderness and forest management issues, many politicians and citizens were becoming concerned with the numerous out-of-date federal land laws still on the books. Conservationists were especially troubled by the Mining Law of 1872. Because the measure still governed mineral entry on national forest lands, including the wilderness areas for another twenty years, most non-miners believed the law was desperately in need of revision. The law had served the nation well when a young America was trying to expand and settle the isolated lands of the West, but a century later the West was a very different place.

\textsuperscript{53} Ashby and Gramer, \textit{Fighting the Odds}, 149.  
\textsuperscript{54} Andrus, \textit{Cecil Andrus}, 165.  
\textsuperscript{55} Ashby and Gramer, \textit{Fighting the Odds}, 155.  
\textsuperscript{56} Ewert, “Peak Park Politics,” 143.
In fact, there were hundreds of antiquated federal land-use policies that needed revision, and in 1962 the Public Land Law Review Commission (PLLRC) set out to examine these laws and compile an extensive report to the president. The massive task of the PLLRC was to review federal land laws, including the notorious 1872 Mining Law. The PLLRC was the pet project of Colorado Representative Wayne Aspinall, who championed mineral rights in the Wilderness Act legislation. He introduced legislation to create the review committee in 1963 as part of a bargain he had struck with Senator Clinton Anderson during the final phases of the wilderness bill debates. The committee included nineteen people: six members of the House of Representatives and six members of the Senate (with each group including three members from the majority party and three from the minority), six members of the public, and finally the chairman. Although the chair was an elected position, Aspinall positioned himself to be chosen. Critics charged him with conflict of interest, because Aspinall was also the chairman of the House Interior Committee.

Aspinall’s West Slope congressional district in Colorado was heavily dependent on natural resources and extractive industries and much of the land was owned by the federal government. Aspinall used his position as head of the PLLRC to advance a view that was reminiscent of the early twentieth century conservation of Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt. He did not take into account the growth of

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57 Harvey, *Wilderness Forever*, 238.
environmentalism or any of the new information coming from the new science of ecology and ecosystems.\textsuperscript{60}

With nearly two-thirds of the state in federal lands, Idaho also had a large stake in the findings of the PLLRC. The only states with a larger percentage of federal land are Alaska, Nevada, and Utah.\textsuperscript{61} It should not be surprising that Idaho’s mining interests made sure they were well represented to the PLLRC. According to a report in December 1969, the Idaho Mining Association “supported and helped secure passage of legislation to establish and fund” the State Commission on Federal Land Laws “which will serve to represent Idaho’s interests before the Public Land Law Review Commission.”\textsuperscript{62}

By reforming exploitative natural resource laws and pointing federal policy towards preservation, conservationists hoped the PLLRC would represent their interests. Many of those who opposed the White Clouds mine proposal in 1969 hoped that the Public Land Law Review Commission report would help the conservationist cause. An editorial in the \textit{Intermountain Observer} in July 1969 reported:

the best guarantee for protection of the White Clouds, as well as other areas where choices must be made between developing mineral wealth and preserving extraordinary natural beauty, lies in amendment of the nation’s mining laws. . . But little can be expected in the way of basic change for another two to four years, when Congress will have had an opportunity to act on the report of the Public Land Law Review Commission.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{60} Schulte, \textit{Wayne Aspinall}, 239.
Although the PLLRC report was initially due December 31, 1967, the deadline was extended to June 30, 1970, thereby overlapping with the White Clouds mining controversy. Because of the secrecy surrounding the committee and its findings, when the report was published, some people were skeptical, if not openly hostile to its findings. These feelings only intensified among conservationists and environmentalists once the report’s contents became known.

Titled One Third of a Nation: A Report to the President and to the Congress, the document was presented to newly elected President Richard Nixon in 1970. It was immediately obvious that the PLLRC report was not going to help the conservationist’s battle to save the White Clouds or any other wilderness area. The report called for mineral extraction to continue dominating federal land uses. Environmentalists were quick to condemn the findings, and publications across the nation echoed this dissatisfaction. The Idaho Statesman commented that the PLLRC “seemed to be guarded by the dollar sign.” Not surprisingly, the Sierra Club attacked the report as a typical exploitative view of the West, and former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall called it a “goodies for all report that apparently pleases nobody.” Even the popular magazine Sports Illustrated condemned the findings.

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64 For more about the PLLRC report, deadlines, and budget see Schulte, Wayne Aspinall, 239-240.
65 Schulte, Wayne Aspinall, 239.
Although the PLLRC recommended changes to the outdated mining laws, it still gave priority to mining on federal land: “mineral exploration and development should have a preference over some or all other uses on much of our public lands.” Since valuable mineral deposits were rare, it continued, “there is little opportunity to choose between available sites for mineral production, as there often is in allocating land for other types of use.” The report noted the importance of developing available mineral deposits as well, because “development of a productive mineral deposit is ordinarily the highest economic use of the land.”

Historian Harold K. Steen has remarked:

at a time when ecological and environmental safeguards were replacing recreation and wilderness as the number one conservation concern, it was most untimely for the commission to stress the importance of economic return to the federal treasury. At least in terms of prudence, protection of the environment ought to have been given prime display.

After careful consideration of the mineral resources present, the committee agreed that some lands should continue to be exempt from mineral withdrawal; it also stated that federal land policy should welcome mineral prospecting and development.

Private enterprise had been successful in the past for the development of America’s mineral resources, and the committee believed that it would continue to “be effective only if Federal policy, law, and administrative practices provide a continuing invitation to explore and develop minerals on public lands.”

With regard to the environmental consequences for public lands, the committee reported that “even though we are concerned about various impacts on the

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70 PLLRC report, 122.
72 PLLRC report, 122.
environment” and have made some recommendations to regulate such impacts, “we recognize that mineral exploration, development, and production will, in most cases, have an impact on the environment.” Furthermore, mineral development may be incompatible with certain other land uses, because “mineral activity alters the natural environment to some degree, and if no such impact were to be tolerated, it would be necessary to prohibit the activity.”

Although committee members may not have been overly concerned about the environment, many Americans were. Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, her dire warning about pesticide use, in 1962. According to historian Robert Gottlieb, Carson’s book “and the ensuing controversy that made it an epochal event in the history of environmentalism can also be seen as helping launch a new decade of rebellion and protest” about nature and quality of life. Throughout the 1960s concerns about the environment and pollution grew. Older issues of wilderness and wildlife gave way to concerns about ecology and the health of land as a whole. According to historian John Opie, ecology was a virtually unknown word to the public and to scientists alike in the early 1960s, but by the early 1970s it was commonplace. This popular interest in ecology led to what Frank Church and others called the “new conservation” movement. According to Church’s biographers, by the late 1960s and

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73 PLLRC report, 122.
early 1970s, the senator was an “outspoken advocate” of the movement. Along with ecological concerns, people also began to question the view that nature was a commodity to be exploited solely for economic gain.

Although historian J.M. Neil observed that most Idahoans were not immediately concerned about pesticides after the publication of *Silent Spring*, “the state exemplified the dramatic change in national awareness and concern that occurred by the end of the 1960s.” During the 1960s, questions arose over water pollution, including sewage in the Boise River, and air pollution, particularly from the paper mills in north Idaho and phosphate plants in the southeastern part of the state. Southeastern Idaho was also the site of the National Reactor Testing Station, an Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) site outside of Idaho Falls that was renamed the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory in 1974. Although AEC officials tried to assuage citizens’ fears about nuclear waste, people became increasingly concerned. Dredging had also been a visible statewide issue in the 1950s and 1960s, further polarizing mining and conservation interests.

With the public increasingly concerned about the environment, Senator Church made another attempt to protect the Sawtooths. After the National Park Service and National Forest Service released its joint study early in 1966, Church introduced two alternative bills in the Senate: one would create a Sawtooth National Recreation Area, while the other would create a Sawtooth National Park. The proposed national park,

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77 Ashby and Gramer, *Fighting the Odds*, 345.
78 Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 240.
at 380,000 acres, was slightly larger than the national recreation area at 350,000 acres. One of the major goals of both bills was to stop the unsightly subdivision of the Sawtooth Valley floor. Development had increased in the Stanley Basin and the results were less than desirable building developments spreading haphazardly through the valley. Although many Idaho counties had zoning regulations by the mid-1960s, Custer County and the Sawtooth Valley did not. The national park would stop unplanned development through private property acquisitions, and the national recreation area would impose zoning regulations. While Church introduced both bills, Idaho Senator Len Jordan co-sponsored only the national recreation area. He argued:

the large share of Idaho’s mountain and valley land resources must be managed under the concepts of multiple use and continuous yield if our State is to develop economically and prosper. A national recreation area in the Sawtooth Mountains is the best way to assure protection and wise use of this area, one of Idaho’s outstanding resource assets.

Idahoans voiced their opinions on the two bills at hearings in Sun Valley on June 13 and 14, 1966, where the public overwhelmingly supported a national recreation area over a national park. As a result, Senators Church and Jordan supported the national recreation area bill in Congress. The Senate Interior Committee passed the measure in October 1967 which then went to the Senate floor. Although the Senate passed the bill, the House refused to support it and the bill died.

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82 Neil, *To the White Clouds*, 156.
83 F 18, Frank Church, newsletter/Congressional Record/Senate speech, April 28, 1966, 1.1/93/10.
84 F 18, Frank Church, newsletter/Congressional Record/Senate speech, April 28, 1966, 1.1/93/10.
85 Frank Church, statement, March 14, 1967, Church Papers, 1.1/93/11.
Although the wilderness bill and the writings of Rachel Carson had helped to create environmental concern across the nation in the 1960s, the public was still ambivalent about legislative protection for the Sawtooths. With 64 percent of Idaho in federal lands, citizens were skeptical about any attempt to limit access to resources. Conservationists needed a rallying cry and a focal point in their quest to protect the central Idaho mountains, and they found one in 1968 when American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) announced that it had been doing exploratory mining at the base of Castle Peak in the White Cloud Mountains. When ASARCO publicized its proposal to build a road into the heart of the White Clouds, the threat of mining at Castle Peak coupled with other environmental catastrophes across the nation to lend a new sense of urgency to the conservationist’s campaign for federal protection.
As the 1960s drew to a close, the nation appeared to be in environmental turmoil. Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* raised environmental consciousness around the country, but in 1969 people did not have to read a book to understand the dangers humans posed to the environment. Beginning on January 29, 1969, oil seeped from the ocean floor for eleven days when a drilling platform suffered a severe blowout off the coast of Santa Barbara, California. The leak caused an 800 square-mile oil slick in the Santa Barbara channel that devastated marine life. Many creatures lucky enough to survive the oil were subsequently killed by the chemicals and detergents dumped into the water to dissipate the slick.¹ For many Americans, the Santa Barbara oil spill and the use of deadly chemicals in Vietnam seemed to solidify their growing distrust of industry and technology.²

Only six months after the oil spill, the Cuyohoga River in Cleveland burst into flames on June 22, 1969, burning “with such intensity that two railroad bridges spanning [the river] were nearly destroyed,” according to a report in *Time* magazine.³ The article, published in the August 1 issue, was the first installment of a new “environment” section. Publisher James R. Shipley wrote that “almost every week now brings new warning of impending ecological upsets.”⁴ The fire was an obvious

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² Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*, 138.
⁴ “A Letter from the Publisher,” *Time*, August 1, 1969.
example that shocked the nation. As historian Ted Steinberg put it, when “the nation’s environmental problems had gone so far as to turn a body of water into a fire hazard,” many people realized the dire state of the nation’s environmental affairs.\(^5\)

The year’s events were put into perspective only one month later when the astronauts of Apollo 11 landed on the moon for the first time. As seen from space, the earth looked small and fragile and many people realized that environmental problems could no longer be ignored.\(^6\)

In the midst of the tumultuous events of 1969, an environmental battle emerged in Idaho when the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) announced plans to submit a road request to gain access to a mining claim in the White Cloud Mountains. ASARCO first started exploring the central Idaho mountains for valuable ore in the summer and fall of 1968.\(^7\) By the spring of 1969, ASARCO thought it had discovered a valuable molybdenum deposit at the base of Castle Peak, the highest mountain in the White Clouds range at 11,815 feet. The need for further exploratory mining prompted ASARCO to announce its intention to build a road into the White Clouds. The Forest Service scheduled public hearings regarding the road permit in Boise on May 9 and a day later in Idaho Falls.\(^8\) A later hearing also took place in Challis.\(^9\)

\(^5\) Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 248.
\(^6\) Steinberg, *Down to Earth*, 249.
\(^7\) “Mine Firm Asks Road to White Cloud Area,” *Idaho Statesman* (Boise, ID), March 9, 1969.
The Boise hearing showed just how controversial the issue was, with the public as well as state and federal government. Republican Governor Don Samuelson spoke in favor of the proposed road and efforts to develop mining in the White Cloud Mountains. Samuelson championed the multiple-use of federal lands and remarked that “our great agricultural, mining, timber and tourist industries are the foundations for most of the state’s economy. The raw materials are here and should be exploited to the fullest possible extent.”

Idaho Mining Association secretary A.J. Teske represented mining interests at the hearing. Teske focused on the benefits that would come from development in the White Clouds and additional industry in Idaho. He predicted the mine would create 300 to 350 new jobs and an annual payroll of nearly two and a half million dollars. Furthermore, on the off chance that the mine did not prove profitable, Teske remarked:

> The Forest Service and Idaho would have, at practically no cost to the taxpayer, a good access road that will permit thousands of Idahoans and tourists to enjoy the scenic splendor and recreational values that are now reserved for a few hundred each year.

Conservationist Ernest E. Day, a Boise realtor, was among the 230 people at the Boise hearing. When Day had his turn to speak, he introduced himself as the former chairman of the Idaho Parks Board. Just an hour before, he had been the current head of the Idaho Parks Board. After hearing Samuelson’s testimony, however, Day told reporters, “I don’t see any sense of being part of a team which doesn’t have enough regard for our resources to better differentiate between uses.”

11 A.J. Teske, statement at Forest Service hearing, May 9, 1969, James McClure Papers, University of Idaho library, 33/1323.
Day regretted that the governor was no longer present when he had his opportunity
to speak, but he told reporters, my “resignation will be on [Samuelson’s] desk by
Monday.”

Day and Samuelson’s clash over the future of the White Clouds was only the
beginning of the battle between the two world views represented by each man.
Throughout the summer of 1969, the White Clouds controversy was “the most talked
about issue in Idaho,” according to Congressman James McClure. J.M. Neil, who
authored a recent book on the White Clouds controversy, claims the issue was “far
more than a matter of scenic preservation,” because “the White Clouds came to
symbolize how public policy should affect the environment.” Natural resources and
extractive industries were a vital part of Idaho’s past and its economic well-being. At
the same time, however, the recent swell of environmental awareness and the steadily
increasing numbers of recreationists on federal lands meant that citizens were
beginning to question unrestrained access to public lands.

After the hearings, Governor Samuelson continued to speak in support of
resource development, pointing special criticism at the Forest Service. In Seattle, he
spoke with disdain about the Forest Service at the Western Governors’ Conference in
July. The Idaho Statesman reported that Samuelson, speaking directly to Chief
Forester Edward Cliff, criticized the agency for failing to issue a permit for the road.
According to Samuelson, if it had simply done so, “and not held hearings, there would

14 Neil, To the White Clouds, 198.
have been no controversy and people would not be stirred up all over the nation.”

Furthermore, the road itself was only going “up a canyon . . . with nothing but sagebrush on one side and scraggly trees on the other.” If Samuelson thought the issue was in the national spotlight in 1969, he would only find it more so as the controversy raged on.

Samuelson’s tirade continued the next week when he charged the Forest Service with being “deceptive and misleading, apparently deliberately so” in the information it presented at the public hearings. He also claimed that his statements a week earlier in Seattle were taken out of context and grossly misquoted. Samuelson’s support for the mine, however, was not misinterpreted when he told reporters that he thought mining would enhance the area because it would produce a “big, beautiful lake.” The governor’s crusade against the Forest Service continued at a Lions Club meeting in Idaho Falls in September when he told an audience that the “administration of the Forest Service in this district stinks to high heaven. They use deceit.” Although the governor did not think everybody in the Forest Service was a “bad guy,” he continued to criticize the agency’s hearings regarding the ASARCO road proposal. According to Samuelson, they should have been held two years earlier or not at all.

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Although Samuelson’s relationship with the Forest Service was strained, the same could not be said for his relationship with the mining industry. Governor Samuelson enjoyed a friendly relationship with Idaho miners, especially in 1969 when he was considering running for reelection the next year. The Idaho mining industry hosted a dinner for Governor Samuelson in September 1969 to show its appreciation for his unwavering support. Although ASARCO did not host the dinner, the *Idaho Statesman* commented that “Samuelson’s complete support for ASARCO’s White Clouds development colors the reason behind holding the party.” The article also reported that “whether true or not,” rumors had circulated that “the mining industry will make certain that Samuelson need not worry about campaign funds in his bid for re-election next year.”

Despite opposition from the governor’s office, Idaho’s Congressional delegation worked towards federal protection for the White Clouds. As the controversy unfolded, however, the issue was not whether there should be federal protection for the Sawtooth and White Cloud mountains, but rather the type of protection. Idaho Congressman Orval Hansen introduced House Bill 5999 in the spring of 1969 to create a Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA). At the same time, Idaho senators Len Jordan and Frank Church introduced Senate Bill 853 for the same purpose. The Senate passed the measure on July 2, but with important changes. The original Senate bill included only the Sawtooth Mountains and valleys, some

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351,000 acres, but the amended bill included the White Clouds, an additional
157,000 acres. When the House reconvened after the Fourth of July recess, it had to
consider a very different Senate bill.

National recreation areas were a relatively new idea in the late 1960s. The
Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) report of 1962 created
the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (which was later absorbed by the National Park
Service). President Kennedy’s Executive Order 11017 of April 27, 1962,
subsequently created the Recreation Advisory Council to support the Bureau of
Outdoor Recreation. It was the Recreation Advisory Council that created National
Recreation Areas in a circular published in March 1963. The report stressed that
“greater efforts must be made be Federal State, local governmental and private
interests to fulfill adequately the steeply mounting outdoor recreation demands of the
American people.” It set forth the qualities necessary for a national recreation area
designation, noting that land should be set aside primarily for recreational purposes,
rather than historical or natural preservation. At that point in time, national recreation
areas could only be established by an act of Congress and were to be administered by
the National Park Service, the Forest Service, or the Bureau of Land Management.

\[21\] Larry M. Dilsaver, ed., America’s National Park System: The Critical Documents
\[22\] For the Executive Order, see the American Presidency Project website at
\[23\] Dilsaver, America’s National Parks, 263.
\[24\] Dilsaver, American’s National Parks, 263-267.
Although the Senate’s national recreation area bill included ASARCO’s claims, the measure was not a direct threat to mining. The bill did not prohibit such activity, but it gave the Forest Service the authority to regulate mining activities to a greater degree than it could on conventional national forest land. Senator Jordan said that the creation of a “National Recreation Area will give the Forest Service needed administrative authority to adequately preserve both the fragile upland country, the western ranching scene of the Sawtooth Valley, and the area’s long-established mining industry.” At the same time, ASARCO was working with the Forest Service and the Idaho legislators who proposed the national recreation area. Senator Jordan was assured “that the American Smelting and Refining Company will cooperate with the Forest Service in the development of its operating plans so that mining and all other uses in this great multiple-use area can go forward harmoniously.”

There is little doubt that ASARCO’s proposed mine was a significant business venture, but there was widespread debate about the specifics. Groups both for and against the mine publicized numbers to support their cause. Representative James McClure reported the potential value of the ASARCO claim as between one-half and one-and-a-half billion dollars. Local taxes, he claimed, would amount to some $700,000 annually, while state taxes would bring in an additional $200,000. McClure also clarified his position on the issue, cautioning constituents not to jump to conclusions before all the facts were gathered. He hoped that citizens would “move ahead with the two-pronged benefits of a Recreation Area, allowing regulated mineral

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development in conjunction with recreational benefits." Not everyone agreed with McClure’s estimates. In a letter to Senator Frank Church, conservationist Bruce Bowler specifically mentioned McClure’s figures and said he was “confident there is no competent credible evidence that will support such net figures for molybdenum deposits in this area. The source of these figures which Governor Samuelson is also using needs to be smoked out.”

Complicating the debates even more was contradictory information about the national demand for molybdenum. Molybdenum, a metallic element used primarily in making steel and iron alloys, increases metal’s hardness and ability to withstand high temperatures and extreme conditions. The element is also used in making pigments, catalysts, and lubricants. \(29\) *Barron’s*, the business weekly, published an article in June 1969 pointing to the growing market for the ore and the increasing uses for the metal. \(30\) ASARCO’s Keith Whiting noted that although molybdenum was not in short supply, the demand was expected to outpace the supply in the near future. According to Whiting, “the Bureau of Mines estimates that United States need for the metal is expected to rise to 175 million pounds within 15 years and to 350 million pounds

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27 Bruce Bowler to Frank Church, September 19, 1969, Bowler Papers, 39/28.
within 30 years. U.S. production in 1968 totalled [sic] only 94 million pounds."\(^{31}\) Production in 1969 reached record levels at nearly 100 million pounds.\(^{32}\)

By the summer of 1969, other miners were staking claims for a share of the mineral wealth in the White Clouds. The Idaho Statesman reported that Vernon and Taylor Associates was doing exploratory mining in the Castle Peak area.\(^{33}\) In November, five people from Pocatello made another claim in the White Clouds northeast of the ASARCO site and not far from the Vernon and Taylor claims. Although the Vernon and Taylor Associates had not requested a road permit, the Pocatello group had.\(^{34}\) While other mining firms showed an interest in the White Clouds, in October ASARCO deferred its road proposal presentation.\(^{35}\)

As 1969 came to a close, the White Cloud controversy was front and center in the minds of Idaho citizens. The regional newspaper The Intermountain Observer, made an unconventional choice for its "Man of the Year," saying that "if Idaho had a 'man of the year' for 1969, it was not a man at all, but a mountain."\(^{36}\) Although it was a bit unconventional to name Castle Peak the man of the year, the article suggests the prominent place the mountain had in the lives of Idahoans. In another article, The Intermountain Observer ranked the top ten stories of the decade and number six was

\(^{32}\) Morning, Minerals Yearbook 1969, 707.
\(^{34}\) "Group Asks Road Permit in Area of White Clouds," Idaho Statesman, November 13, 1969.
the White Clouds controversy. According to journalist Sam Day, the ranking “illustrated the rise of conservation as an issue and brought traumatic political repercussions.”37 The mountain’s fame only grew with the coming of the new decade. The White Clouds controversy was catapulted onto the national stage when *Life* magazine published a three page article about the Idaho mining debate in its January 9, 1970, issue.38

While people around the nation learned about the struggle at Castle Peak, local groups organized in support or to protest resource development in the White Clouds. The Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council (GSPC), a group in the eastern part of the state and associated with the Idaho Environmental Council, was one of the most vocal conservationist groups fighting to protect the White Clouds from mineral extraction and road development.39 The group developed a Boise chapter in February 1970 in order to “extend to Southwest Idaho the opportunity for interested citizens to actively participate in the efforts to publicize the controversy and otherwise thwart the mining ventures now proposed.”40 Most of the state’s well-known conservationists were members of one of the two chapters. After the Boise chapter’s organizational meeting, the group announced that its objective was “to obtain a national designation for the Sawtooth-White Clouds area which includes at least part of the area in the National Park System. Only National Park status can ‘save the White Clouds.’”41

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Davis, director of the organization, told a Boise Public Schools symposium that the controversy was a typical example of “the conflict between our materialistic standard of living and life quality.” National audiences may have been interested in the remote Idaho White Clouds because they could see similar controversies happening in their own backyards.

The White Clouds controversy centered around whether the area should be designated a national park or national recreation area, with each category carrying with it very different land-use policies. Conservationists usually favored a national park because of its stricter environmental protections and limited access for resource development and motorized vehicles. Although a national park meant strong land-use protections, it also meant increased development of tourist facilities and large numbers of people flocking to the area. On the other hand, a national recreation area was more consistent with the Forest Service idea of multiple-use. Although national recreation areas could be administered by either the Park Service or the Forest Service, most people who favored a national recreation area did so with the idea that the Forest Service would continue to allow grazing, mining, logging, hunting, fishing, and other traditional uses. Those who favored resource development supported a national recreation area because it did not threaten access to the land. The issue dividing supporters of either a national park or a national recreation area was recreation.

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42 H. Tom Davis, “Remarks Delivered to the Boise Public Schools’ January Colloquium on Environmental Concerns,” January 11, 1971, Church Papers, 1.1/93/11.
One of the most vocal opponents of outdoor recreation was Ot Power, recently retired director of FMC Corporation’s mineral development. FMC, an international chemical company, was formerly known as the Food Machinery and Chemical Corporation but changed its name to simply FMC Corporation in 1961. The company had a large presence in southeastern Idaho where it operated phosphate mining operations. Power’s pro-mining platform rested on the premise that the area offered only limited recreation potential and was enjoyed by only a small handful of people. “Out of the 700,000 people in our state,” he asked, “how many ‘back packers’ really see the White Cloud area? Would it be 50, 100 or 500 each year? Infinitesimal – and this number shouldn’t have the power to set our rules and regulations.”

Another opponent of federal land protection asked:

> Are we going to make ‘sacred cows’ for the exclusive pleasure of these few eccentrics who actually get a valuable religious experience from seeing a vast economic waste while not getting the same experience from seeing a multiple-use supervised forest?"44

In opposing conservationists, Power stressed the unexceptional nature of the mountains: “You’d think from all the uproar that Idaho is as flat as Kansas, with one mountain.”45 For Power and others supporting resource extraction, what was unique about the White Clouds area was not its beauty but the fact that it might contain one of the largest molybdenum deposits in the nation. Representative James McClure echoed

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44 E.L. Shults, letter to the editor, February 10, 1969, James McClure Papers, University of Idaho library, 18/743.
similar sentiments in a letter to Bruce Bowler in June 1969, commenting that citizens “have many areas of incomparable beauty in Idaho with only a few of proven economic significance for mineral development.”

Power’s other criticism of setting aside federal land for protection was the negative impact tourism would have on the state. He thought there was a real danger in overdoing tourism and relying too heavily on an industry that he saw as a “three-month deal.” While Power saw ASARCO as a guaranteed and interested taxpayer, he viewed the potential profit from tourists as limited. Many tourists “come to Idaho,” he said to the *Idaho Statesman*, “with a dirty shirt and a $10 bill – and don’t change either one of them.”

Other criticisms of recreation included the argument that backpacking and hiking was too expensive and too arduous for most people to enjoy. Ernest Day, conservationist and former chair of the Idaho Parks Board, specifically responded to such criticisms in an article in the *Intermountain Observer*:

> Seeing the backcountry takes time and desire. It doesn’t take a lot of money in spite of what they say. The average family tourist spends $50 a day. You can backpack anywhere for less than that. Anyone capable of 18 holes of golf without a cart can do it. I used to go in with horses, but that isn’t necessary any more. With new equipment, the new backboards and lightweight gear and freeze-dried foods you can carry all you need for a week in 25 pounds.

Another response to the high cost of backpacking appeared in the *Idaho Statesman* under the title “$6.75 a Day Buys Luxury Trek Through Spectacular White Clouds.”

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The reporter, who wrote about his recent trip to the White Clouds, noted that his group was the only one they saw using a hired packer. Everyone else was carrying their own gear. Even with the hired packer, however, the total cost of the party’s trip – including meals on their way to and from the mountain, camp food, fuel, and a stay overnight at a hotel – amounted to $6.75 per person per day.\(^\text{49}\)

While conservationists and pro-mining interests continued to debate the issue, little mining activity was taking place in the White Clouds. Because ASARCO had delayed its road proposal, the action put the Forest Service on hold pending a final proposal by the company. In a January 1970 press release, the Forest Service stressed that under the 1872 Mining Law, it had no power to deny the road, only to influence where it was built. The agency’s examination of the ASARCO request had shown that the company’s claims were valid, which meant that the firm was “assured of ingress and egress to valid claims, but the means of that access is yet to be decided.”\(^\text{50}\) In its press release, the Forest Service reported the results of public comments on the ASARCO proposal – slightly more than half of the respondents favored “maintaining the White Cloud Peaks area in a roadless condition.”\(^\text{51}\)

ASARCO delayed its road development plans again in March 1970 pending a Forest Service study to be completed by July 1971. The purpose of the inquiry was to investigate resource conditions, the ecology of the area, and possible management


alternatives. The Forest Service planned to supplement its study with ASARCO’s ecological study. ASARCO’s plans for Castle Peak for the summer of 1970 were to complete the ecological study and remove some of the machinery that was no longer needed at the exploratory site.\(^\text{52}\)

Earlier that spring, the Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council organized a symposium about the White Clouds with five speakers: John Merriam, President of the Idaho Falls GSPC and Economics Chair at Idaho State University; Brock Evans, attorney and Northwest representative of the Sierra Club; Ernie Day, former chair of the Idaho Parks and current member of the National Wildlife Federation; Don Obee, biologist at Boise State University; and Bruce Bowler, Boise attorney and conservationist.\(^\text{53}\) More than 300 people attended the meeting at the Boise YMCA, with speakers urging support for a national park and calling the current national recreation measure “a weak bill which does little to solve the immediate problem. Claims already staked are exempt from any regulation and new claims and mining will be allowed subject to ‘reasonable regulation.’”\(^\text{54}\)

As the summer of 1970 heated up, so did debate surrounding the White Clouds --- and the upcoming November elections. Another round of hearings was scheduled for August 26 in Sun Valley, but this time under the auspices of the Parks and Recreation Subcommittee of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. As the

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hearings approached, the tide seemed to be moving in favor of the conservationists and proposals for a national park and recreation area complex that would place the fragile peaks in a national park and the multiple-use valleys in a national recreation area. In the Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council’s summer newsletter, the group announced: “we are winning now and must sustain our momentum if the Sawtooth Park is to become a reality. Victory is in sight; we have only to reach for it.” The Idaho Wildlife Federation also announced its support for a national park and recreation area complex.

The Idaho Statesman reported on August 11, 1970, that all four members of Idaho’s Congressional delegation were in agreement with the park and recreation area plan. The Statesman printed a joint statement from the delegation:

[We] believe that a combined Sawtooth National Park and Recreation Area would best meet the needs of this remarkable region. It would prove a perpetual asset to Idaho, and make possible the proper facilities for accommodating the burgeoning number of vacationists now converging on the area.

The plan called for three national park units protecting the Sawtooth, White Cloud, and Boulder mountains. A national recreation area, managed by the Forest Service, would surround the valley floor along the Highway 93 corridor (now Highway 75), including Redfish Lake and Alturas Lake as well.

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Figure 3. Proposed National Park and Recreation Area Complex
Source: Idaho Statesman, August 11, 1970

Senators Church and Jordan introduced two pieces of legislation on August 11: Senate
Bill 4212 would establish a Sawtooth National Park and Recreation Area, while
Senate Bill 4213 was a temporary measure to withdraw certain National Forest land
from mining entry.  

If the Idaho congressional delegation and conservationists wanted a national
park and recreation area complex, they had only to look to the neighboring state of
Washington for a model. Congress created North Cascades National Park and

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58 Introduction of Bills Relating to the Sawtooth Basin in Idaho, S. 4212 and S. 4213,
Recreation Area in northern Washington on October 2, 1968. The legislation provided a new way of thinking about land-management strategies. The controversy in the North Cascades was not about mining, but about cars and their place in wilderness environments. Although an increasing number of people did not want cars in national parks, it was still hard to imagine setting aside an area as magnificent as the North Cascades without providing public access. The problem, however, was that the increasing number of cars in national parks were seriously degrading the landscapes. Parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite were packed with visitors in the late 1960s in a way that detracted from any sort of wilderness experience.\textsuperscript{59} The Park Service looked to the North Cascades as a chance to usher in a new era in park management, where wilderness would be the dominant feature.\textsuperscript{60} The solution to the North Cascades problem was found in a completely new management strategy – the park and recreation area complex. The North Cascades reserve was the first of its kind, designating two national park units and two national recreation areas, all managed by the Park Service.

The parallels between the North Cascades complex and the proposal two years later for the Sawtooth and White Clouds complex are obvious, especially when looking at a map of the North Cascades. The complex consisted of two park units separated by the Ross Lake National Recreation Area, which encompassed the Highway 20 corridor and continued north along the Skagit River, which had already

\textsuperscript{59} Louter, \textit{Windshield Wilderness}, 123.
\textsuperscript{60} Louter, \textit{Windshield Wilderness}, 128.
been developed with the construction of multiple dams. Unlike the White Clouds proposal, the North Cascades complex had an additional recreation area at its southern end. The Lake Chelan National Recreation Area allowed the residents of Stehekin and tourists who had became vital to the small town, to continue hunting, fishing, and using motorized vehicles – activities that have traditionally been excluded from national parks. This reflected to some degree the way that Idaho’s national recreation area was supposed to protect Sawtooth Valley residents. Although the North Cascades complex did not please everyone, David Louter points out that “it was creative” and it was a new way of managing national park lands while accommodating different uses.

Figure 4. North Cascades National Park and Recreation Area
Source: http://www.north.cascades.national-park.com/map.htm

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61 Louter, 133.
62 Louter, 132.
63 Louter, Windshield Wilderness, 133.
While Idaho’s Congressional delegation seemed to be coming together over the White Clouds with support for a park and recreation area, the same could not be said for the governor’s office. Governor Don Samuelson still opposed the Idaho delegation’s proposal, and adamantly so. His predecessor and fellow Republican Robert E. Smylie wrote an editorial in *The Intermountain Observer* blasting Samuelson’s failure to join the Congressional delegation’s plan for the Sawtooths. Written only days after the Congressional delegation announced that it had come to an agreement, Smylie noted:

> it was possible that the long and frustrating battle over the Sawtooth was finally ending. It had been started by Senator Borah way back in the second decade of the century. Then the Governor had a press conference all his own. As the young people would say, that blew it.  

But Samuelson wanted “no part of a national park” and did not mince words in telling the public his views. For his part, Smylie thought Samuelson’s “arrogance has probably robbed the State of a last clear chance to save the Sawtooth Valley.” Smylie also pointed out the apparent irony in Samuelson’s position. Prior to being elected governor, Samuelson “was one of the most devoted members of the Idaho Wildlife Federation.” Smylie went on to surmise that “something awfully funny must have happened to Don Samuelson on the way to the Governor’s office.”  

Writer J.M. Neil has noted that the split between Samuelson and the conservationists appeared to be over a dredge control law in 1969, after which conservationists “increasingly saw him

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as a willing tool of those determined to exploit natural resources regardless of environmental degradation.\(^{66}\)

Samuelson’s opposition to protecting the White Clouds came at a politically strategic time – an election year. The Democratic candidate for the gubernatorial race was Cecil Andrus from the Clearwater Valley. The White Clouds issue set the two candidates apart; with the same fervor that Samuelson opposed protection, Andrus favored it.\(^{67}\) Andrus won a tough Democratic primary against Vernon Ravenscroft. Before the primaries, some conservationists backed Republican Dick Smith who ran against Samuelson on a platform calling for a twenty-year mining moratorium in the White Clouds. But after Samuelson defeated Smith in the Republican primary, conservationists squarely supported Cecil Andrus. Both the Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council and the Idaho Environmental Council put their support behind Andrus and his platform to save the White Clouds.\(^{68}\)

At the Sun Valley hearings before the House Interior Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, more than 500 people showed up, 350 of them to testify, on August 26, 1970. The meeting had to be divided into two sections in the afternoon so the committee could hear all the testimony. Representative Morris K. Udall (D-Arizona) headed one session while Representative Roy A. Taylor (D-North Carolina) chaired the other. Witnesses in one of the sessions were limited to only one minute of

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\(^{66}\) Neil, *To the White Clouds*, 180.


\(^{68}\) Neil, *To the White Clouds*, 199.
testimony. Ultimately there were too many people to get through the testimony and statements had to be pooled to cut down on time.

The gubernatorial candidates squared off over the White Clouds issue at the hearings. Governor Samuelson sent Al Minton, director of the Idaho Department of Commerce and Development, to represent his views. Despite the strict time limitations Minton spoke for fifteen minutes before Chairman Taylor brought the gavel down. Minton responded to Taylor’s call for the next witness by saying, “I would like to point this out . . . ,” to which Taylor replied, “You have. Will Mr. Renstrom please come forward. If we can’t have cooperation, we can’t proceed.” Witnesses in Taylor’s session were limited to three minutes of oral testimony and were warned by a bell when the time was almost up. Secretary Minton spoke through four warning bells for a total of fifteen minutes. Minton left the hearings “in a huff,” which was ironic, because he commonly stressed the need to look at the issue in an “unemotional” way, saying “few right decisions were ever made out of bitterness and emotion.”

At a Kiwanis Club meeting just five months earlier he pleaded for tolerance:

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Let us as reasonable men sit down and solve our problems without projecting them emotionally into politics where they do not belong. Let us hand down to our children not just the choice of a mining interest or a wilderness area, but a problem-solving method, a true workable philosophy of living and economics, and a faith that men of opposite opinions can talk, examine the facts, and resolve the issue.\textsuperscript{74}

Cecil Andrus also testified, supporting “the creation of a park large enough to protect this area of the Sawtooths, but small enough to allow hunting, fishing and grazing in the lower elevation areas.”\textsuperscript{75}

The detrimental effect that mining would have on the vital Salmon River watershed heavily influenced testimony favoring the park.\textsuperscript{76} Because of the low grade ore, processing would have to be done on site since transportation to another facility would make the operation unprofitable.\textsuperscript{77} Mining operations would likely pollute the East Fork of the Salmon River as well as much of main fork. According to a U.S. Forest Service fisheries biologist, even the best anti-pollution methods would do little to protect the salmon in the Little Boulder Creek area.\textsuperscript{78}

Bruce Bowler’s testimony stressed the merits of the new park and recreation area bill. Unlike management in the recently created North Cascades National Park,

\textsuperscript{74} Colette Wilde, “Minton Backs Mining in White Clouds, Pleads for Multiple-Use Concept to Aid State,” \textit{Idaho Statesman}, March 21, 1970.
\textsuperscript{76} “Sawtooth Hearing Testimony,” \textit{The Times-News} (Twin Falls, Idaho), August 30, 1970.
\textsuperscript{77} Cecil Andrus to F.H. Thomas, July 1, 1971, Cecil Andrus Papers, 141.1/15/13, Boise State University Library (hereafter cited as Andrus Papers).
Bowler noted that the unique management situation for the Sawtooths offered new opportunities for federal cooperation:

The new bills offer excellent opportunity for Congressional direction of cooperative administration of public lands by the Forest Service and the Park Service in the combination Park and NRA. This is a cooperative attitude that has too long been lacking between these agencies. 79

As the 1970 election drew closer, a poll showed that 55 percent of Idahoans supported some type of protection for the White Clouds, while only 35 percent wanted to allow mining in the area. 80 The gubernatorial candidates were clearly lined up on opposite sides of the issue and when the votes were tallied, Cecil Andrus won a narrow victory by fewer than 11,000 votes. Andrus recounted later: “I beat Don Samuelson, aided by two hundred thousand Idahoans who carried a hunting or fishing license, and stopped the rape of the White Clouds.” 81 Although he won only thirteen of forty-four counties, he prevailed in the large population centers. He later reminisced that “the battle over the White Clouds would help make me the first Western governor elected on an environmental platform.” 82

Despite hope that the Sawtooth legislation would easily pass through Congress, by the fall of 1970 it was clear that it would not happen during that legislative session. In his October newsletter, Senator Church reported: “All decisions affecting the Sawtooths have been put over until next year. The possibility for enacting any legislation this year collapsed in early September, when Chairman

80 Neil, To the White Clouds, 199.
81 Andrus, Cecil Andrus, 82.
82 Andrus, Cecil Andrus, 19.
Wayne Aspinall announced that his House Interior Committee would close shop for the balance of the session.\textsuperscript{83} The year came to a close without any protection for the Sawtooths or White Clouds. Using his prominent position in federal land management policy, Representative Aspinall had again thwarted Idaho conservationists. The coming year, however, held much promise. The congressional delegation was in agreement over the park complex bill, and Cecil Andrus would take office in January. Conservationists likely felt hopeful, if a bit frustrated, as 1970 came to a close.

\textsuperscript{83} Frank Church, “Washington Roundup,” October, 1970, Church Papers, 1.1/93/11.
5) 1970-1972: Compromises, Committees, and the Creation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area

The White Clouds gained the national spotlight again in the pages of *Smithsonian* magazine in its January 1971 issue. The article detailed the battle between ‘hysterical preservationists,’ as the Idaho Bureau of Mines called the conservationists, and ‘gouge-and-run bulldozer boys,’ as the conservationists retorted. It also highlighted the importance of the White Clouds issue in state politics, particularly with the election of Cecil Andrus as governor.¹ The *Smithsonian* reported that “the White Clouds were singled out by two major television networks as the prime issue in the Governor [Samuelson’s] defeat, and *The New York Times* called the Idaho results the ‘most sensational, perhaps, of the environmentalists’ Election Day triumphs.’”² The *Smithsonian* piece also recounted the latest developments in the park complex bill and expected it to be reintroduced in 1971.³

Although Idaho now had a governor who was eager to protect the White Cloud Mountains, the same could not be said for the Idaho state legislature. Representative Aden Hyde from Idaho Falls introduced a memorial in January 1971 to indicate the legislature’s preference for only a national recreation area.⁴ John H. Merriam, of the Idaho Falls Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council, called Hyde’s bill a “slap at our

³ Jack Hope, “In Idaho’s White Clouds: Mines or a Park – or Both,” *Smithsonian*, January 1971, 49.
governor as well as Idaho’s entire Washington delegation. More important, it is a slap at the people of Idaho by vested interests.”⁵ Merriam pointed to recent hearings and Representative Orval Hansen’s poll showing that the majority of the public supported a park complex. Despite the public and media outcry, in February the Idaho legislature passed the memorial urging Congress to create only a national recreation area.⁶ The *Lewiston Morning Tribune* called the memorial “a dismal, inadequate action compared with the proposed federal legislation offered by a unanimous, bi-partisan Idaho congressional delegation” to create a park and recreation area complex.⁷ The *Tribune* article blasted the Idaho legislature: “it doesn’t give a damn for the leadership of the congressional delegation or the wishes of the people as indicated in the election last fall.”⁸

Although the state legislature did not support a park proposal, conservationists assumed that Idaho’s congressional delegation would continue to favor such a measure. Conservationists were still content with the congressional delegation’s compromise park-complex bill despite its failure in the 1970 Congress. In the spring of 1971, the Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council, Idaho Wildlife Federation, and Idaho Environmental Council offered the Congressional delegation a park and

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recreation bill modeled on Washington’s recently created North Cascades National Park and Recreation Area.  

Conservationists suffered a devastating turn of events, however, when Idaho’s congressional delegation announced a new bill calling for only a national recreation area. Representative James McClure pointed to five objectives of the bill: (1) it would create the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA); (2) it would designate the existing Sawtooth Primitive Area as wilderness within the SNRA; (3) it mandated a Forest Service study of the SNRA to determine if any other land should be classified as wilderness; (4) it allowed existing mining claims, but gave the Forest Service power to “regulate activities associated with such claims” and called for a five-year moratorium on future mining claims; and (5) it called for a National Park Service study of lands that might be included later within the park system.  

The proposed recreation area included the Sawtooth, White Cloud, and Boulder Mountains and encompassed a total of 752,000 acres, 25,000 of which were private lands. Although the bill allowed the Forest Service to regulate mining, it also made possible “special use permits as may be reasonably necessary for the exercise of such [existing] rights.”

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In the absence of national park protections conservationists had been dealt a blow. Moreover the national recreation area bill was much weaker than others of its kind in terms of preservation. The GSPC was left to wonder why the park complex bill was not reintroduced in 1971, while director Gerald Scheid called the new bill “a

mandate for mining.” Gerald Jayne, president of the Idaho Environmental Council, remarked that “the omission of National Park designation in the bill came as a complete surprise to us.” Jayne and the IEC saw some merits in parts of the new bill, particularly the wilderness classification for the primitive area.

As the details of the newly proposed wilderness area became clear, the Sawtooth Primitive Area became “a new round in the battle to save a part of central Idaho’s Sawtooth country.” The primitive area was established in 1937 and encompassed 205,000 acres, but under the Wilderness Act of 1964 the land had to be reclassified as wilderness or as a multiple use area. Forest Service hearings were scheduled on May 3 and May 4, 1971 in Sun Valley and Boise regarding the reclassification issue. The Forest Service wanted some lands added to the wilderness area and some lands excluded. Governor Andrus testified at the Boise hearing in favor of including all of the primitive area in the proposed wilderness area, rather than excluding the sections proposed by the Forest Service. Andrus also voiced his continued support for a national park:

[The White Clouds] range is an example of an area that contains minerals that may be economic to mine but which should not be mined because of the present need, supply and alternate value situation. The highest potential of the White clouds and the Sawtooth Range will accrue through wilderness uses.

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Although conservationists still hoped for a national park, they mobilized to show support for the wilderness classification. The Wilderness Society urged people to testify or write letters for the May 3 and 4 hearings. The Society also listed nine other conservation organizations supporting the wilderness area, including the GSPC, Idaho Environmental Council, and the Sierra Club. The hearing alert called attention to the precedent-setting proposal to withdraw the wilderness area from mineral entry. [The Wilderness Act (1964) required that all Forest Service lands in the Wilderness system remain open to mineral claims until 1984.] The Wilderness Society also urged conservationists to use the hearing as another opportunity to voice support for a park.¹⁹

Groups representing motorized trail users, such as the Magic Valley Trail Machine Association, were outraged by the possible wilderness designation. If popular resort destinations such as Redfish Lake were included in the wilderness area, motor boats, campers, and cars would no longer be permitted access to the lake. Representing the Magic Valley Trail Machine Association, Mel Quale directed his attack towards preservationists: “you can’t water ski behind a canoe or backpack a camper into a campground – and this is just what would happen if some people have their way.”²⁰

After the Sun Valley testimony regarding the wilderness classification, additional hearings were held June in Washington D.C. before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation. The June meetings were to consider the House bill in

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¹⁹ The Wilderness Society, public hearing alert, April 23, 1971, Church Papers, 1.1/93/11.
its entirety, but prior to the hearings, Chairman Roy Taylor requested that witnesses who had already testified in Sun Valley should appear only if they had “new and useful information.”  

Idaho’s Senator Frank Church testified on June 7, supporting the House SNRA bill as a first step towards creation of a Sawtooth National Park:

> Few other places in our nation are so deserving of protection as the area which encompasses the alpine heights of the Sawtooth, White Cloud and Boulder Mountains and the lowlands of the Sawtooth Valley. Undoubtedly, the mountains are deserving of National Park status, as part of any permanent management plan. The legislation now before you, supported and sponsored by all four members of the Idaho Congressional delegation, is a pragmatic first step toward the creation of a National Park-National Recreation Area complex.

Although Church ultimately hoped for a park designation, he stressed the importance of passing the recreation area bill in order to give some measure of protection to the fragile peaks and valley floor. His colleague, Senator Len Jordan also testified, pointing out that both the Idaho Congressional delegation and the state legislature supported the proposed bill.  

Governor Andrus did not waver on his support for a park and recreation area complex, writing to McClure prior to the hearings: “While I feel the lower lands need, deserve and require a national recreation status, I cannot abdicate the fact that the fragile higher elevations need the protection that only the national park service can give.”

Although Church stressed that passage of the NRA “would not preclude later enactment of a national park bill,” some

22 Statement of Senator Frank Church, Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation hearing, June 7, 1971, Church Papers, 7.9/13/4.
24 Cecil Andrus to James McClure, June 3, 1971, Andrus Papers, 141.1/15/12.
conservationists thought it would do just that. Tom Davis of the Idaho Environmental Council, feared that if the recreation area bill passed, there would never be a national park for the Sawtooths.25

Idaho newspapers protested the new bill as well. Ferris Weddle of the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* told readers: “Idaho deserves an outstanding national park and the Greater Sawtooths are indeed outstanding, therefore I must agree with the criticism of the present NRA proposal.”26 *The Post-Register* of Idaho Falls warned:

> Idahoans should recognize that the legislation is not as strong in its preservation reach as most recreation areas – especially in what it tolerates in special use permits for mining on existing claims. . . . The problem with the Sawtooth NRA as written is that the special use permits on existing mining claims confer permission where permission is not due in the White Clouds.”27

As debate over the 1971 bill continued, conservationists wondered why the park complex bill was not reintroduced into Congress. The Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council speculated that “the key man in this fast shuffle apparently is Cong. James McClure” who sat on the House Interior Committee. The Preservation Council believed that McClure was “blocking the way and the balance of Idaho’s delegation seem content to go along with him. The best that this legislation offers the White Clouds is an indecent burial.”28 The organization’s Vice president, Russell Brown, thought the new bill had three main problems: it did not provide protection under the national park system; it called for temporary, not permanent, mineral

25 Notes from June 7, 1971, hearing, Church Papers, 1.1/93/11.
withdrawal and; finally, it allowed special use permits that could undermine the bill’s minimal protections. Brown charged: “as protective legislation, the NRA bill is a tragic failure.”

The House Interior Committee was scheduled to review the bill in early October, and as the date drew near, people continued to call for changes to strengthen its protective measures. Conservationists had problems with two sections of the bill. Section fourteen was a concession to miners stating that no provisions of the bill shall “be construed as preventing or interfering with the full exercise of the rights of the holder of a valid claim to further prospect, develop, and mine any such claim.” Conservationists wanted this clause removed to protect the White Clouds from mining interests. They also wanted section twelve, calling for a temporary mining moratorium, strengthened to permanently withdraw the area from mineral entry. Carl Hocevar, of the Idaho Environmental Council, maintained that a park and recreation area complex would be ideal, but an amended national recreation area with the changes to sections twelve and fourteen would be preferable to the existing weak bill.

As the October committee meeting approached, Congressmen Hansen released the results of a poll regarding the management options for the Sawtooths and White Clouds. Although Idaho’s Congressional delegation had dropped the park bill,

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30 “Sawtooth Recreation Bill Called Inadequate,” Post-Register, October 1, 1971.
32 “Sawtooth Recreation Bill Called Inadequate,” Post-Register, October 1, 1971.
Hansen’s poll showed that citizens still favored a park and recreation area complex over a national recreation area. Fifty percent of Hansen’s respondents favored the complex bill, while only 24 percent favored a national recreation area. Nineteen percent of the respondents supported a variety of other management options and the remaining 6 percent had no opinion.\(^\text{33}\)

The Preservation Council still sought to gain committee support for a park proposal. At the October subcommittee meeting, Chairman Roy Taylor conceded that the bill was “not as strong as we could have written it.” Arizona Representative Morris K. Udall supported the bill, telling the committee that if it was inadequate he would not have backed the measure. The Idaho Falls Post Register reported, however, that Udall’s aides “admitted the congressman was perplexed as to why Sen. Frank Church . . . had co-sponsored the measure with the rest of the Idaho congressional delegation.” The newspaper went on to say that “sources near Church said the environment-minded senator felt the bill was about as much as McClure would go for.”\(^\text{34}\) Church wrote to a concerned constituent that he did “not regard the bill as the ideal or final solution”:

I must hasten to add that this measure is the best on which I could get agreement from all members of the Idaho Delegation. In the past, the lack of unanimity on this subject has meant that bills passed in the Senate have died in the House. After ten years of trying, I am convinced that enactment of protective legislation must not be delayed further, even if it doesn’t contain everything I should wish to see in it.\(^\text{35}\)

\(^{33}\) “Poll Backs Park-Play Areas for Sawtooths,” Post-Register, October 6, 1971.


\(^{35}\) Frank Church to Darrell J. Hirte, June 28, 1971, Church Papers, 1.1/93/11.
The House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee approved the bill establishing the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and a 216,383 acre Sawtooth Wilderness Area on November 10, 1971. The wilderness area was not included in the SNRA but was a separate entity. The committee passed the bill, retaining the five-year mining moratorium. A similar measure was still in the Senate committee.

As winter approached, conservationists realized that the only option they had left, and the only fight they had a chance to win, was a revision of the Senate bill. The Preservation Council knew that “unless some kind of revolution occurs, the bill will be approved by the House when it finally comes up for a vote.” Although the GSPC failed in the House, it turned its attention to what was salvageable in the Senate. Idaho’s two senators had fought for park protection much more enthusiastically than the state’s congressional delegates and conservationists turned to Senator Church for support. Local papers expected senators Church and Jordan to come up with a tougher bill for the Senate.

The House passed the bill by a vote of 369-9 on January 26, 1972, with no amendments on the floor. The bill retained changes made in the committee.

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Although Representative James McClure opposed two of these changes, they remained in the House bill. McClure was unhappy with the decision to give the federal government jurisdiction over hunting and fishing rights within the SNRA, preferring to see the state regulate such activities. McClure also did not support the decision to exclude the wilderness area from SNRA management. Otherwise, he was satisfied with the bill which had “no effect on the rights of the [mining] claim holders.”

One of the nine dissenters of the House bill was Pennsylvania Republican John Saylor who favored a park bill. A member of the Sierra Club, Saylor voiced his dissatisfaction with the bill, calling it “a sham” because it “provides a confusing, weak, and inherently ineffectual package of provisions.” He noted that some of the bill’s provisions worked against protecting the White Clouds, and that it was “fatally flawed by special loophole provisions that will bring mining and other forms of wholly incompatible use into the very heart of this area.”

Even the *New York Times* weighed in on the bill and its concessions to the mining industry:

> The grave defect in the bill is due to the pro-mining bias of Representative Aspinall of Colorado, the long-time chairman of the House Interior Committee. Not only should there be a permanent ban on new mining claims, but all existing claims should be quashed. Marginal economic benefits do not justify despoiling White Cloud peaks.

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The Times touched off a series of responses, with Idaho’s remote mountains spotlighted in one of the nation’s largest newspapers. The chairman of ASARCO, Charles Barber, responded to the New York Times article, pointing to the thirty million dollar investment ASARCO had made in the White Clouds area and the importance of mineral development to the nation’s economy and security. Barber directly criticized the newspaper: “I think your editorials on the subject would best serve the interests of all citizens if they recognized the issue fairly rather than casing it in terms of running the miners off.”

The Times debate continued when the Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council’s Russell Brown refuted many of ASARCO’s claims while drawing attention to the huge open pit mine – 700 feet wide, 7,000 feet long, and 350 feet deep – that would be created if ASARCO’s efforts were successful.

Meanwhile, the recreation area bill slowed to a crawl in the Senate, with senators Church and Jordan expected to make many changes to strengthen the measure. The senators wanted the wilderness area to be included in the SNRA, otherwise, under a loophole in the Wilderness Act, the area would be open to mining entries until 1984. In addition, Church was still pushing for permanent, rather than temporary, withdrawal of the area from mineral extraction. The senator also wanted to restore hunting and fishing regulation to the state, an amendment that both McClure and Hansen in the House supported. Although Church’s provisions were expected to get through the Senate, the ultimate destination for the bill was the House-Senate

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conference committee chaired by Colorado’s infamous Wayne Aspinall. The congressman, who wrote the original mining loophole in the 1964 Wilderness Act, was unlikely to budge on the mining issue. He was expected to restore any loopholes removed by senators Church and Jordan.⁴⁷

Senate hearings before the Parks and Recreation Subcommittee were scheduled for April 12 and 13 in Washington D.C.⁴⁸ The Preservation Council continued to support a park and recreation area modeled on the North Cascades and administered by the National Park Service.⁴⁹ During the Senate hearings, Governor Andrus supported the creation of a national park and recreation area for the White Clouds and called for permanent prohibitions against mining.⁵⁰ Senator Church introduced a number of amendments at the hearings “to insure that this area does not fall victim to the quick-buck operator, that it is not subject to unplanned development that mars the magnificent vistas, the scenic grandeur found here.”⁵¹

Representative McClure, on the other hand, came under increasing scrutiny for his ambiguous environmental positions as he put his hat in the Senate race for Len Jordan’s seat in April 1972. The Lewiston Morning Tribune blasted McClure’s policies regarding the White Clouds and his support for damming Idaho’s rivers. The

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⁴⁸ Press release, Frank Church, February 11, 1972, Bowler Papers, 37/16; Frank Church to Bruce Bowler, February 24, 1972, Bowler Papers, 37/16.
⁵¹ Statement of Senator Frank Church on Sawtooth National Recreation Area Legislation, Senator Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, April 12, 1972, Church Papers, 1.1/93/12.
newspaper called McClure “the last prominent voice in Idaho against permanent protection of the White Cloud Mountains.” The newspaper went on to say, “it is McClure who jams up the legislative works” and “who fights the rear guard action for the miners and the dam-builders, advocates for the weakest legislation likely to pass and waves the position at the voters as the banner of a conservationist.” The Idaho Statesman commented that the House bill would keep the door open for the mining industry and that “Rep. James McClure has served the mining interests faithfully to see that this is the outcome.”

The Idaho Falls Post Register reported a particularly memorable exchange at the Senate hearings between Representative McClure and Senator Church. Church drew the committee’s attention to a recent report by an environmental task force concluding that it was unnecessary to mine molybdenum due to a national surplus and that it would be best to leave the White Clouds in their undeveloped state. Church also pointed to Governor Andrus’s initial support of the report. McClure quickly fired back that the report had been deliberately leaked to Governor Andrus for purely political reasons and that the report was nothing but opinion and speculation. The Post-Register reported that McClure then “did the unpolitic: The aspiring senatorial candidate blasted the report”:

even Church appeared to be surprised at the degree of McClure’s blast, and sat back without much response. McClure, appearing to suddenly recognize he was well on his way to inheriting the White Clouds albatross which drug

former Gov. Don Samuelson to defeat two years ago, paused to collect the cool he had uncharacteristically blown.\textsuperscript{54}

The next day McClure issued a letter to the press explaining his position further and pointing to the support of others in the Interior Department.

The Senate Interior Committee passed its version of the bill and reported it to the full Senate in May.\textsuperscript{55} The bill called for state control of fish and game rather than federal control, and for permanent withdrawal of mining claims, instead of a five-year moratorium. Unlike the House bill, it did not allow special use permits. At the request of conservationists, the Senate bill called for the addition of the Pioneer Mountains to a National Park Service study and the inclusion of the Sawtooth Primitive Area as part of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.\textsuperscript{56} Senator Church believed the “bill will safeguard this superb landscape from needless injury.” Senator Jordan expressed his confidence in quick passage of the measure, because the Senate had already unanimously passed two previous Sawtooth bills.\textsuperscript{57} The \textit{Post Register} lauded the bill as a significant improvement over the House version.\textsuperscript{58} The Idaho Environmental Council also supported the Senate bill and called for Representative McClure to support Idaho’s senators and their strong national recreation area bill.\textsuperscript{59} But the outcome still depended on the conference committee, chaired by Wayne

\textsuperscript{55} Frank Church, open letter, May 1972, Bowler Papers, 37/16.
\textsuperscript{56} Press release, Frank Church and Len Jordan, May 19, 1972, Bowler Papers, 37/16; Jerry Jayne to Frank Church, March 20, 1972, Church Papers, 1.1/93/12.
\textsuperscript{57} Press release, Frank Church and Len Jordan, May 19, 1972, Bowler Papers, 37/16.
Aspinall and with James McClure as a member. Senators Church and Jordan were also members of the committee.

The Senate passed its Sawtooth bill on May 23, 1972, the third time in five years that it had passed SNRA legislation. The measure then went to the House-Senate Conference Committee to resolve differences in the two versions of the bill. Despite all the predictions that had been made about Congressman Aspinall’s likely opposition, Senator Church reported in July 1972 that the bill had emerged from the conference committee with all of the Senate sponsored changes that strengthened the national recreation area legislation. Hunting and fishing rights were handed back over to the state as Idaho’s congressional delegation wanted. The conference bill provided for permanent withdrawal of the land from new mining claims and a prohibition against patenting existing claims. The 217,000 acre wilderness area was included within the SNRA making it exempt from mineral entry as well. The bill also included the Pioneer Mountains in a National Park Service study to be completed by the end of 1974.

The mining industry considered the bill a defeat. A spokesman for the Idaho Mining Association, referring to the permanent prohibition of mining, remarked: “we lost that round.” Although ASARCO’s claims in the White Clouds were valid, under

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60 Press release, Frank Church and Len Jordan, May 19, 1972, Bowler Papers, 37/16.
the new national recreation area legislation the company would have trouble getting permission to build a road to gain access to its claim.\textsuperscript{65}

Although conservationists had lobbied hard for a national park, they viewed the final bill as a victory and the first important step to the eventual establishment of a national park. The Greater Sawtooth Preservation Council’s president Russell Brown commented that “lacking national park status this is the next best thing.”\textsuperscript{66}

Conservationists saw the national recreation area as only the first step in their ultimate goal. Governor Andrus echoed the same sentiments: he was “pleased that in this election year all the members of the Idaho delegation finally saw fit to get together to take the first step in protection of those magnificent mountains.”\textsuperscript{67}

Idaho senators Len Jordan and Frank Church were given credit for guiding a strong national recreation area bill through the conference committee. But the \textit{Idaho Statesman} was puzzled: “one of the mysteries about the agreement is the role Idaho Congressman James McClure played in it.”\textsuperscript{68} Conservationists were certain that representatives Aspinall and McClure would weaken the legislation, but in the end they did not. Perhaps, as \textit{Idaho Statesman} reporter Mindy Cameron wrote, the surprising outcome was because “the pressures of an election year worked to the


advantage of the preservationists’ cause.” The Preservation Council’s Russell Brown speculated that the controversy was not worth the fight for McClure, especially as the fall Senate election approached.

McClure backed off from his pro-mining stand when his opponents in the primary, Glen Wegner and Robert Smylie, drew attention to his unpopular position. Ernest Day, who resigned as director of the parks board in 1969 as a result of the White Clouds controversy, wrote to Senator Church thanking him for doing “such a masterful job getting the best bill under the circumstances and capitalizing on McClure’s situation prior to the primary.” Others speculated that retiring Senator Jordan wanted “to see the legislation pass before a perhaps less eager Senator takes his spot” which “prompted him to use his immense prestige to pressure the conferees.”

President Nixon signed the Sawtooth National Recreation Area measure into law on August 25, 1972. The SNRA encompassed 754,000 acres, an area roughly the size of Rhode Island. It included the Sawtooth, White Cloud, and Boulder mountains, with Ryan Peak in the Boulders standing the tallest at 11,900 feet. More than 300 lakes were within the boundaries of the SNRA. The Idaho Statesman called the legislation a victory, although it pointed out that “the possibility of destruction

72 Ernest E. Day to Frank Church, September 8, 1972, Church Papers, 8.2/11/27.
74 “Nixon Signs Sawtooths Bill,” Idaho Statesman, August 26, 1972.
from mining existing claims remains, but the chances are diminished.” The measure also halted the unsightly development of subdivisions on the valley floor.  

The Sawtooth National Recreation Area was dedicated on September 1, 1972. All four members of Idaho’s Congressional delegation, along with Governor Andrus and the chief of the Forest Service, spoke at the ceremony at Redfish Lake. The day started with a bus tour for about 100 people who had been involved in the creation of the SNRA, followed by a luncheon. The public was then invited to Redfish Lake in the afternoon for the official dedication ceremony. Because passage of the SNRA was “easily the most significant legislation for Idaho” in 1972, Senator Church hoped to use the day as a chance to snap a picture of his family for his Christmas card. No politician had fought harder to protect the White Clouds than Church, who noted that the legislation was “the culmination of an effort I began over a decade ago to bring protection to this area.”

Beginning with Jean Conly Smith and the Idaho Federation of Women’s Clubs in 1911, the legislation was the culmination of six decades of work to protect the south-central Idaho mountains. Support for protective legislation waxed and waned as politicians and public attitudes changed, but conservationists finally found the support they needed when the threat of mining in the White Clouds became a reality. For conservationists, however, the creation of the SNRA was only the beginning of

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76 Vern Hamre to Frank Church, August 2, 1972, Church Papers, 8.2/11/27.
77 Cleve to Frank Church, memo, August 7, 1972, Church Papers, 8.2/11/27.
78 News release, Idaho Congressional delegation, July 17, 1972, Church Papers, 7.9/13/4.
another battle to ensure stronger protection for the White Cloud, Boulder, and Pioneer mountains for the future.
"America stands today poised on a pinnacle of wealth and power, yet we live in a land of vanishing beauty, of increasing ugliness, of shrinking open space, and of an over-all environment that is diminished daily by pollution and noise and blight. This, in brief, is the quiet conservation crisis . . ."

Stewart L. Udall  
_The Quiet Crisis_, 1963

Although Stewart Udall’s remark remains as true today as it did in 1963, Idaho is fortunate to still have places of incredible beauty and vast open spaces. It is because of these places that the conservation crisis continues. The central Idaho conservation battle did not end with the designation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Although the legislation gave the strongest protection to the Sawtooth Mountains with the creation of a wilderness area, the White Cloud and Boulder mountains remained vulnerable to mining and motorized vehicle use as part of a recreation area.

After the designation of the recreation area, the Forest Service’s major task was to examine all the existing mining claims in the area. Regional Forester Verne Hamre announced that mining engineers would examine all the claims in order “to determine the total extent of outstanding mineral rights.” An estimated 7,000 unpatented claims existed in the recreation area according to Gray Reynolds, superintendent of the SNRA.

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Three years after its creation, Reynolds maintained that “the biggest challenge in administering the NRA will be the resolution of the mineral questions.”\(^4\) The legislation creating the SNRA called for the government purchase of existing valid claims that could not be mined in a way that maintained the environmental and aesthetic values of the land. Although ASARCO continued assessment work in the area around Castle Peak, the company showed no immediate intent to mine the area.\(^5\)

The National Park Service published its report on a proposed national park and recreation area complex in 1975. The report recommended that the Sawtooth, White Cloud, Boulder, and Pioneer mountains all be included in the national park system. By the time the report was published, however, the Forest Service had already established management guidelines and put considerable effort into developing the national recreation area. According to an article in the Idaho Falls *Post-Register*, many Idahoans were content with the Forest Service management of the area and feared the hordes of visitors that would come with a national park designation. The park service study, Forest Service supporters claimed, was only a measure to appease park advocates and pressure the Forest Service to effectively manage the area.\(^6\)

Some conservationists, however, continued to push for a national park and were not pleased with Forest Service management. The Idaho Environmental Council’s H. Tom Davis kept pressure on Governor Andrus, writing, “I am convinced that anything

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But with the election of Jimmy Carter to the presidency, Andrus was appointed Interior Secretary in 1976. As the department’s new secretary, he did not recommend park status for the White Clouds. Senator Church, who had lobbied more than anyone else for a national park, argued that the Forest Service was doing an adequate job managing the recreation area. If that changed, however, National Park Service administration of the area should still be a possibility. Ultimately, Church urged constituents to “wait and see.”

Today, many of Idaho’s citizens are still waiting for additional protection for the White Clouds.

Although Cecil Andrus, James McClure (who was elected to the Senate in 1972), and Idaho Senator Larry Craig all made attempts to further protect the White Clouds, the most promising legislation is in the 2007, 110th Congressional session. Idaho Representative Mike Simpson, a Republican from eastern Idaho, sponsored the Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act (CIEDRA) in 2004. Although the bill passed the House in 2006, the Senate held hearings only days before the end of the session and the bill was dropped. Representative Simpson reintroduced the bill in the House on January 4, 2007, where it awaits further action.

The Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act is a compromise measure that tries to please residents of Custer County – the location of most of the recreation area – its resource and recreational users, and wilderness advocates. The bill would create three new wilderness areas, including the Boulder and White Cloud mountains, totaling more than 300,000 acres. The proposal also includes a Boulder-

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7 H. Tom Davis to Cecil Andrus, August 14, 1976, Bowler Papers, 37/17.
White Clouds Management Area surrounding the wilderness area which would allow many motorized trails to remain open. The bill calls for the transfer of nearly 5,700 acres of public land to Custer and Blaine counties and to the cities of Stanley, Mackay, and Clayton. Much of the land is low-elevation, valuable land surrounding Stanley. Because the bill is a compromise, an attempt to appease a very diverse group of land users, it faces plenty of opposition.⁹

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⁹ For more information about CIEDRA, including the full text of the bill, see Representative Mike Simpson’s website, specifically http://www.house.gov/simpson/ciedra.shtml.
longer afford to let perfect be the enemy of good.” The group believes that “the most challenging aspect for Rep. Simpson and the Democrats in Congress will be to craft changes that will address the concerns of the majority party . . . without losing the support of the most Republican state in the nation.”

A recent joint statement by Democrat Cecil Andrus and Republican James McClure, however, shows that bipartisan agreement may be a possibility and that history has indeed come full circle:

Needless to say, we haven’t always been on the same side of land management issues, but in the case of the Boulder-White Clouds we are convinced that Mike Simpson, and those who have worked with him on this important effort, have found a winning approach. Areas of the Boulder-White Clouds clearly deserve wilderness designation.

While the legislative future of the White Clouds is yet to be determined, it is clear that there is something captivating about this place that has remained in the public spotlight after decades of debate.

I recently made my own trek into the White Clouds. Having spent time in the neighboring Sawtooth Mountains and in the Pioneers further east, the White Clouds had eluded me, and my mission was to see Castle Peak. I wanted to lay eyes on the peak portrayed in so many photos and written about in so many articles. I wanted to imagine being at the base of Castle Peak forty years ago when the whole nation knew about the White Clouds and the threat of mining in the fragile alpine valleys. And so I set out from Boise – with one two-legged companion and two four-legged companions – and made the four hour drive to the Fourth of July Creek trailhead south of Stanley.

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After spending the night at Washington Lake, we headed up the trail for Chamberlain Pass. As we made our way up the switchbacks under the watchful gaze of a curious badger, we could see the clouds darkening across the valley. Just minutes before, there was nothing but blue sky, but storms move surprisingly fast through the mountains, especially from our vantage point at 9,000 feet. Lightening lit up the mountains to the southeast and thunder jolted us out of the surreal scene as we stopped to decide whether we should turn around or try to make it to the pass. Against our better judgment, we continued another half mile, accompanied by the creaking and popping of the tall pines in the stiff breeze. And then all of a sudden, we were at the pass. How anything can happen “all of a sudden” after hiking seven miles uphill with one goal in mind always puzzles me, but it truly was shocking to come out of the trees to Chamberlain Pass. As we gazed north across Chamberlain Basin, I almost lost my breath. Castle Peak was huge, imposing, and magnificent.

Standing there facing Castle Peak, I began to understand the White Clouds controversy beyond reading articles or looking at photographs. Standing in the shadow of the White Clouds, it is obvious that the Castle Peak controversy was not just about politics or mining or bureaucracies; it was about a place - a place that has different meanings to different people. There are no heroes and villains in this story, only different conceptions of place.

The idea of place is an elusive concept for historians, as William Lang explains, because “so much of the focus is on the internal as contrasted with the external.”

is not just about geographical location; it is about perception. According to Lang, “the physical environment is often understood best as a symbol that represents cultural values and perceptions invested in a place.”¹³ Castle Peak was a place where competing values and perceptions were contested in politics and policy during the late 1960s and into the 1970s.

Place is not only about internal values and sentimental attachments, however, as economist Thomas Michael Power has argued in his work on economies in the West. Economic health, he emphasizes, is bound up very closely with environmental health:

Commitment to place is important to local economic development, and thus the qualities that instill commitment have economic importance in addition to whatever social, biological, or cultural importance they have. One quality that has always instilled a sense of place is a desirable landscape.¹⁴

In addition, Powers has concluded that the resources that characterize many landscapes in the West are being valued differently as the region looks to the future. While natural resources are still an important part of Western economies, they are increasingly valued for their non-consumptive, non-commercial aspects rather than their traditional extractive uses.¹⁵ According to Powers and fellow economist Richard Barrett, a transformation in the economies of the American West began in the last half of the twentieth century and continues today. The transition marks a shift away from reliance on traditional extractive industries and towards what the authors call a “post-cowboy” economics.¹⁶ If such a model is correct, the future should be bright for the White Clouds.

¹³ Lang, “From Where We Are Standing,” 85.
¹⁵ Power, Lost Landscapes and Failed Economies, 236.
Although the White Clouds may seem of little importance to people beyond Idaho, the story of the land-use controversy surrounding Castle Peak fits into a larger picture of similar debates across the nation. Historians have told the stories of countless local places, and taken together these events have helped to inform a thoughtful and detailed environmental history of the twentieth century. From Hetch Hetchy to Echo Park and Castle Peak, these stories indicate national trends, but also offer departures, and regional nuances that broader accounts may otherwise miss. Although the story of the White Clouds controversy contributes to many broader stories that historians are already familiar with --- such as the tensions between the Forest Service and the National Park Service and the rise of the environmental movement --- it also contains elements that may be surprising and could lend themselves to further study.

With the mining loophole in the 1964 Wilderness Bill and with his position as head of the Public Land Law Review Commission, Wayne Aspinall should be the villain of the White Clouds story. But neither he nor James McClure weakened the national recreation area legislation. The intricacies of the political controversy and the idiosyncrasies of the individuals involved remind us that even histories about federal land management and massive bureaucracies are still histories about people. These people do not always make the choices we expected them to. If they did, we might not be doing very good jobs as historians. The White Clouds saga fits into the larger history of public lands in the West, but it also shows that places and people and regional differences help inform a more complex story.
The history of the Sawtooth and White Cloud mountains also occupies an important place in Idaho history. Although the mining controversy is usually relegated to a footnote, or perhaps a paragraph, in Idaho history, a more in-depth look at just the four years between the ASARCO mining proposal and the creation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area reveals incredible details about the social and political history of the state as well. The study of a land controversy such as the White Clouds is one of the most telling ways to uncover political trends and personalities, especially as it spans critical election years. Furthermore, it is possible to uncover the social and political movements surrounding land-use debates in a way that larger stories may overlook. Above all, the history of the White Cloud and Sawtooth mountains helps inform current situations and provides a basis for future land-use decisions. As historian William Robbins has noted: “The role of the federal government has washed across almost every aspect of western life and continues to do so.”17 With 64 percent of Idaho controlled by the federal government, there promises to be no shortage of land-use controversies in the future.

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