

Preface

The Wilderness Science in a Time of Change Conference was held in Missoula, Montana, May 23 through 27, 1999. The conference was conceived to be both a followup and an expansion of the first National Wilderness Research Conference, held in Fort Collins, Colorado, in 1985. That conference brought together most of the scientists in the world who are working on issues related to the management of wilderness and resulted in literature reviews and compilations of research that remain critical references today (Lucas 1986, 1987). Our intent was to bring scientists together again, along with wilderness managers, to produce an updated compendium of the current state-of-knowledge and current research. In addition, we sought to increase the array of scientific disciplines represented at the conference and to expand the range of topics beyond the challenges of managing wilderness. Finally, we hoped to use plenary talks to highlight controversy, divergent viewpoints, and management dilemmas—to challenge participants' belief systems—in the hopes that this would stimulate interaction and personal growth.

Well over 400 people participated in the conference. Conference attendees included a roughly equal mix of people from federal land managing agencies and from academia. There were also several representatives from state, local, and tribal governments. There were more than 30 attendees from 16 different nongovernmental organizations, as well as a number of private individuals, consultants, and members of the press. About 20 participants were from Canada, with about 20 more participants from other countries. We succeeded in attracting people from diverse disciplines, united in their interest in wilderness. As usually is the case, a large proportion of the researchers who attended specialize in the social science aspects of outdoor recreation. However, attendees also included other types of social scientists, philosophers, paleontologists, and life scientists interested in all scales of analysis from cells to the globe.

The conference consisted of plenary talks to be presented before the entire conference, as well as more narrowly focused presentations organized around three conference themes and presented in concurrent sessions. The conference's plenary talks were organized into four sessions: (1) global trends and their influence on wilderness, (2) contemporary criticisms and celebrations of the idea of wilderness, (3) the capacity of science to meet the challenges that wilderness faces and to realize the opportunities that wilderness presents, and (4) concluding talks related to conference themes.

The bulk of the conference was organized around three themes. The first theme was "Science for Understanding Wilderness in the Context of Larger Systems." The emphasis of this theme was better understanding of the linkages between wilderness and the social and ecological systems (regional, national, and international) in which wilderness is situated. The emphasis of the second theme, "Wilderness for Science: A Place for Inquiry," was better understanding of what we have learned from studies that have utilized wilderness as a laboratory. The third and most traditional theme was "Science for Wilderness: Improving Management." The emphasis of this theme was better understanding of wilderness visitors, threats to wilderness values, and means of planning for and managing wilderness.

We organized three types of sessions under each of these three themes. We invited 18 speakers to present overview papers on specific topical areas under each theme. Many of these speakers developed comprehensive state-of-knowledge reviews of the literature for their assigned topic, while others developed more selective discussions of issues and research they judged to be particularly significant. In addition, conference participants were given the opportunity to contribute either a traditional research paper or to organize a dialogue session. Most of the research papers (131 papers) were presented orally, but 23 additional papers were presented in a poster session. The 14 dialogue sessions were intended to promote group discussion and learning.

The proceedings of the conference is organized into five separate volumes. The first volume is devoted to the papers presented during the plenary sessions. Subsequent volumes are devoted to each of the three conference themes, with two volumes devoted to wilderness management, the theme with the most papers. Within each theme, papers are organized into overview papers, research papers, and papers from the dialogue sessions. The format of dialogue session papers varies with the different approaches taken to capture the significant outcomes of the sessions. Research papers include papers presented orally and on posters. Within each theme, research papers are organized into broad topical areas. Although the initial draft of each proceedings paper was reviewed and edited, final submissions were published as submitted. Therefore, the final content of these papers remains the responsibility of the authors.

We thank the many individuals and institutions on the lists of committee members and sponsors that

follow. They all contributed to the success of the conference.

Planning Committee: Joan Brehm, Perry Brown, David Cole, Wayne Freimund, Stephen McCool, Connie Myers, and David Parsons.

Program Committee: David Cole (Co-chair), Stephen McCool (Co-chair), Dorothy Anderson, William Borrie, David Graber, Rebecca Johnson, Martha Lee, Reed Noss, Jan van Wagtenonk, and Alan Watson.

Sponsors: Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute; Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center; Bureau of Land Management; Forest Service, Research; Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station; Humboldt State University, College of Natural Resources; National Outdoor Leadership School; National Park Service; Parks Canada; State University of New York, Syracuse, College of Environmental Science and Forestry; The University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources; The University of Montana, School of Forestry, Wilderness Institute;

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; and U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division.

Steering Committee Members: Perry Brown (Co-Chair), David Parsons (Co-Chair), Norman Christensen, Rick Coleman, Chip Dennerlein, Dennis Fenn, Denis Galvin, David Harmon, John Hendee, Jeff Jarvis, Kenneth Kimball, Luna Leopold, Robert Lewis, David Lime, Nik Lopoukhine, James MacMahon, Michael Manfredo, William Meadows, III, Chris Monz, Margaret Shannon, Jack Ward Thomas, and Hank Tyler.

References

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- Lucas, Robert C., comp. 1987. Proceedings, national wilderness research conference: issues, state-of-knowledge, future directions; 1985 July 23-26; Fort Collins, CO. Gen. Tech. Rep. INT-220. Ogden, UT: Intermountain Research Station. 369 p.

—The Compilers