A Political Cultural Map to Future Wilderness, Monument and Park Designation

M. A. Nie

Abstract—This research examines western American political (sub)culture as it pertains to past and future wilderness, monument and park designation. It thus provides a sort of rough map, or cultural compass, in determining the most likely political obstacles (other than political institutions) and detours in the creation of new nonmultiple use areas. It explores landmarks such as Western environmental public opinion, the Western federal presence, the West seen as plundered province, bumper-sticker economics, differences between de facto and de jure wilderness designation, and others. Like all maps, it also attempts to point the way towards the least bumpy, unobstructed and democratic route that future wilderness proponents may want to take.

Wilderness science, it could be argued, has a richer understanding of the ecological foundation of various wilderness areas—its natural state—than it often does about the political and cultural dimensions that determine whether such places will or will not be officially designated and protected. If one is to understand the foundation on which so many wilderness, monument and park conflicts are built, one must head West—the most coveted but contested of American terrain. It is within this "geography of hope" that the American environment-culture relationship can perhaps be best understood. It is only after the political and cultural foundation of Western-based environmental conflict is put into perspective, that the region, as Wallace Stegner once hoped, can "create a society to match its scenery." Given that the American West is largely held in common due to the disproportionate amount of public lands in the area, visions of the region necessarily involve disparate and often dissenting political cultural assumptions, beliefs, values and objectives.

This research summary provides a type of rough cultural map in determining the most likely political obstacles and suggested detours in the creation of new nonmultiple use areas in the American West—and, to a certain extent, in suitable areas east of the Rockies. While many of these cultural contours and cleavages have been analyzed in an historical context and are thus well known, this synopsis updates their relevance and applies new findings to future wilderness and monument designation (findings and themes that will be applicable to future park conflicts as well). The paper is best seen as a summary of selected findings from a larger and more inclusive research project examining the intersection between western American political culture and natural resource politics and policy; thus, there is a curious lack of detail throughout, and readers are encouraged to contact the author for additional information, data and references. The research also draws heavily on case study fieldwork conducted shortly after President Bill Clinton proclaimed 1.7 million acres of southern Utah as the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument; it enlarges this debate to cover the ongoing struggle over additional southern Utah wilderness designation.

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M. A. Nie is assistant professor of political science-environmental policy, Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota, Duluth, MN 55812-2496 U.S.A.

Methods and Utility

Historical analysis and case study field research were used to assess the region's political culture and roots of contemporary wilderness dissension. The field research was developed using semi-structured interviews, which allow respondents to answer freely and casually. The study population was chosen from names that appeared most frequently in the press and various organizational handouts and by using a chain-referral snowball sample. Much of the research was originally conducted as part of a much larger project focusing on the incongruity of Western environmental public opinion and Western political representation—"the great divide." I found the use of the political culture concept helpful in describing the western American political cultural terrain as it applies to natural resource policy, but not helpful in explaining such an important democratic fissure.

A Cultural Compass

Legend

Political culture is an inclusive concept that helps shape, through a society's social history and present situation, the way in which it interprets itself and the factors affecting it. Due to this inclusivity, the concept of political culture and subcultures can use such elements as history, myth, geography, demography, the environment and the economy to show (conceptually) how culture can help shape politics and policy. Like unwritten rules of a game, a region's or community's political culture can sometimes unknowingly constrain its participants; it can be seen as a pair of political blinders or bifocals that either constrict or magnify one's view of the political world.

A regional subculture can be thought of as a region that has enough unique characteristics to merit isolated study.

There are a number of historical and contemporary factors that can be isolated and explored. Scholars have often divided and subdivided the U.S. into various regions for analytical purposes (Elazar 1972, 1994; Garreau 1981). When considering future land set-asides in the American West, there are five broad cultural landmarks that wilderness, monument and park proponents need to be aware of: 1) the often incongruous relationship between Western political representation and environmental public opinion (the great divide); 2) The federal presence in the West and its cultural ramifications (environmental backlash); 3) Western parochialism and perceptions of out-of-region exploitation; 4) "bumper sticker economics;" and 5) perceived differences between de facto and de jure wilderness.

The Great Divide

An empirical assessment of Intermountain West (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming) political representation and environmental public opinion reveals a great divide and important democratic dilemma. A number of sources were used to evaluate the Western state's public policies and political leadership regarding environmental protection including Green Index ratings (Hall and Kerr 1991), State of the States ratings (Ridley 1987), EPA's Toxic Release Inventory (1996) and a longitudinal interest group rating comparison using League of Conservation Voters' and League of Private Property Voters' data and scorecards. Using these limited data sources, the larger study concludes that the Intermountain West ranks poorly in its efforts to protect the environment and its natural resources.

On the other side of this great divide lies a strong, positive, pervasive, but qualified Western environmental public opinion. Dozens of state and regional environmental surveys focusing on such issues as wilderness designation, forest management and species reintroduction have been collected and analyzed in a sort of meta-analysis or research note (Nie 1999). Survey findings on a number of environmental issues in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, as well as one county- level approach are included in the review. This extensive public opinion review shows that residents of the Far and Intermountain West support a number of environmental issues and protections, including strong wilderness support (see Pope and Jones 1990; Richer 1995; Rudzitis and Johansen 1991). Thus, the expectation that a unique Western political culture will foster environmentally hostile attitudes, when investigated at the citizen level of analysis, is fundamentally flawed. While Western political representatives may use their unique regional context as a reason to be environmentally antagonistic, the Western public-at-large does not.

The Federal Presence

The largest landowner in the United States is the Federal Government, and the majority of its land is in the West. Eighty-two percent of Nevada, 66 percent of Alaska, 62 percent of Idaho and 64 percent of Utah is owned by the U.S. Government; in comparison, little land in the Midwest, South and East is federally owned (for example, 1.2 percent in Iowa, 3.3 percent in Alabama, and 0.4 percent in Connecticut). Federally designated wilderness is also a particularly Western phenomenon, with more than 95 percent of designated wilderness located in the 12 states (excluding Hawaii) fully west of the one-hundredth meridian (99,332,644 out of 103,754,595, Congressional Research Service 1995). Given this ubiquitous federal presence, it is important to distinguish between dimensions of federalism and those of environmentalism—federal support versus environmental support.

A predominant theme in the debate over southern Utah Monument and Wilderness designation, for example, is the amount of land in the area that is already owned and operated by the Federal Government. Simply put, preservationists believe that this federal presence is necessary to ensure these public lands can be enjoyed by a public that goes beyond southern Utah. The canyons of Utah, says writer and wilderness supporter Stephen Trimble (1996), "Belong not to an elite cadre of backpackers, not to the cattle-raising families of Escalante and Kanab, not to the Utah state legislature, not to the Bureau of Land Management. They belong to all citizens of the United States. In truth, they belong to no one."

According to Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance's (SUWA) Mike Matz, public ownership is necessary to ensure that non-Westerners—those who have long subsidized Western growth and development, are taken into account when land use decisions are being made. Underlying this support of federal control is a distrust among preservationists of what southern Utah communities would do to the land if given the opportunity. Matz (1997) maintains that "this land is owned by you and me. But if special interests and local politicians have their way, it is a land that could be lost to us forever."

The local response to this extensive federal presence is an angry and culturally based one. According to Garfield County (Utah) commissioner Louise Liston (1995), whose county is comprised of less than two percent of private land: "The truth is, massive federal ownership of lands in Utah and the West with its accompanying laws, regulations and policies, is destroying the custom, culture and economic stability of rural America, [and] wilderness is perceived as yet one more nail in the coffin."

This federal presence is cause for concern for many in the area. Clinton's use of the Antiquities Act, done without meaningful state consultation and proclaimed from the south rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona not Utah, angered Utah political representatives and provides an example for some of just how out of touch the Federal Government has become with some Western communities. According to Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, this "mother of all land grabs" is a clear example of "the arrogance of federal power" (Siegal 1996).

This antipathy towards the Federal Government stems partly from the belief that those closest to the area's natural resources know how to manage them best. In one survey of 602 respondents in southwestern Utah, a largely rural area including the cities of St. George, Hurricane, La Verkin, Toquerville and Virgin, residents expressed the most satisfaction with the job that state (65 percent) and local (66 percent) governments are doing to manage the area's natural resources, while they expressed the lowest satisfaction with Federal Government management (48 percent, Northern Arizona University 1997). Such concerns, moreover, did

not appear isolated to Utah, but were an important thread in the larger survey review (Nie 1999).

Local Knowledge and Community Input

Closely related to this antagonism is the feeling among many in southern Utah that they are continually slighted by an overcentralized, technocratic and out-of-touch Federal Government. The President's proclamation, made without meaningful Utah consultation, angered those who believe that they have the most at stake in protecting the area's resources and natural amenities. These sorts of feelings are pervasive in southern Utah, and while most are comfortable with the status quo of BLM multiple-use management (of which environmentalists and others are quite critical), most express a desire for greater consultation and community collaboration.

Many in the region also believe that they are vilified by those outside southern Utah and receive no credit for keeping the beauty of the area intact. Karla Johnson, a rancher in Kanab, Utah, likens the situation to a neighbor who, after admiring another neighbor's home and upkeep, demands to take over its management, although they have never put any work or effort into its maintenance. Thus, there is a feeling among some in the region, many from families who have lived in the area for generations, that local knowledge is not appreciated nor taken into account by environmental decision-makers.

The West as Plundered Province

The western United States has historically been interpreted as a colonial region—what historian Bernard DeVoto once poignantly labeled a "plundered province." The vast, people-sparse and resource-rich Western landscape was largely dominated by Eastern capital and a business elite during this period. Whether it be the discriminatory policies of Eastern-owned railroad companies, Frederick Weyerhaeuser's logging operations or the mining practices of Kennecott, Phelps Dodge or Anaconda (owned by the New York based Guggenheim family and onetime owner of much of Montana), the West once had a decidedly Eastern and monopolistic flavor during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. This "colonial" history left a sour taste in many Western mouths and ultimately set the stage for dissent; examples include President Carter's Western water project "hit list," the Great Basin as Cold War testing grounds, the Sagebrush Rebellion, Wise Use and Land Rights movement (Brick and Cawley 1996; Cawley 1993; Lamm and McCarthy 1982; Switzer 1997).

Many contemporary leaders and representatives from the West still interpret (at least in their rhetoric) the region as being exploited, colonized or at least controlled by non-Westerners. The lack of relative wealth in the region is also an issue. For example, out of the 500 wealthiest companies in the United States, according to *Fortune* magazine, only 24, not including California, are headquartered in the West. Excluding California (58 headquartered companies), Oregon (six), and Washington (eight), the Intermountain West houses only 10 of the wealthiest 500 American companies. Whether it be for coal, copper or Western oil, the capital needed to mine these resources most often comes from outside the region.

In an interesting twist, some Westerners, particularly in the more rural parts of the region, now feel they are being subject to a new environmental colonialism, in which some Western jobs are being sacrificed by what Alaska Republican Representative Don Young (1994) calls the "leisure lobby." Young contends that "those who care more about what people do with their leisure time on the weekends than what workers do for a living continue to push legislation that locks up more of our nation's resource base." According to former Wyoming Republican Senator Alan Simpson (1996), elite environmentalists—"greenies…as they are sitting there having a little Chardonnay by the campfire" pose a threat to the West—not those who use its land to make a living. Those such as Western attorney and wise-use author William Perry Pendley (1995) go so far as to believe that there is a war on the West. He sees Western-based natural resource industries as besieged by environmental elitists who seek to "turn everything from the 100th meridian to the Cascade Mountains into a vast park."

Many environmental organizations based either in a Western metropolitan area or in Washington, D.C. are sometimes perceived as representing non-Western interests, for example, Easterners making a trip to Yellowstone or Grand Canyon National Parks once a year, not those that are closest and most familiar with a Western landscape or treasure. Although the validity of this supposed environmental colonialism is debatable, primarily due to the fact that so much environmental support originates within the West, it does illustrate the lineage of such a cultural interpretation and political strategy. It also illustrates how many of those aligned with wise-use have tried to tap what they perceive as Western political (rural) culture for political language and symbolism.

Several individuals in southern Utah, for example, believe that increased wilderness designation and monument support comes from people outside the area who are either completely unfamiliar with the region or use it solely as a playground. Much of this criticism is directed towards Eastern and California political representatives who want to dictate how land, which they are not responsible or accountable for, is managed. On the other hand, due to instances such as the hanging of Interior Secretary Bruce Babbit in effigy, and "Black Wednesday" in which some Utah residents wore black ribbons and released black balloons to commemorate Clinton's Monument proclamation, these "outsiders" are apt to see locals as environmentally hostile and thus untrustworthy caretakers of this national treasure.

Non-Western support for H.R. 1500 (the Redrock Wilderness Protection Act), for example, is very strong. Of the 82 cosponsors of the bill, and excluding California, only five are from the West (and only seven are Republicans). This Eastern support, especially from people such as early sponsor Maurice Hinchey of New York and former Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, is resented by some Western congressional representatives. According to Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, "They don't even know what wilderness is. We do [and] we've got plenty in Utah" (Associated Press 1996). Partially responsible, says Hatch, are powerful national environmental lobbies: "The fact is that we are being sandbagged not so much by our colleagues but by a

well-orchestrated and well-financed campaign staged by huge, huge *national* environmental lobbies who are pursuing their own *national* agenda [emphasis added]" (Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance 1996). Another example of non-Western animosity is provided by Utah representative, Jim Hansen who steered his House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Land, to approve funding for protection of New Jersey's 17,500 acre Sterling Forest, but only if it was first declared as wilderness.

The debate over southern Utah wilderness has been framed in national terms, so a national strategy has been adopted. Since three-quarters of SUWA's members are from outside Utah, including 23 of the 36 members on its board of directors and advisory committee, and since the acreage in question is federal and not state-owned land, the approach seems logical. As happened during the struggle over Echo Park and Glen Canyon, full-page ads in the *New York Times* and *USA Today* are meant to target a larger and more sympathetic American audience.

A rural-urban dichotomy is also evident in the debate, with those living in places such as Salt Lake City perceived as being more pro-wilderness than those in rural Utah. While environmental support is strong in the urban and rural West (with limited evidence for the latter), there are also isolated pockets of anti-environmental sentiment in the region (Nie 1999). Recognizing where pro-wilderness support is strongest, groups such as SUWA are headquartered in Salt Lake City and not in the more rural parts of the state. Many in the area feel indignant, however, about this vocal urban and non-Western wilderness support. The outside strategy has polarized much of Utah, with the preservationist agenda being equated with non-rural beliefs, values, and concerns. There is a sense that urbanites interpret southern Utah as a place where wilderness should be championed while human occupation is discouraged—even though it is the preserved records of early human occupation that makes the area such a valued anthropological and archaeological place of study.

Bumper Sticker Economics

The Western economy is embedded within larger cultural and historical forces and is best understood by distinguishing the unique characteristics of California (one of the world's largest economies), the Far West and the Intermountain West, as well as comparing the rural-urban dichotomy of the region. It is also critical to be clear about which Western economy one is talking about—the old or the new. Perhaps most important when discussing the Western economy, however, is trying to separate Western perception from reality (Power 1996).

The crucial role of natural resources and extractive industry is often the most common element of the Western economy discussed. The structure of many Western states' extractive economies leaves them more vulnerable to external forces and cycles of boom and bust and more dependent on Federal Government contracting and decision-making. Notwithstanding some recent economic changes, the West is still more dependent on extractive industries than are other regions of the country. The farming, mining, timber and ranching industries of the West are still relatively important economic sectors and are the economic mainstay of many rural Western communities.

Although in absolute terms, the importance of agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining in the West is limited, they are a relatively larger and more important part of the economy compared to many other states (Alampi 1994). In states such as Montana and Wyoming, where many of these industries are economically significant, employing thousands of residents and injecting money into state coffers, extractive industry is seen as an essential part of the state economy and its cultural heritage. Many in the West, including political representatives, see the extractive or livestock based regional economy as serving an important cultural function. According to Alaska Senator Frank Murkowski (1996), "In the lower 48 states, however, livestock grazing is a part of Western society. It is part of the history, and the heritage, of the American West. And it's a part of the social fabric of the West and a cornerstone of the Western economy." It is interesting to note, however, that despite the relative importance of extractive industry in the Western states, a larger percentage of Westerners are employed by the Federal Government than by extractive industries.

The West has not been very well vertically integrated in the past. That is, it has provided only one part of the entire economic production process—supplying raw resources. Generally, timber cut in the Pacific Northwest or minerals mined in Montana were not usually processed instate, or even in-region, but were instead sent to better equipped or cheaper labor force states. Much of the region has also been susceptible to the well-documented boom-and-bust economy. Because of the West's dependence on natural resources, the region also found itself more dependent on external circumstances and decision-making. Whether it be timber in the Pacific Northwest, coal in Montana, copper in Arizona or beef in Colorado, many Western economies were more dependent on international and national trends than other regions. A drop in beef prices, for example, would reverberate more loudly in the West than in a more diversified regional economy.

The role of the economy in the Western political culture-environmental politics relationship is a pivotal but contested one. Thus, it is important to distinguish between how the Western economy is often popularly portrayed and politically used, and the current, actual economic reality (Power 1996). Although some advocates of Western custom and culture view the "environmental juggernaut" in the region as the cause of needless unemployment and economic stagnation, most evidence points to the contrary. Studies done at the national level, for instance, show environmental regulations have not resulted in any significant overall job losses (Templet 1995). In fact, the amount of effort taken by a state to protect the environment through government regulations is positively correlated with a state's gross product, total employment and labor productivity (Meyer 1992).

A study endorsed by more than 30 economists, almost all in the West, also paints a contradictory picture, showing environmental protection in the Pacific Northwest (defined here as Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington) being positively related to economic growth in the region (Power and others 1995). Recognizing how commonplace it is in the region and nation as a whole to assume that environmental

protection causes unemployment, these economists have shown how environmental quality has a positive effect on local economies because people care where they live and its quality of life, water and air quality, and recreational opportunities, and because businesses care where people choose to live. Many of these economists also recognize how integral natural resources have been and still are to many Western communities, while also realizing how the new economic benefits associated with a more diverse economy are not evenly dispersed. Nevertheless, say the authors, it would be ill-advised and in the end futile, to try to turn back the economic clock to a time of natural resource dependency.

Despite the emergence of this new, more diversified regional economy, coupled with the decline of the natural resource industry, the belief that extractive industry is the economic essence of the West is still pervasive. According to University of Montana economist Thomas Michael Power (1996), this "view through the rearview mirror" poses a dangerous threat to the economic health of local communities. Folk economics—the belief that the extraction and processing of natural resources is the heart of the economic system—is a powerful but misleading myth, says Power, that should not dictate current or future economic policy in the region. Whatever the importance of the natural resource industry may be, in absolute or relative terms, the economic "view through the rearview mirror" remains an integral part of Western political culture.

The economic value and opportunity costs associated with wilderness and monument designation in southern Utah is also a central theme in this public lands controversy. Larger wilderness designation bills are opposed by most rural county officials because they are seen as a loss of revenue, either from lost payments-in-lieu of taxes or mineral leases. Although some such as SUWA cite this as a red herring, the loss of possible revenue produced by school and institutional trust lands—acreage owned by Utah for the purpose of generating revenue for education—is another reason put forth by Utah county representatives to oppose a larger wilderness bill.

Some southern Utah county representatives believe that additional wilderness will jeopardize the economic and social stability of the region, while preservationists believe it will spur economic growth in wilderness-related service sectors—while also protecting the environment. County representatives point to the small percent of privately owned land in Utah and the economic ramifications of this federal presence. It is private property, not federal land, they say, that generates revenue to pay for such services as education, infrastructure, law enforcement, emergency services, fire protection and, ironically, a host of other tourist needs and services.

The assumption that the wilderness-related service sector will provide an economically and environmentally sound alternative is also considered suspect by many in the region. However, SUWA and related organizations doubt the economic arguments made by the counties and others who favor less wilderness. The supposed economic opportunity costs of increased wilderness are fallacious, according to the Alliance. Not only are several existing uses respected by the 1964 Wilderness Act, but the Alliance contends that global economic trends, changing energy markets, increased automation, and the increasing importance of the service sector, among other factors, are changing national as well as rural Utah employment patterns. Using logic supported by Power and other economists, the Alliance contends that wilderness presents the possibility of abandoning the boom-and-bust economy symbolic of the West in favor of a more sustainable and ecologically sensitive one.

These differing interpretations of the southern Utah economy are evident in other parts of the West and are perhaps best illustrated by a bumper sticker wryly asking "Are you an environmentalist or do you work for a living?" Keeping with the bumper-sticker dialogue, environmentalists have responded—"Don't like environmentalists, put them out of work." In other words, environmentalists, including those in Utah, are often perceived by rural residents as condemning all work in nature, or sentimentalizing certain archaic forms of it. They are viewed as being unaware of the nature that supports them, whether it be the wood that heats their homes, the dammed water they drink or the electricity that runs their computers (White 1996).

[W]ilderness Versus wilderness

One of the most consistent themes in the debate over land in Southern Utah is the difference between de jure and de facto wilderness, that is, whether or not officially recognized wilderness will be beneficial or detrimental to the land. According to Ken Sizemore, a community and economic development director for the Utah Association of Governments and a member of the Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument planning team, preservationists want officially recognized and managed wilderness (wilderness with a capital W), while locals believe that it is this official designation, or the newly established Monument designation, that will ruin and not preserve the area. According to Steve Crosby, commissioner of Kane County, Utah, environmentalists need to know that it does not have to have a wilderness stamp on it to be wilderness. Hence, while one side emphasizes human restrictions, the other side focuses on human impact.

Some feel wilderness or monument status, along with national park status, poses a greater environmental threat than the status quo. Boulder, Utah, Mayor Julee Lyman sees the newly created Monument as potentially harmful: "Now it's going to become more destroyed, because people destroy the land faster than animals do" (Ryckman 1996). The specter arises of another Moab, the symbol to many of a "trinketized" West, a new recreation and service-based economy benefiting those owning hotels, restaurants and trinket shops, but not providing enough economic stability to keep young people from leaving the area. Some also worry that wilderness or monument designation is a prelude to adding yet another national park in the region; thus, more visitors and more impact, as was the case with the former Capitol Reef National Monument.

Some people in southern Utah also believe that wilderness in the area will simply always remain wilderness—with or without official recognition. Crosby believes the land in question is self-preserving and will not be developed because of its rugged terrain and notorious lack of rainfall. Many believe that the fear among preservationists like SUWA's Matz, that the area will be developed if it is not officially set

aside, is unfounded given its past conservation record and natural limitations. Environmentalists, on the other hand, simply point to recent drilling developments as an indicator of what will happen without official designation and protection.

Selling Wild in the West

Those advocating future land set-asides in the American West, or the continued protection of already designated areas, are well served by stretching their ecological knowledge to include a better understanding of the political/cultural context in which such lands will or will not be protected. It is important to unearth the cultural roots of the current Western lands debate and to provide a foundation for a common definition of the problem(s)—to show that culture matters. This study points the way to more culturally based environmental strategies because wilderness is ultimately affected by the western American political culture. Those seeking additional land set-asides and/or continued protection of existing wilderness may wish to adopt an environmental strategy that is more compatible with this study's conception of this regional culture. In addition to litigation, interest group liberalism, Washington mobilization, the best use of science, voter education and various other political strategies; wilderness proponents could utilize Western history, folklore and culture to better understand and thus protect such areas. The wise use and land rights contingent has tried to mine the rural Western psyche (historically grounded or not) for symbolism and policy "framing" language; environmentalists, in my estimation, have failed to do so. There are several possible places to begin such an environmental approach that is more culturally informed. However useful they may prove to be, they hopefully will generate the type of serious dialogue about political strategy that will be necessary to democratically save Western wilderness.

Such a political/cultural analysis also suggests the need, more important than political strategy, for a more participatory and democratic environmental politics that goes beyond the Beltway and the 12 Western state capitals—a Western civic environmentalism (John 1994; Kemmis 1990). Although there are problems and shortcomings with this local participatory environmental strategy, mainly due to national ownership of Western lands and resources and various political/resource inequities, it is bound to be more acceptable to those living in the West. As illustrated throughout this research summary, the ways and means by which Western wilderness is protected is often as important to Westerners, and all democratic citizens, as the final outcome itself.

Those fighting to protect wilderness areas, moreover, should be aware that these struggles often transcend questions of acreage and use. Instead, a panoply of other political and cultural issues often rise during the boil. Participants, on all sides of the debate, need to critically assess these non-tangential issues and political/cultural concerns. It is also important to recognize that as in many policy debates, participants sometimes agree on the ultimate objectives of public policy while disagreeing on the means by which to reach them.

The West has always occupied a special place in the American imagination. "Heading West" may still carry connotations similar to those of a frontier ago, while also conjuring up all sorts of grandiose landscapes and panoramas—ones that are becoming increasingly rare in this country. But the West is no longer just a place to go to, it is now a place to live in and protect. Perhaps Westerners can apply the same degree of fortitude and ingenuity shown by settlers, and those already settled there, and find a way to democratically save and protect Western wilderness.

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