

**CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP WORKSHOP:
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



NIAGARA, THOMAS COLE, DATE UNCERTAIN, POSSIBLY CIRCA 1829-30, COLLECTIONS OF MARY F. AND LAURANCE S. ROCKEFELLER, WOODSTOCK, VERMONT.

**MARSH-BILLINGS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
WOODSTOCK, VERMONT
NOVEMBER 20-21, 1993**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The Conservation Stewardship Workshop convened a group of some 50 professionals from within and outside of the National Park Service in November 1993 to define the broad outlines of the “story to be told” at the new Marsh-Billings National Historical Park. The purpose of the park is to interpret the history and evolution of conservation stewardship in America and to recognize the significant contributions of the individuals who have shaped and occupied the property—George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Billings, and Laurance S. Rockefeller.

During the two-day workshop, participants engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of topics related to conservation history and the specific contributions of Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller that reflect important aspects of the evolution of the American conservation movement. Participants also explored the national significance of the park’s conservation mandate and its implications for defining the potential audience for the park’s interpretive mission.

DEFINING THE INTERPRETIVE MANDATE

The workshop achieved broad agreement on the fundamental mandate for the park's interpretive development. Marsh-Billings National Historical Park should:

- 1 **Reflect a complex past**—the dynamic, changing, and vital legacy of conservation stewardship;
- 2 **Affect the future**—stimulating, provoking, teaching, and inspiring: “we cannot rest on the achievements of the past”; and
- 3 **Ground itself in the specific identity of the place**—interpreting the historic and evolving relationship between the land and the Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller generations, which have shaped and have been stewards of this landscape and its powerful sense of place.

TAKING AN EXPANSIVE VIEW

In their opening remarks, both Laurance S. Rockefeller and National Park Service Director Roger Kennedy exhorted workshop participants to “take an expansive view” of conservation stewardship in approaching their assignment. The participants responded with recommendations that embrace the rich diversity of the historic roots of conservation and seek a broad audience with the conservation message. The recommendations also stress a park management philosophy that extends beyond park boundaries in developing an interpretive program and seeks the creative involvement of non-profit organizations and state and local government.

- 1 Adopt a holistic approach to the interpretation of conservation stewardship, celebrating the broad diversity of its historic roots—spiritual, aesthetic, and scientific.
- 2 Emphasize conservation stewardship as an evolving and dynamic concept shaped by human interaction with the natural world.

- 3 Establish an outreach program that will carry the conservation message beyond the boundaries of the park.
- 4 Use the history of the site and its protagonists (Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller) as a lens for interpretation of the history of conservation stewardship in America.
- 5 Demonstrate conservation stewardship through park management.
- 6 Work in partnership with the people of Woodstock and the region in developing interpretive programs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Park Service thanks all of the individuals, agencies, and institutions who have generously offered their insight and experience, reflected in so many ways in this report. Their participation will shape the fundamental framework not only for interpretation at Marsh-Billings National Historical Park but also for the park's role in promoting the conservation message beyond Woodstock.

In particular, the planning team recognizes the important contributions of Henry Diamond and David Donath. Diamond served as vice chair of the workshop and was one of its chief architects. Donath provided expert assistance in all phases of the workshop, including preparation of the background materials for the participants. His short essays on the National Historical Park, Site History, George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Billings, and Laurance Spelman Rockefeller are included in this report.

The planning team also gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the American Memory project at the Library of Congress in researching themes related to the history of American conservation. A portion of this excellent research, written by Jurretta Heckscher, follows the Workshop Findings and Recommendations.

LAURANCE SPELMAN ROCKEFELLER

It is entirely fitting that Marsh-Billings National Historical Park, where we hope to interpret the history of conservation stewardship in this country, is a partnership effort. Citizen participation and partnership have been central elements of the history of conservation in this country.

Marsh himself, although a congressman and ambassador, was not a federal official involved with conservation. He wrote as a private citizen, and his impact came not from his official duties, but from the cogency of his thought as a citizen trying to influence the action of his fellow citizens.

So it was with Billings. While he held some part-time state positions, he was a citizen practitioner putting conservation into practice on the hills around Woodstock and the farm he operated so successfully.

In a similar manner, Audubon, Muir, and Mather, at first, all acted privately, primarily as citizens. Today, that tradition of private concern is carried on by citizens' organizations, such as National Audubon, Sierra Club, NPCA, and the World Wildlife Fund . . . in particular, the seven hundred local land trusts, which have grown up in the past few years to create greenways, open space, and natural preserves, are dramatic further evidence of the vigor of citizen conservation.

The theme which has been developed for this workshop is conservation stewardship: how private citizens have acted to preserve and care for land and resources. Let me suggest that you consider an expansive view of stewardship or even go beyond it. In the classic sense, stewardship implies maintaining the status quo or maintaining that which is given into one's care.

The true importance of Marsh, Billings, and those who follow in their footsteps, goes beyond simple stewardship. Their work transcends maintenance.

It involves new thought and new action to enhance and enrich and even repair errors of the past. This may be the real importance of what we can be taught and learn at Marsh-Billings. We cannot rest on the achievements of the past. Rather, each generation must not only be stewards, but activists, innovators, and enrichers.

As this exciting new unit of the National Park System comes into being, we look forward to the day when the message and vision of conservation stewardship and its importance for the future will, once again, go out across the nation from the hills of Vermont.

In closing, Mary and I once again express our deep thanks to you all for giving so generously of your time and talent in the tradition of conservation volunteerism.



MARY FRENCH ROCKEFELLER AND LAURANCE SPELMAN ROCKEFELLER WITH SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY AND MARCELLE LEAHY AT THE DEDICATION OF THE BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM'S RESTORED FARM HOUSE IN 1989.

ROGER KENNEDY

This is an astonishing place and a remarkable assemblage of people. In the spirits that throng in this place, we have come together because, concurrently, we have sets of feelings about this kind of place and about what it means for other places.

Just by the assemblage of all of this concurrent energy moved in the same direction toward the same kinds of consciousness about the world we inhabit, it's entirely possible that, as in the assemblage of prayers of intercession, we may attract some grace because we all have in mind the same benign intentions.

So, I hope that here, as Laurance has already suggested, we do take an expansive view. Curators, archivists, librarians, and park people are today moving from a custodial toward a narrative view of their responsibilities, moving from just stewardship toward making of all of the things that fall in their care an opportunity for intergenerational and interpersonal storytelling.

We talk about the things we care about in these specific places. They are not a pretext, but an occasion for a narrative, and I want to suggest that today, because we are all here for the same reasons and with the same passionate caring, that we extend it yet one more remove, which is from the narrative to the evangelical.

We go beyond then, I hope, today and tomorrow, from the mere creation of an appropriate program for a place to the beginning of a concurrent set of ideas about a larger place, Northern New England. We can let it emerge or evolve. It doesn't need to become programmatic, but, surely, we are in a specific place having specific characteristics, and, if we are fortunate, we may find that today there emerges from us, because we are not just anywhere, but in a kind of terrain, a set of ideas about how we may all, in this generation, move toward better care of this kind of landscape.



ROGER KENNEDY



THE WORKSHOP

The Conservation Stewardship Workshop convened a group of some 50 scholars and practitioners from within and outside of the National Park Service for two days to:

- outline the conservation stewardship theme as a general historical context for interpretation at Marsh-Billings National Historical Park; and
- correlate the broad thematic aspects of conservation stewardship history with the site-specific histories of Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller, and identify the points of intersection where site-specific history can illuminate important aspects of the theme.

PARTICIPANTS

The workshop participants represented a broad range of backgrounds and experience, including American history, environmental history, Vermont folklife, geography, forestry, historic preservation, conservation and land use, park planning and management, and National Park Service policy. The group also included the foremost biographers of George Perkins Marsh and Frederick Billings.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TEAM

The team responsible for developing the general management plan for Marsh-Billings National Historical Park was established in March 1993, and is located in the Planning, Development and Engineering Office of the North Atlantic Region in Boston, Massachusetts.

Sarah Peskin is the Regional Liaison between the team and the current managers of the site. Peskin developed and organized the Conservation Stewardship Workshop and will concentrate on shaping the interpretation elements of the plan. As Chief of the Planning Division, she provides overall guidance to the team.

Marjorie Smith is the Team Captain. A landscape architect in the Park Planning Division, Smith has extensive experience in park planning with a special focus on initiating new parks. She has the task of managing the planning process and the lead role in developing management alternatives for the park.

Ellen Levin-Carlson is the team's Cultural Resources Lead. Levin-Carlson has an undergraduate degree in American studies and a graduate degree in

planning and works as a community planner in the Park Planning Division. She is coordinating the creation of a cultural resources database and initial work on an environmental impact analysis for the site.

Charles Tracy, a landscape architect in the Conservation Assistance Division, is the team's Natural Resources Lead. Tracy is primarily responsible for writing and producing the project's planning reports, including this Workshop Report. He also is working on forest management and public access issues.

David Donath is the Site Liaison, representing Laurance S. Rockefeller and the Woodstock Foundation, Inc., on the planning team. Donath is the Director of the Billings Farm & Museum.

1

Adopt a holistic approach to the interpretation of conservation stewardship, celebrating the broad diversity of its historic roots—spiritual, aesthetic, and scientific.

WE HAVE TO TAKE ON BOARD THE EMOTIONAL FORCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEBATE. IT'S NOT ENOUGH JUST TO PRESENT IDEAS ABOUT NATURE IN RATIONAL TERMS. WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND TO THE CONFLICTING FEELINGS THAT SUFFUSE ISSUES OF SURVIVAL, OF STEWARDSHIP OF THE FUTURE, AS SOMETHING TO LOOK AFTER.

SUCH AN APPROACH AT THIS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK WILL ENCOURAGE VISITORS TO FEEL THAT THEY OWN THEIR OWN HERITAGE—THAT THEY THEMSELVES ARE ITS PROPER MANAGERS.

DAVID LOWENTHAL

Conservation history in the United States is made up of a remarkable complex of highly interconnected themes that can be broadly grouped into scientific and utilitarian concerns, philosophical and spiritual values and beliefs, and aesthetic considerations. One of the best ways to tell the story and communicate a sense of the “organic complexity” of conservation stewardship is to capture it in action, in the way that it motivates individuals in specific places to develop a sustaining relationship with the natural world.

The interpretive program should take advantage of the rich fabric of natural and cultural resources of the park and the surrounding region in conveying to visitors a holistic understanding of the diverse roots of the conservation movement. In addition to teaching about the scientific and utilitarian principles of land conservation, the program should strive to illustrate, for example, the personal values and beliefs that motivated a conservation ethic in the lives of Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller, thereby encouraging visitors to reflect more clearly on their own motivation for caring about the environment.

I WANT TO URGE US TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO GIVE IN TO THE CONVENIENCE OF BEING EXCESSIVELY DOGMATIC ABOUT DIVIDING UP THE DIFFERENT THEMES THAT COME INTO THE HISTORY OF CONSERVATION IN THIS PLACE AND ELSEWHERE. IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE THAT IF YOU LOOK AT MARSH OR IF YOU LOOK AT BILLINGS, YOU'RE DEALING WITH AN ISSUE OF SCIENTIFIC AWARENESS AND UTILITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION; BUT IF WE ALLOW THE PARTICULARITIES OF THIS PLACE TO LEAD US, I THINK THEY IN FACT LEAD US DIRECTLY INTO THE ORGANIC COMPLEXITY

OF CONSERVATION HISTORY. THINK, FOR EXAMPLE, OF THOSE WONDERFUL BIERSTADT AND COLE PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS OF THE MANSION. THESE REFLECT AN AWARENESS OF THE AESTHETIC DIMENSION OF THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE AND THE AESTHETIC DIMENSION OF CONSERVATION HISTORY, WHICH WAS CENTRALLY IMPORTANT TO THE STORY, AND, I WOULD SUGGEST, IMPORTANT TO THE STORY THAT NEEDS TO BE TOLD HERE.

SIMILARLY, BILLINGS, ALTHOUGH HE DID IT AS A BUSINESSMAN, WAS THOROUGHLY AWARE OF THE

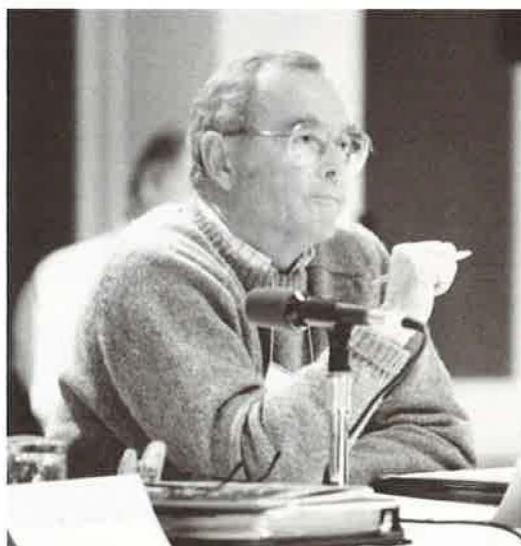
IMPORTANCE OF RECREATIONAL TOURISM. THIS AGAIN REPRESENTS THAT AESTHETIC DIMENSION OF SCENERY AND THE NEED PERHAPS TO BRING THE RAILROAD TO YELLOWSTONE BECAUSE PEOPLE WANTED TO GO OUT AND SEE THOSE MOUNTAINS AND SEE THOSE EXTRAORDINARY ENVIRONMENTAL ATTRIBUTES IN THE WEST.

THIRDLY, THERE IS THE DIMENSION OF SPIRITUALITY. . . . I THINK THAT TOO IS A CENTRAL STRAND IN THE STORY OF CONSERVATION WHICH SHOULD NOT BE DIVORCED TOO COMPLETELY FROM THE UTILITARIAN ASPECT.

JURRETTA HECKSCHER

I THINK IF YOU TOOK WHAT JURRETTA HECKSCHER SAID THIS MORNING AND PUT IT AS THE OPENING PARAGRAPH OF WHATEVER INTERPRETIVE PROSPECTUS WAS DEVELOPED FOR THIS, YOU'D PROBABLY HAVE IT JUST ABOUT PERFECT.

BOYD EIVSON



BOYD EIVSON

2

Emphasize conservation stewardship as an evolving and dynamic concept shaped by human interaction with the natural world.

ONE OF THE KEY ASPECTS OF THIS STORY IS THE COMPLEXITY OF HUMAN ATTITUDES TOWARD NATURE: HOW THEY HAVE CHANGED CONSIDERABLY OVER TIME. I THINK THAT IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THIS STORY IN TERMS OF TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT HOW THESE VARIOUS ASPECTS FIT.

ED BRANNON

The dynamic interaction between humans and the environment at all levels—physical, intellectual, and spiritual—ensures that our concept of conservation and a conservation ethic will continue to evolve, and it suggests that the way the park defines conservation stewardship for its interpretive mission must also continue to be redefined. The interpretive program can personalize this dynamism through the lives of Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller, showing how their ideas about conservation and stewardship were shaped by their experiences and evolved as they grew older. It can also chart the major developments in the history of conservation and at the same time help visitors to reflect on the evolution of their own concepts of conservation stewardship.

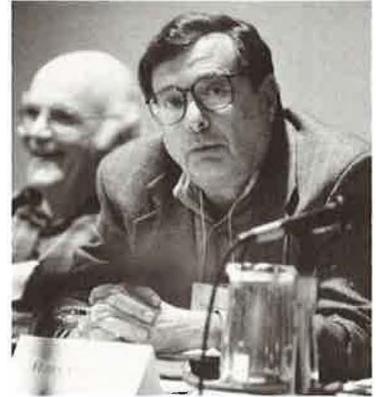


ED BRANNON

THE HISTORY OF CONSERVATION IN THIS COUNTRY IS ONE OF CONTINUING STRIFE. IT'S A STRUGGLE THAT'S STILL GOING ON. THE TALE TO BE TOLD HERE IS DYNAMIC, FOR ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEFS ALTER OVER TIME. INDEED, PREVALENT VIEWS CHANGE EVEN OVER THE COURSE OF ONE LIFETIME. MARSH'S ORIGINAL APPRAISAL OF HUMAN IMPACTS ON NATURE WAS HIGHLY OPTIMISTIC. HIS LATER PESSIMISM WAS PARTLY DUE TO AGING, PARTLY TO SENSING THAT THE LAND HE'D GROWN UP IN WAS UTTERLY DIFFERENT FROM POST-CIVIL WAR AMERICA. AS MASSIVE INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISE FUELED CORRUPTION AND CORPORATE GREED, ENVIRONMENTAL REFORM BECAME HARDER TO ENVISAGE.

OTHER PEOPLE IN THIS STORY TOO HAVE CHANGED THEIR MINDS AS THEY'VE GONE ON. FREDERICK BILLINGS TURNED CONSERVATIONIST AFTER HALF A LIFETIME AS ENTREPRENEUR. MARY AND LAURANCE ROCKEFELLER LIKEWISE SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY OVER TIME. THE WILDERNESS IDEAL THAT ANIMATED THEIR EARLIER PARK VENTURES— WYOMING, THE VIRGIN ISLANDS— ARE ENLARGED HERE IN VERMONT BY RECKONING WITH ENVIRONMENT AS A HUMAN AS WELL AS A NATURAL CREATION. SUCH CHANGES ARE CRUCIAL IN THE CONSERVATION STORY. THEY HELP US TO SEE PIONEER REFORMERS LIKE MARSH AND BILLINGS AND ROCKEFELLER AS PART OF A HISTORY NOT OF STEADY PROGRESS AND TRIUMPH, BUT OF PERPETUAL REVISION IN RESPONSE TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES AND CHANGING PERSPECTIVES.

DAVID LOWENTHAL



HENRY DIAMOND

FINALLY, I THINK WE HEARD THAT THE STORY OF CONSERVATION IS A STORY OF CHANGE. IT'S A STORY OF REDEMPTION, TO RETURN TO THE EVANGELICAL MODE. I THINK WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE THAT WHAT GOES ON HERE IS NOT A STATIC THING. WE WILL HAVE CHANGE. WE WILL HAVE CONTROVERSY. WE WILL HAVE REASONABLE ADVOCACY. I THINK THAT'S IN THE SPIRIT OF MARSH AND BILLINGS AND ROCKEFELLER. I THINK IT IS A VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF WHAT WILL GO ON HERE IN THE FUTURE.

HENRY DIAMOND

3

Establish an outreach program that will carry the conservation message beyond the boundaries of the park.

WE HAVE TO GIVE ALL CITIZENS AN APPRECIATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSERVATION AND INSPIRE ALL CITIZENS TO BE CONSERVATIONISTS. WHAT WE DO HAS TO BE RELEVANT TO THE AUDIENCE, AND TO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF SOCIETY.

THE MESSAGE DEVELOPED HERE MUST BE EXPORTED. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO GIVE THE MESSAGE JUST TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO WILL VISIT HERE EACH YEAR. WE HAVE TO DEVISE DIFFERENT WAYS TO DO THAT. SOME WAYS MIGHT BE TO HOLD CONFERENCES AND PRODUCE PUBLICATIONS OR SPONSOR FELLOWSHIPS AT UNIVERSITIES OR WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES FROM HERE.

JOHN BYRNE

The central role of communicating the conservation message as part of the National Park Service's overall mission, nationally and even internationally, was recognized by many workshop participants as simply too important to be limited to the small number of expected visitors to the site. The participants recommended that the park's interpretive program should include outreach, to as broad an audience as possible. Two specific ideas for outreach were supporting the development of a center for ongoing research, conferences, and training in conservation stewardship, and using new technologies to provide access to primary resources related to the history and evolution of conservation in America.



JOHN BYRNE, GREGORY SHARROW, MICHAEL DOWER

I THINK THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY HERE FOR THE PARK SERVICE TO REALLY BECOME A STAKEHOLDER IN DEVELOPING A NATIONAL AGENDA FOR LAND USE AND FOR THE STEWARDSHIP OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, AND I WOULD URGE THE PARK SERVICE TO GRASP THAT OPPORTUNITY, TO CREATE A CENTER HERE, TO CREATE IDEAS, AND TO DISSEMINATE THOSE IDEAS THROUGHOUT THE NATION AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

HENRY JORDAN

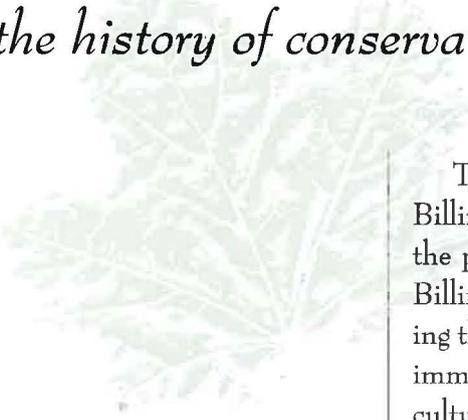


BEN LEVY

A PARK NEEDS, FIRST OF ALL, TO TELL ITS OWN STORY. THAT IS NECESSARILY GOING TO BE A LIMITED STORY. AT THE SAME TIME, TO REACH WHAT I HOPE WE WISH TO ACCOMPLISH—A PARK THAT IS AN INSPIRATION TO PEOPLE—REQUIRES MECHANISMS OTHER THAN WHAT WE WOULD CALL THE TRADITIONAL MEANS OF INTERPRETATION. . . . THIS PARK CAN BECOME MORE THAN A PARK AND OUGHT TO BE MORE THAN A PARK IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ITS MISSION. IT NEEDS TO BE A CENTER FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ENDS THAT CAN COME ONLY THROUGH NONTRADITIONAL PARK PRACTICES.

BEN LEVY

Use the history of the site and its protagonists (Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller) as a lens for interpretation of the history of conservation stewardship in America.



IF ONE CONTRASTS THE MARSHIAN AND NEW ENGLAND IMAGE WITH THE ROMANTIC VIEW OF WILDERNESS, ONE IS TEMPTED TO SEE MARSH AND GIFFORD PINCHOT AND THEIR SUCCESSORS AS UTILITARIANS ONLY, BUT THEY WERE NOT. THEY SAW, CERTAINLY MARSH DID, THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEING THINGS AND NOT JUST TELLING STORIES THROUGH WORDS. IN ONE OF HIS ESSAYS ON NATURE, MARSH POINTS OUT THAT "SIGHT IS A FACULTY, SEEING IS AN ART." AND IT WAS AN ART IN WHICH MARSH HAD SPECIALIZED.

DAVID LOWENTHAL

The historical significance of three eras of ownership—Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller—should be recognized and included in the park's educational and interpretive program. For Frederick Billings and Laurance S. Rockefeller, opportunities for interpreting their significant contributions to conservation stewardship are immediately present through the house, art collection, and the cultural landscapes of the forest and farm. Their stewardship of this land helped to form the powerful sense of place that pervades the park and has had a visible impact on the village of Woodstock as well.

In contrast to the practical conservation action of Billings and Rockefeller, George Perkins Marsh's contribution was almost exclusively in the realm of ideas—his presence is largely invisible on the site. The compelling need to relate the story of Marsh's contributions to conservation history represents a major creative challenge to developing a successful interpretive program. The strategies that the workshop recommended for bringing to life Marsh's ideas about resource conservation and restoration concentrated on making use of the compelling environmental and cultural character of the site and the surrounding countryside.

Just as Marsh's early conservation ideas sprang from the observations of his childhood, so his mature thought informed and motivated those whose self-conscious stewardship reshaped Marsh's childhood surroundings. Marsh's ideas became a foundation of American conservationism, and they found expression in the work of Frederick Billings and Laurance S. Rockefeller, both in Woodstock and on the state and national levels. The significant contributions of Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller, and their impact on the site, provides a lens for interpretation of the larger theme of conservation stewardship in America.

IF WE'RE GOING TO DRAW FROM THE SPIRIT OF MARSH WHAT HE WOULD WANT US TO DO ABOUT THE THINGS THAT MATTER TO HIM, WHICH I THINK IS PROBABLY WHAT WE SHOULD TRY HARDEST TO DO, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO BE VERY RESOURCEFUL.

IT IS NOT A JOKE TO SPEAK OF SIMULATED REALITY OR EVEN ROBOTICS. I DON'T SUGGEST THAT WE RECREATE DISNEY, BUT I DO SUGGEST THAT BRINGING A GHOST AND MAKING THAT GHOST TANGIBLE, TAKING AN IDEA OR A SET OF IDEAS AND RENDERING THEM SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR AND AT THE SAME TIME TANGIBLE, REALLY TANGIBLE, IS THE HARDEST WORK OF ALL.

ROGER KENNEDY

WHAT WILL GRAB PEOPLE'S IMAGINATION, I THINK, IS GEORGE PERKINS MARSH AND HIS LEARNING EXPERIENCE HERE. THAT HAS ENDURED BEYOND ANYTHING ELSE THAT HAS GONE ON AT THIS HOUSE. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE ONLY DIRECTION THAT CAN BE MEANINGFUL HERE IS TO RESURRECT GEORGE PERKINS MARSH OUT OF THE SHADOWS AND TO HELP PEOPLE GO THROUGH THAT EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF WHAT ALDO LEOPOLD CALLED "THE LAND ORGANISM" THAT SURROUNDED MARSH GROWING UP HERE AS HE REACTED TO THE PROCESS OF FRONTIER

EXPANSION AND SETTLEMENT AND LOOKED AT WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO THE LARGER ENVIRONMENT. TAKE PEOPLE BACK THROUGH THAT KIND OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND SHOW THEM HOW IT CAME TOGETHER IN MARSH'S MIND, POWERFULLY INTO A SET OF WAYS OF ANALYZING THE PAST AND ITS RELEVANCE TO LAND USE MANAGEMENT AND DECISIONS. . . . YOU HAVE TO GET PEOPLE OUT OF THE HOUSE AND OFF THAT HILLSIDE AND SAY: "HERE IS HOW THIS PLACE WORKS TOGETHER. WATER RUNS THROUGH IT. IT COMES OFF MOUNTAINSIDES. THERE IS THE FOREST UP THERE. FOREST AFFECTS THE WATERSHED."

DONALD WORSTER



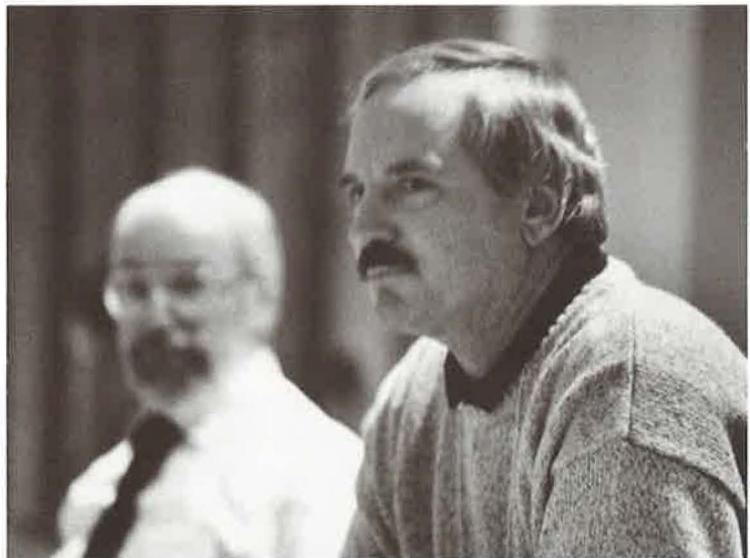
MARIE RUST, DONALD WORSTER

Demonstrate conservation stewardship through park management.

The most direct opportunity for demonstrating conservation stewardship is through preservation of the park's historic structures and cultural landscapes. Although effective resource management is fundamental to the mission of all national park units, it bears a special relationship to the primary purpose of Marsh-Billings National Historical Park because conservation stewardship is intrinsic to the park's legislative mandate. The authenticity and credibility of the park's interpretive program depend on professional resource management of the highest caliber.

TAKE CARE OF THE HOUSE FIRST.
TAKE CARE OF THE WOODS
SECOND. TAKE CARE OF THE
VIEWSHED THIRD. THAT'S THE
FABRIC OF THE RESOURCE.
IF WE MAKE MISTAKES IN
EDUCATION, WE CAN IMPROVE
EDUCATIONAL TECHNIQUES; WE
CAN CHANGE OUR MESSAGE.
WITHOUT THE FABRIC, WE HAVE
NO PODIUM; WE HAVE NO
CLASSROOM.

WILLIAM PALECK

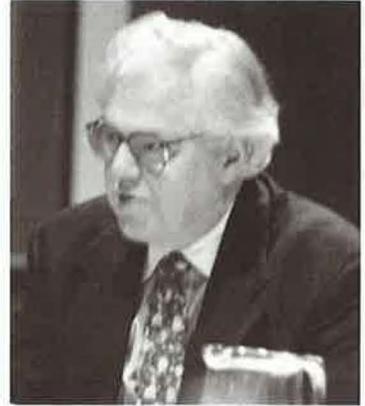


WILLIAM PALECK

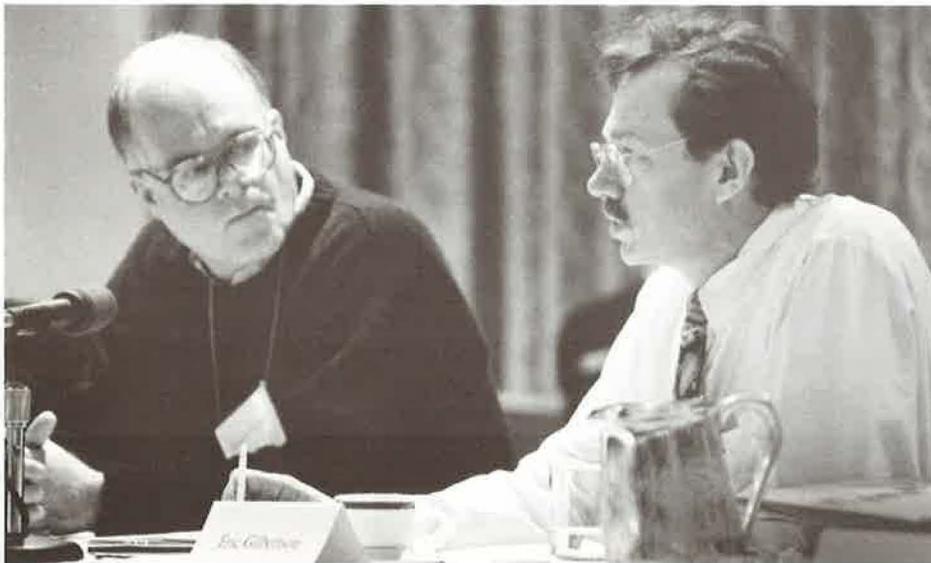
STEWARDSHIP HAS ALWAYS MEANT EXTREME SENSITIVITY TO SITE AND THE IMPACT OF ONE'S OWN ACTIONS. AQUINAS INTENDED THAT IT SHOULD. JAMES STEPHEN, ONE OF THE EARLY ENGLISH WRITERS ON STEWARDSHIP, INTENDED THAT IT MUST, AND I THINK WE HERE HAVE TO BE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO SITE AND TO THE CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY OF WOODSTOCK.

WE WOULD VIOLATE MARSH AND BILLINGS'S CONCERNS AND CERTAINLY THOSE OF MARY AND LAURANCE ROCKEFELLER IF WE DID NOT RECOGNIZE THAT THIS UNIT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM SITS WITHIN A FRAGILE, WORRIED, DISTINCT, INDEED UNIQUE, COMMUNITY WHICH REPRESENTS A PARTICULAR ASPECT OF VERMONT, BUT BY NO MEANS ALL ASPECTS OF VERMONT.

ROBIN WINKS



ROBIN WINKS



DOUGLAS WHEELER, ERIC GILBERTSON

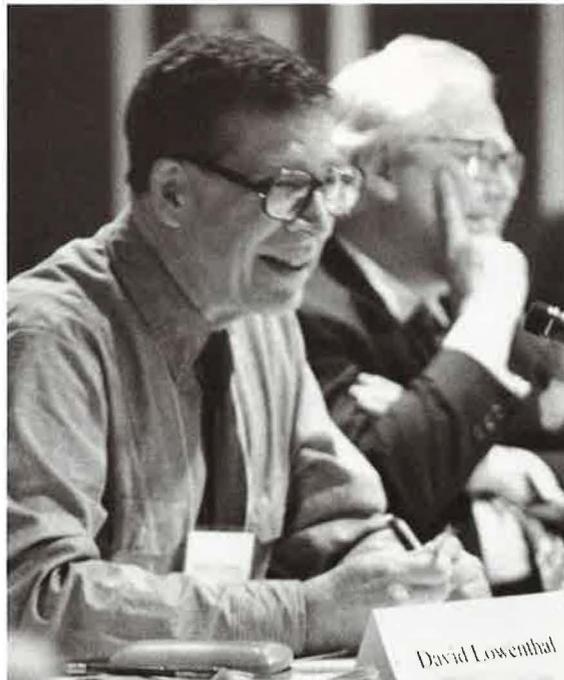
6

Work in partnership with the people of Woodstock and the region in developing interpretive programs.

THE LINK BETWEEN PARK AND PLACE SHOULD BE FOSTERED IN THIS PARK'S PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE. THE THREE MAIN CONTRIBUTORS TO ITS SIGNIFICANCE OWE MUCH OF THEIR SENSE OF CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP TO LIVING HERE, TO BEING PART OF THE WOODSTOCK LOCALE. FEW VISITORS CAN FAIL TO BE PERSUADED BY THE POWER OF THIS PLACE. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERPRETATION IS UNIQUE BECAUSE, AS MICHAEL DOWER POINTS OUT, THIS NATIONAL PARK IS UNIQUELY INTEGRAL TO ITS LOCALE.

DAVID LOWENTHAL

The lives of Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller all demonstrate a concern for community and the broader landscape. The park should strive to continue this tradition by working in partnership with the people of Woodstock and the region in developing interpretive programs and in addressing land conservation affecting the broader landscape of the Ottauquechee Valley and the broader region.



DAVID LOWENTHAL



MICHAEL DOWER

WHAT I WONDER IS WHETHER YOU SHOULDN'T THINK OF THIS—I PUT IT IN A PROVOCATIVE LANGUAGE IN ORDER TO PROVOKE—AS A UNIT WHICH IS NOT A UNIT; THE FIRST NON-UNIT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE. THAT IS, IT IS DELIBERATELY NOT SELF-CONTAINED. OF COURSE, THE ACTUAL BOUNDARY EXISTS AS A MANAGEMENT UNIT FOR PURPOSES OF OWNERSHIP AND THE REST.

IF SEEN AS A NON-UNIT, AS ONE THAT IS DELIBERATELY LINKED WITH ITS SETTING, YOU COULD BE NEARER THE REALITY OF WHAT THIS KIND OF PARK IS . . . A MANAGED LANDSCAPE THAT HAS NOT BEEN ISOLATED IN ANY WAY—SOCIALY, ECONOMICALLY, OR OTHERWISE—FROM ITS SURROUNDING AREA.

MICHAEL DOWER

I HAVE ALWAYS ENVISIONED THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN THERE WOULD BE TRAILS THAT WOULD EXTEND BEYOND THIS SITE—THAT WOULD HOOK UP IN MUCH MORE ELABORATE WAYS WITH THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL, WHICH ITSELF WOULD HAVE MORE THICKNESS, THICK INTERPRETATION IN THE CLIFFORD GEERTZ* SENSE OF THE WORD—ALONG THESE STRETCHES, WHICH WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THIS PLACE IN ITS VERMONT ENVIRONMENT, IN ITS NEW ENGLAND ENVIRONMENT.

INDEED, THE ROAD, THE VERY ROAD OVER WHICH THE BILLINGS

FAMILY DROVE THAT FAMOUS PIG AND PASSED BY THIS FAMOUS HOUSE, THAT FAMOUSLY OR ALLEGEDLY LED BILLINGS TO DECLARE ONE DAY HE WOULD OWN THAT HOUSE, IS STILL UNPAVED, IS A MAGNIFICENT DRIVE. I'VE HIKED EVERY INCH OF IT.

IT COULD WELL BE GENTLY PLAQUED AND COULD TELL PEOPLE, WHO WOULD EITHER WALK IT OR WHO WOULD CROSS-COUNTRY SKI IT, SOMETHING ABOUT HOW ONE COMES TO THIS PLACE. WE'VE GOT TO KEEP IN MIND THAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THIS PLACE, IT SEEMS TO ME, AND THESE PEOPLE, VERMONTERS.

ROBIN WINKS



LAURANCE SPELMAN ROCKEFELLER, GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN

* CLIFFORD GEERTZ, "THICK DESCRIPTION: TOWARD AN INTERPRETIVE THEORY OF CULTURE" IN *THE INTERPRETATION OF CULTURES* (NEW YORK: BASIC BOOKS, 1973).

**REVIEW OF THEMES &
RESOURCES ON THE
HISTORY OF AMERICAN
CONSERVATION**



JURETTA J. HECKSCHER

This document results from a preliminary round of wide-ranging reading and reflection on the opportunities posed by the proposed development of an American Memory collection related to conservation and also by Marsh-Billings National Historical Park's legislative mandate "to interpret the history and evolution of conservation stewardship in America."

THEMATIC DESIGN

From the vantage point of the late 20th century, it is natural to regard the development of "conservation stewardship" as a single discernible movement in American history, one which came of age in the era c.1850-1920, though it continued to expand and evolve in vital ways in the decades thereafter. To the cultural historian probing the components of this movement, however, its unity, and hence its inevitable coming of age in the nation's consciousness, are far less clear. On the contrary, what is most striking is the eclectic nature of the historical trends and cultural attitudes which coalesced in the development of conservation thought and policy, and consequently the **diversity of historical materials and sources** which are centrally relevant

to the study of the development of American conservation.

I contend that this thematic eclecticism should be regarded as a strength rather than a weakness for the design of research collections and interpretive programming. Conservation history, it turns out, is a wonderful way to engage and synthesize a multitude of vital patterns in American life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and any project which authentically reflects the roots of conservationism will inevitably offer a provocative cross-section of source materials in American cultural history. The study of conservation's evolution in this light also intersects some of the most creative interdisciplinary developments in recent American scholarship, inviting the participation of innovative thinkers in a variety of academic fields.

It must be noted that the designation of 1920 as the close of the first major phase of conservation history is somewhat arbitrary. Clearly, developments before 1920 cannot be severed from those that followed. Among the most important of these were the growth of private conservation organizations, the wide-ranging creative involvement of federal agencies in conservation efforts in the New Deal era, the maturation of ecological science in the '30s and '40s and Aldo Leopold's concomitant articulation of a "land ethic," the Echo Park controversy of the 1950s and the landmark federal victory in that fight, the continued expansion of the National Park Service through the '60s, and the birth and impact of the contemporary environmental movement in the '60s and '70s. The year 1920 was not the end; it was only the beginning, and the designers of the projects in question may wish to reconsider, or at least consider elastically, the 1920 boundary. Nevertheless, within the complex of conservation history, 1920 may legitimately mark the close of a first coherent phase, and it is so regarded in the comments which follow. At

the broadest level, then, developments in at least three distinct but interlocking thematic imperatives guided Americans' reconception of their relation to their natural environment in the 1850-1920 era:

Scientific concerns, provoked by fundamental transformations in technology and economic activity (e.g., Marsh's seminal recognition of the detrimental effect of human activity on the natural world in *Man and Nature*, 1864; and Gifford Pinchot's commitment to forestry as rational management of natural resources).

Philosophical, ethical, and spiritual values and symbolizations, including those which linked American "nature" to the construction of American national identity, and redefined the natural world as a spiritual resource for post-industrial urban man (e.g., the work of John Muir and Frederick Law Olmsted, and what historian Peter Schmitt calls "the Arcadian impulse in urban America").

Aesthetic considerations, including those which celebrated the perception and enjoyment of "natural beauty" as a legitimate and necessary recreational resource in American life (this theme is closely related to the preceding, but is often distinguishable from it in its straightforwardly pragmatic cast: e.g., the development of scenic park tourism, and of wildlife painting and photography as middle-class hobbies).

These fundamental preoccupations intersected with a cluster of deep historical transformations—the triumph of large-scale industrialization, urbanization, full-fledged commercial agriculture and natural-resource extraction—all of which amounted to a fourth formative pattern in the culture of the age:

A radical revision in the man-land and man-nature relationships which had subsisted in America since the European settlement. The development of conservation thought and policy may be

traced from these structural and ideological roots as they ramified throughout American life to manifest themselves in a host of related phenomena, including the following:

- ▶ a perceived crisis in American national identity and purpose, expressed in part in the popularity of the "Turner thesis," which located the source of American identity in the pioneer encounter with the wilderness frontier, and deemed that frontier now "closed";
- ▶ expressions of anti-urbanism and anti-modernism among intellectuals and the elite;
- ▶ the use of photography to fix the image of the American landscape, especially in the "wilderness" west, in the post-Civil War years;
- ▶ the practice of academic (but broadly popular) landscape painting in the second half of the nineteenth century as a self-conscious instrument marrying science, spirituality, and the celebration of the American landscape as the source of America's moral identity;
- ▶ the transformation of the old American pastoral/agrarian ideology into the new suburban ideal, with its accoutrements of landscape gardening, country clubs, summer camps, scouting, "nature study" in schools, etc.;
- ▶ the proliferation of nature essays and nature-based fiction and poetry in popular periodicals and books, including the perception of nature as a locus of moral authority;
- ▶ the sentimental celebration of nature as a theme in popular music and amateur painting;
- ▶ the development of landscape architecture as a profession;

- ▶ the urban parks and playgrounds movement;
- ▶ the “city beautiful” movement;
- ▶ the growth of leisure time for the new urban middle class, a function of the diminished temporal demands of industrially related vs. agricultural labor;
- ▶ the growth of hiking, mountaineering, angling, and game-hunting as recreational activities, and the proliferation of amateur clubs to sustain them;
- ▶ the growth of “bird-watching” as a popular hobby, and the proliferation of amateur ornithological clubs and bird sanctuaries;
- ▶ the consequent origins of what historian Stephen R. Fox calls the “radical amateur” tradition which led the development of American conservationism into the 1960s;
- ▶ the development of scenic tourism by railway and (eventually) by automobile;
- ▶ the consequent establishment of national parks and (eventually) the National Park Service;
- ▶ the development of principles of scientific forestry, and their adoption as government policy in accordance with the Progressive Era’s characteristic preoccupation with rational public management;
- ▶ Theodore Roosevelt’s identification of conservation as a legitimate object of Presidential policy;
- ▶ the controversy over the proposal to dam Yosemite’s Hetch Hetchy Valley, c.1913, which galvanized public consciousness of conservation issues and crystallized the tension between advocates of preservation and advocates of natural-

resource use which has defined the terms of conservation debate into our own era; and

- ▶ the proliferation of a wide range of conservation legislation, from the local to the national level.

POSSIBLE PROJECT MATERIALS

The phenomena noted above developed at a time in American history when the now-familiar boundaries between amateur and professional science, between science and religion, and between elite and popular culture were in many ways far less fixed than they have since become. Liberally educated individuals—such as Marsh himself—could still speak with authority on scientific matters, scientific investigation could still be construed as a complement to religious faith, and instruments of cultural expression commonly crossed class lines. These factors, too, make the historical ferment complex and enrich the range of historical sources within which American conservationism found its beginnings.

Any or all of the categories of materials listed below will provide valuable background for the development of interpretive programs at Marsh-Billings. Some, like maps, photographs, drawings, and prints, with strong graphic and communicative elements, will be especially helpful in the creation of, say, interpretive exhibitions or audio-visual programs in a visitors’ center. Other materials, when found in Library of Congress collections and when suitable for digital reproduction, should be considered for inclusion in the American Memory conservation collection.

- ▶ The relevant papers of individuals important in the development of conservation-related thought and policy. These include letters, speeches, publications, reports, diaries, memoirs, nature-study journals, etc. Such individuals might include: George Perkins Marsh, Gifford Pinchot, John Muir, Frederick Law Olmsted,

Theodore Roosevelt, Carl Schurz, John Burroughs, Ernest Thompson Seton, George Bird Grinnell, William T. Hornaday, John Wesley Powell, Franklin Lane, Stephen T. Mather, and Robert Underwood Johnson. A later period might include individuals such as Horace M. Albright, Robert Marshall, Harold Ickes, Harlean James, and Aldo Leopold.

▮ Proceedings of policy conferences and Congressional hearings, records of legislation, and government agency reports documenting the development and implementation of conservation policy (e.g., the proceedings of the 1912 federal conference to determine the need for a National Park Service; documents of the legislative hearings and debates which led to the establishment of the Park Service, 1912-1916; and the Annual Reports of the Park Service's Director thereafter).

▮ Popular periodicals of the time. Their role in laying the foundations for public awareness of conservation issues—through the publication of nature essays, nature-related literature, popularly accessible scientific articles on the natural world, and commentary and debate on such matters as the need for wildlife protection—can scarcely be overstated; remarkably, the debate on the fate of Hetch Hetchy, for example, was fought out in newspapers and general interest magazines as much as it was in the halls of government. Periodicals to be considered might include: *Atlantic Monthly*, *Forest and Stream*, *Garden and Forest*, *Century* magazine, *Harper's*, *National Geographic*, and *American Planning and Civic Comment*; the eclecticism of their contents reflects the eclectic roots of the conservation movement.

▮ Other topical literature related to conservation issues, such as the pamphlets produced for mass distribution by partisans in the Hetch Hetchy debate.

▮ Papers, proceedings, and publications of the sporting, mountaineering, and ornithological clubs whose

middle- and upper-class membership constituted the original grass-roots of the conservation movement: for example, those of the Boone and Crockett Club, founded by Roosevelt and Grinnell to link hunting and wildlife preservation, which published a number of books of essays by its members on hunting and conservation-related issues.

▮ Other popular culture materials on nature-related themes: e.g., books of serious but popular science in the old and honorable (but quickly vanishing) tradition of the broadly educated "naturalist" as scientific investigator (Roosevelt published several); books of fiction and poetry; sheet music; handbooks for suburban gardeners; "birding" literature; manuals for nature study; books on "woodcraft" and scouting, etc.

▮ Landscape paintings and their mass-produced reproductions in print, from the high academic (e.g., the work of Frederic Edwin Church, Thomas Moran, Albert Bierstadt, William Bradford, Martin Johnson Heade, Fitz Hugh Lane, Jasper F. Cropsey, etc.) to the amateur; the whole spectrum fostered an iconography of meaning which fixed the importance of the American natural landscape in the American mind. (A conference on the Park Service in 1917 included an installation of landscape paintings by major American artists, and participants heard a speech on "The Painter and the National Parks"; this was published by the Government Printing Office and has found its way to the Library of Congress general collection.)

▮ Landscape photography, such as that produced for the U.S.G.S. and railroad company surveys in the West in the period following the Civil War, and in periodicals and books with wide distribution; such work complemented and extended the older role of landscape painting in defining the importance of American nature in the national consciousness. Major photographers whose work contributed to this effort in this era

and afterward included: William H. Jackson, T. H. O'Sullivan, Alexander Hessler, William Bell, Jack Hillers, Alex Gardner, C. E. Watkins, Eadwaerd Muybridge, Jack Haynes (at Yellowstone), Emory Kolb (at the Grand Canyon), and Ansel Adams.

▮ Amateur photography, like amateur painting, reveals how individual Americans wished to see nature, and their families and pastimes in relation to nature. (Are there turn-of-the-century family vacation photograph albums in the Library of Congress?)

▮ Political cartoons on conservation issues.

▮ Maps, which are of course cultural constructions reflecting the human making of place and attitudes toward the natural environment in everything from their namings to their depictions of land boundaries to their iconography: human beings map what they believe to be important, and show why they think it is important by how they map it. Local maps of this era might be especially useful in reflecting changes in Americans' perceptions of their relationships to the land, its scenery, and natural resources, while Park Service materials might be more useful for the more recent decades of conservation history.

▮ The literature of promotional campaigns to encourage scenic tourism, such as the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company's annual publication *In the Maine Woods* or the American Civic Association's 1916 itinerary pamphlet "National Parks Tour for the Purpose of Disseminating Information and Promoting Interest in our Great National Playgrounds." Relevant archives for this material might also include those for the Northern Pacific, Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Yellowstone Park, and Fred Harvey companies, among others.

RELEVANT ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

The selection and interpretation of these sorts of materials invite the participation of scholars from a wide range of academic disciplines, again reflecting the diverse roots of conservationism and its wide-ranging implications as a historical phenomenon. Some of the academic disciplines from which advice should be sought include the following:

▮ the so-called new environmental history, one of the most creative developments in recent historical scholarship, which synthesizes natural and human history on the premise that human history is embedded in ecological history, and that nature lies within rather than outside of the ambit of human historical development;

▮ other areas of cultural history, including intellectual history, the history of popular culture, and the history of public policy;

▮ historical geography and the historical study of landscape;

▮ folklife study, inasmuch as it concerns the study of expressive culture as a product of regional and environmental relationships; folklorists also give voice to vernacular traditions of land stewardship and environmental perception; and

▮ art and literary history as they merge into cultural history.

MARSH-BILLINGS
NATIONAL HISTORICAL
PARK



DAVID A. DONATH

Marsh-Billings National Historical Park was created by an Act of Congress, and signed into law by President George Bush on August 26, 1992.

Early in 1993 Mary and Laurance Rockefeller donated title to the park's "historic zone" and easements to the "scenic zone" to the United States, conveying deeds to Secretary of the Interior Manuel J. Lujan on January 11, 1993. Mary and Laurance Rockefeller retain a life estate on the property, and the park will not open to the public while they remain residents. The Rockefellers have also pledged to establish an endowment to support the ongoing preservation and conservation of the property, and have donated a fund to the Town and Village of Woodstock to offset the impact of removing the "historic zone" from the tax rolls.

Marsh-Billings National Historical Park comprises the "historic" and "protection" zones. Outside the park boundary, two "scenic zones" protect important vistas. (see map on page 25):

The "historic zone" is a 555-acre tract that includes the Billings mansion and its dependencies and the Mount Tom forest that was replanted and developed under Frederick Billings's direction in the late 19th

century. This property, with its contents, has been donated to the United States for operation by the National Park Service.

The "protection zone" includes the Billings Farm, which was farmed by the Marsh family and developed as a progressive model farm by Billings. The farmland and buildings are in private ownership, and are operated by the Woodstock Foundation, Inc., as the Billings Farm & Museum.

Two "scenic zones" protect vistas from the mansion and the farm. These zones are not contiguous with the others. The properties are in private ownership, and scenic easements to them have been donated to the United States.

The legislation for Marsh-Billings National Historical Park specifies the purposes of the park as follows:

- to interpret the history and evolution of conservation stewardship in America;
- to recognize and interpret the contributions and birthplace of George Perkins Marsh, pioneer environmentalist, author of *Man and Nature*, statesman, lawyer, and linguist;
- to recognize and interpret the contributions of Frederick Billings, conservationist, pioneer in reforestation and scientific farm management, lawyer, philanthropist, and railroad builder, who extended the principles of land management introduced by Marsh;
- to preserve the Marsh-Billings Mansion and its surrounding lands; and
- to recognize the significant contributions of Julia Billings, Mary Billings French, Mary French Rockefeller, and Laurance Spelman Rockefeller in perpetuating the Marsh-Billings heritage.¹

The enabling legislation directs the National Park Service to complete a General Management Plan for development and operation of the park within three years of enactment.

SITE HISTORY

The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller properties are nationally significant for their historical association with three individuals and their families, who were occupants, developers, and stewards of this land for nearly two centuries. George Perkins Marsh, who spent his formative years on this property, published his seminal work *Man and Nature* in 1864, a book which became the fountainhead of American ecological thought and the conservation movement. Frederick Billings, who purchased the property from Marsh and his family, then developed it as a progressive, model estate, reflecting Marsh's principles. Laurance S. Rockefeller, a leader and shaper of the American conservation movement in the post-World War II era, secured this property for the enjoyment and education of future generations.

The sense of land stewardship exhibited by these individuals, as well as by their families in intervening generations, is revealed in the ways in which the property has been shaped and preserved. The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller property is a living artifact of the values of those who shaped and husbanded it—individuals and families active in the mainstream of American conservation thought and in the practice of land stewardship since the early 19th century.

The story of this property is one of interaction between the land and its succession of occupants. It is a characteristically Vermont story. The environmental character and geographical history of Vermont are more than just background—they are essential to the plot. Vermont's climate is harsh, and Vermonters have al-

ways known that to ignore nature is to put oneself in peril. It is fitting, and not at all coincidental, that the American conservation movement should have been born in Vermont.

Before settlement Vermont was mostly forest. The land is mountainous; the soils are thin and liberally pebbled with glacial till. Native Americans—in historical times, the Abenakis—hunted and gathered and planted garden plots in burned-off clearings. Although the Abenakis were numerous, their presence hardly taxed the land. A pattern of dispersed, mobile villages allowed the land to recover soon after an Abenaki band moved on to a new location. In the 17th and 18th centuries the advance of English settlement spread diseases that decimated the Abenakis. Although the Indians remained a presence on the fringes of white settlements in Vermont, the English settlers promoted the ideas that the land had been abandoned, and that by settling and developing it, they validated their rights of ownership.²

Early white settlement throughout Vermont extracted the forest resources that the land would yield, pressing the land into agricultural use. Early forestry practices were often both wasteful and environmentally destructive. Likewise, early agricultural practices, such as extensive grain culture, proved to be geographically unsuitable. Upland grazing of sheep caused further damage to the land. By the mid-19th century, growth and development of rural Vermont stalled, the agricultural economy was plagued by a recurrent depression, and the rural population declined and stagnated.³

George Perkins Marsh and Frederick Billings grew up in the midst of this. The growth, deforestation, and degradation of Vermont were apparent throughout their lives, and helped to shape their attitudes and perspectives. Marsh's *Man and Nature* was, in large measure, a reaction to the environmental changes he had witnessed in Vermont, validated and amplified by what he saw and

experienced in his travels in the Mediterranean region and elsewhere.

Billings, in turn, reacted to the environmental degradation of his native state in the progressive spirit of his age, taking inspiration from Marsh and using scientific and industrial management approaches to repair Vermont's forestry and agricultural economy.

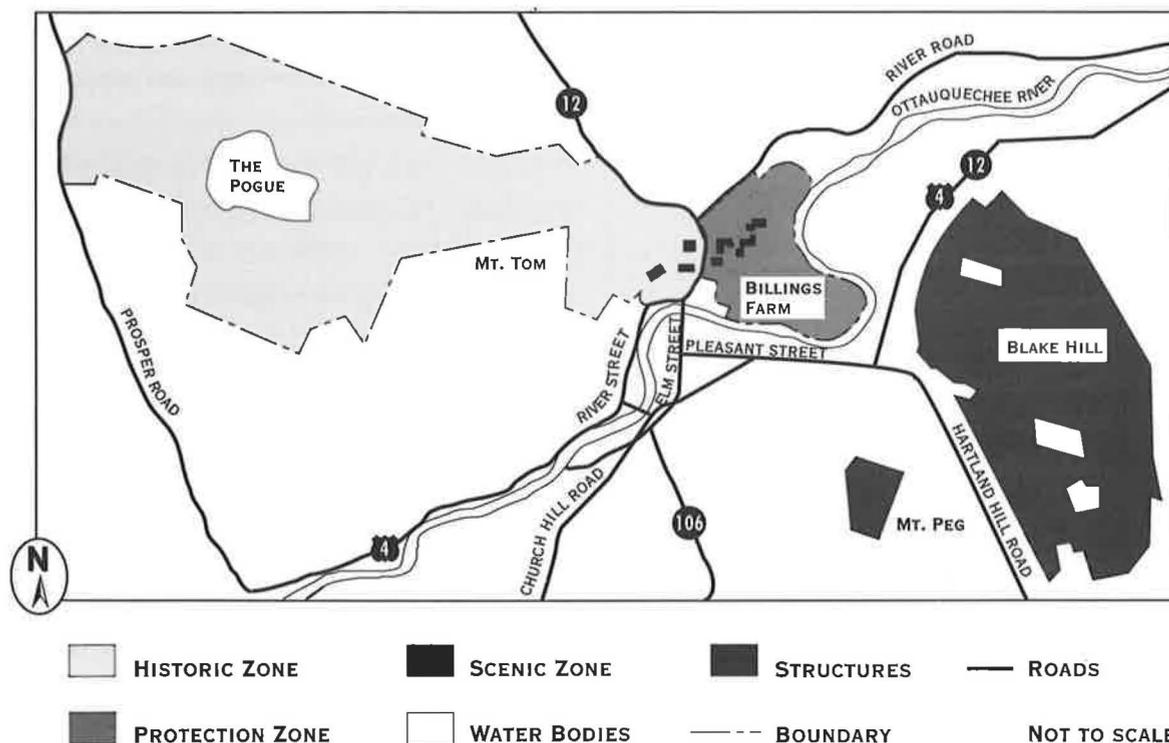
At Marsh-Billings National Historical Park, Marsh's vision and Billings's stewardship resonate with the 20th-century role of Laurance S. Rockefeller as a steward of this land and as a shaper of America's conservation agenda since the 1950s. Like the work of the Outdoor Recreational Resources Review Commission and its outgrowths in the Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Ford Administrations, as well as the creation of the Virgin

Islands National Park and many other conservation and preservation accomplishments, the establishment of Marsh-Billings National Historical Park illustrates Laurance S. Rockefeller's conservationism, as it builds upon the stewardship of the Marsh and Billings eras.

GEORGE PERKINS MARSH

History regards George Perkins Marsh's book *Man and Nature* as "the fountainhead" of the American conservation movement.⁴ Marsh was remarkable for the diversity of his interests, the multiple facets of his career, and his amazing energy and gift for observation. The brilliance of Marsh's *Man and Nature* lies in its perceptive synthesis of his wide-ranging observations, studies, and thinking.

MARSH-BILLINGS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



Man and Nature was also striking in its timeliness. The book appeared at the time when the Union could see a light at the end of the dark tunnel of civil war, about the time that transcontinental railroads first girded the North American continent, when the Manifest Destiny of the United States to civilize the continent and to exploit its seemingly inexhaustible resources appeared self-evident. The cautionary perspectives of Marsh's arguments seem at once to deny the sense of superabundance that drove the American empire and at the same time to embrace the era's progressive faith in man's ability to repair and improve on nature.

In a wry comment to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Marsh characterized *Man and Nature* as a little volume of lay science that would challenge the scientific view of man as a product of nature. "Whereas Ritter and Guyot think that the earth made man," he asserted, "man in fact made the earth." To buttress his argument, Marsh related a Vermont homily, pointing out what any good farmer knows: Farming changes the nature of the land. Wise husbandry can enhance nature's productivity, and unwise use of the land can diminish it. Left unchecked, devastation can become complete and irreversible. For good or ill, the farmer reaps what he sows.⁵

In *Man and Nature*, Marsh warned Americans to begin practicing responsible stewardship of their resources, lest the basis for American prosperity be wasted and lost. This was a timely cautionary, coming as it did when some Americans had begun to worry whether the resources of the continent, particularly the forests, were truly limitless. Within a decade of its publication, the book had become a widely read and influential work. In 1873, it inspired a report that prompted Congress to establish a national forestry commission and government forest reserves. The book's pragmatic optimism and belief in the efficacy of reform was consistent with

the 19th-century view of progress, but its revolutionary exploration of the ecological relationships that governed nature would not be fully appreciated until the 20th century.⁶

Man and Nature endures as a conservation classic because of its far-reaching ecological insights. By the Dust Bowl era of the 1930s, Americans could see vivid proof that resources were finite, and that the land's productive capacity was not limitless. Environmental disaster illuminated the essential dilemma in Marsh's insightful argument—Marsh had regarded man as both a part of, and a shaper of, nature. Through wise husbandry, man could repair or even improve upon nature—that was the optimistic view. But if man treated nature unwisely, the damage could be irreparable, and ultimately, a devastated nature would cease to sustain man. "The earth is fast becoming an unfit home for its noblest inhabitant," Marsh wrote, "and another era of equal human crime and human improvidence . . . would reduce it to such a condition of impoverished productiveness, of shattered surface, of climatic excess, as to threaten the depravation, barbarism, and perhaps even extinction of the species."⁷

In writing *Man and Nature*, George Perkins Marsh connected the observations of his childhood and youth in Woodstock, Vermont, with perspectives gained throughout his long and multifaceted career. As his wide-ranging career carried him farther and farther from Woodstock, new perspectives broadened and validated his early observations. What he had seen and learned about early Vermont resonated with what he would observe elsewhere, particularly in Mediterranean and Alpine lands.

The Woodstock of Marsh's boyhood and youth had a raw appearance. Nearly thirty years before Marsh's birth, Vermont settlers had declared their independence from the Crown. "We are in a state of nature," they

asserted in their 1777 declaration of Vermont Independence, and they were already busy hacking and hewing natural Vermont for their own use. By the time George Perkins Marsh was old enough to notice his surroundings, the largely unbroken forest that had blanketed northern New England was in retreat on all fronts. Around Woodstock, the forest was pushed back earlier than in most places.

George Perkins Marsh grew up on the property that ultimately would become Marsh-Billings National Historical Park. At the time of Marsh's birth in 1801, it was the estate of "Squire" Charles Marsh, who was the leading lawyer in the county seat, Woodstock, and was also the son of one of the founders of the State (formerly the Republic) of Vermont. The Marsh estate was the premier property in Woodstock, commanding the head of Elm Street from a knoll on the shoulder of Mount Tom. When George Perkins Marsh was born to Susan and Charles Marsh, the estate was visually more prominent than it is today because Mount Tom was treeless, having been transformed into an upland pasture capped by a pair of rocky peaks. In 1800 a wildfire burned what few trees were left, and the forest was not replanted there until much later in the century. Likewise, the great farm meadow below the Marsh house had been cleared for agriculture. Formerly a swampy intervale woods containing a clearing that was periodically used by bands of Abenakis, in the 1790s the meadow was transformed into some of Woodstock's best cropland.

Marsh was born in a frame house that stood roughly at the location of the current estate's tennis courts. This house, which was built in 1790, was later moved down to the meadow, and it probably forms a part of what is now the Hitchcock house, just outside of the boundaries of the park's "protection zone." When he was four years old, his father hired Nathaniel Smith, prob-

ably the best of Woodstock's builders, to construct a new brick house. The construction of the five-bay square, two-and-one-half story Federal-style residence fascinated the young child, and may have stimulated his lifelong interest in tools and manual crafts.

Young Marsh was also fascinated by his father's library, spending countless hours engrossed in books like Reese's *Encyclopedia*, which he could barely heft. He read volumes of the encyclopedia cover to cover, lying on the floor in dim light. By the age of seven or eight, his reading obsession severely strained his eyes, leaving him temporarily blinded and afflicted with terrible headaches. For the next four years he was unable to read. Although his vision recovered and he was able to resume his voracious reading, he suffered periodic relapses of eyestrain throughout the rest of his life.

Banished from his father's library, young Marsh took to the meadows and hillsides of the estate. Nature became his encyclopedia, and, deprived of reading, he cultivated his remarkable powers of observation, pursuing nature with characteristic voracity. Not content simply to observe, he sought to understand the science of nature and its connections to human activity. Already, he was gathering the tools he would need to write *Man and Nature*.

On his own Mount Tom, Marsh observed the effects of deforestation. Uncontrolled runoff, increased erosion, and the steady loss of topsoil were all consequences of the loss of forest cover. Downstream consequences were violent freshets and increased siltation. Millsites alternatively silted up or were washed away in floods, fields lost their fertility, fish habitats were lost—either obstructed by dams or choked by changes in the stream character. Throughout his life, Marsh would continue to observe and draw conclusions.

In 1847, in an address delivered before the Agricultural Society of Rutland County, he spoke about the agricultural impact of the loss of forests. In 1857, as Vermont Fish Commissioner, he reported on the impact on fisheries brought by changes in the environment.⁸ Exploring the Mediterranean as U.S. Minister to Turkey during the early 1850s, Marsh would see how human occupation had devastated the Near East ever since Greek and Roman antiquity. *Man and Nature* would be the product of these observations and more.

George Perkins Marsh's education in Woodstock was sporadic, but in the late 1810s, he attended Dartmouth College, graduating in 1820. Soon after, he took a job teaching Greek and Latin at Norwich Academy, then located across the Connecticut River from Dartmouth. He was bored by teaching, and long hours of reading at the nearby college library soon brought on a relapse of eyestrain. He returned to Woodstock, and when he recovered, he read the law. In 1825 he was admitted to the bar and moved to Burlington, where he went into practice with Benjamin F. Bailey. In 1828 he married Harriet Buell, the daughter of a prominent Burlington family. The couple moved into a frame house on the southeast corner of Church and Pearl Streets, which would be Marsh's home until he moved, permanently, to Europe in 1861.⁹

Although Marsh never again lived in Woodstock, he maintained family ties there. In 1833, when his wife and their first son, Charles, died, a devastated Marsh brought their infant second son to be raised by the child's grandparents. Marsh returned to a sad, solitary existence in Burlington, where he immersed himself in his studies and a number of unsuccessful business ventures. In 1839 he emerged from his solitude, marrying Caroline Crane, and two years later he made a successful run for the U.S. House of Representatives. While in Washington, he played an important role in the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution.

In 1849 Marsh began his diplomatic career as Minister to the Court at Constantinople. He served four years, and during that time traveled extensively in the Middle East. After returning to the United States in 1853, he published a book advocating the introduction of camels for use in the American West.¹⁰ The following year he was appointed Minister to the Kingdom of Italy and he left for the Mediterranean, never again to reside in Vermont. In 1857 Marsh made a lengthy visit to Woodstock. That summer he and his brother Charles spent a number of days climbing the hills surrounding the village and measuring their elevation above the Town Hall, using a new barometric method. Marsh probably visited Woodstock for the last time in 1861, shortly before leaving for Europe. He never returned to the United States.

Marsh began working on *Man and Nature* in 1860. He published the book in 1864, and revised it in 1874, about the time that he wrote a paper on irrigation for the U.S. Commissioner of Agriculture.¹¹ At the time of his death in Vallombrosa, Italy, in 1882, he was in his 22nd year as Minister—he also was still expanding and revising *Man and Nature*, of which the third edition appeared in 1885.

George Perkins Marsh's father had died in 1849 and his mother in 1853; his younger brother Charles occupied the Woodstock estate and farm. In 1855 Charles Marsh sold the northern part of the farm meadow for a fairgrounds for the Windsor County Fair. Around 1866, Marsh sold two more lots on the southern side of the meadow, adjacent to the Ottauquechee River. These lots now comprise the south side of Moore Place, and are outside of the park's "protection zone." In 1869 Marsh sold the remainder of his father's farm and estate to Frederick Billings.

Later that year, while Billings was busy with the first of his remodelings of the Marsh mansion, Caroline

Marsh returned from Italy for a visit to Vermont and visited Frederick and Julia Billings. In 1883, after the death of George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Billings purchased Marsh's personal library for a generous sum, both to secure the significant collection for the University of Vermont and to provide financial assistance to Marsh's widow. Caroline Marsh returned to the United States and lived in Scarsdale, New York. She corresponded with the Billingses, saw them socially in New York, and, at Frederick's request, presented them with a silver-headed cane as a memento of her late husband. The cane remains in the mansion collection.

FREDERICK BILLINGS

Frederick Billings was a practitioner and a steward. He was a moral and religious man who believed in virtue, responsibility, and philanthropy, values he shared with his wife, Julia, and which they transmitted to their children and grandchildren. He was a successful lawyer and a man of business—a founder of the State of California and a builder of the Northern Pacific Railroad. In the spirit of his age, he was an optimist who believed in progress. He believed in using his talents, his means, and the best knowledge available to make things happen, and he believed that anything worth doing was worth doing well.

Billings was a conservationist at a time when conservationism was only beginning to have meaning in America. His conservationism grew first from a sense of awe at the striking natural beauty of the Far West. It later matured into an impulse for stewardship of precious natural resources and a drive to repair and perfect the landscape of his home and farm. Billings embraced the lessons of George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature*, using Marsh's principles to guide the restoration of his Mount Tom forest. He brought them

to bear on the State of Vermont in helping to frame the state's first forestry policy. Frederick Billings's regard for Marsh's work ultimately led him to secure Marsh's library for the University of Vermont and to build the university a monumental building in which to house it.

Frederick Billings was a practitioner, not a shaper, of American conservationist thought. By influence and example, he demonstrated—in Woodstock and elsewhere—how lands could be protected, used, and enhanced through informed husbandry and stewardship. Even a century after Frederick Billings's death, the mansion, the estate, and the farm that he created reflect his philosophy, values, and personality.

Although he was born in Royalton, Vermont, Frederick Billings grew up in Woodstock, and Woodstock remained his home until the end of his life. In 1835, after an unfavorable judgment in a civil matter, his father, Oel Billings, was required to move the family over the hill to Woodstock—in order to live in legal proximity to the Windsor County Sheriff. Family tradition has it that young Frederick, who was in charge of driving the family pig along "Squire" Marsh's turnpike, paused as he passed the Marsh mansion. Never again, he resolved, would he be poor. Someday, he wanted to own that place.

Whether or not the legend is true, it is without doubt that young Frederick knew the Marsh property well, and regarded it as the most prominent real estate in Woodstock. If results can be relied on as evidence of intentions, it appears that Frederick Billings resolved, early on, to make a success of himself. As he grew up in Woodstock, he was driven to excel at his studies. When his learning outstripped local educational opportunities, he determinedly pursued his education first at Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, New Hampshire, and later at the University of Vermont. There he was exposed to some of the most progressive educational ideas of the

time— notions that would ultimately be associated with American Transcendentalism. His mentors and professors included James Marsh (a cousin of George Perkins Marsh), Ferrand Benedict, Joseph Torrey, as well as Vermont's early natural historian Zadock Thompson. He applied himself to his studies and emerged with a solid, liberal education and a Whiggish orientation. Then he read law.

In 1849 Frederick and his sister and brother-in-law, Laura and Bezer Simmons, sailed for California, via the Isthmus crossing. As soon as Frederick arrived in San Francisco, he unpacked his already-painted shingle and went to work as the first lawyer in the gold-rush town. Tragically, Laura died several days later, the victim of a fever contracted in the Panamanian jungle, but Frederick stayed on. He did well—much better than most who spent their time digging gold. Frederick's specialty became the resolution of land claims descending from Spanish ownership. For many, his legal services proved indispensable. His law practice—soon a prominent partnership with Henry W. Halleck and Archibald C. Peachy—coupled with a number of astute real estate investments—ensured Frederick's financial success, and he quickly became one of the wealthiest men in California.

In California Frederick Billings developed his awareness of place. He took great pleasure in getting away from the raucous congestion of San Francisco to explore. Within a year of his arrival he was commenting on the need to preserve California's natural wonders. In 1851 the Yosemite Valley was first viewed by white explorers, and Billings went there in March of the next year. He would return many times during and after his California sojourn. By 1860 a naturalist "grand tour" of Yosemite, the big trees, Lake Tahoe, Placerville, and the Napa Valley had become so popular that key sites along the way were visibly showing signs of overcrowd-

ing. Frederick Billings and his friends saw the degradation and began advocating preservation. Their conservation impulse was largely emotional and romantic, rooted in patriotism and religious sense of duty, as well as delight in the unknown and the picturesque. They also were aware of the commercial potential of these natural wonders as destinations for tourists.

Billings's support for the conservation of California's natural wonders was both a source and an outgrowth of his networking in a growing circle of friends and associates. Among these were Horace Bushnell, Frederick Law Olmsted, John and Jessie Fremont, Thomas Starr King, Louis Agassiz, and Carleton E. Watkins. His law firm had employed the photographer Carleton E. Watkins to record Las Mariposas and the New Almaden Mine. In 1863 Watkins made an album of Yosemite. Billings acquired a set and sent it to the naturalist Louis Agassiz, who was an enthusiastic supporter of the preservation of the valley as a Federal reserve. The next year photographs from the Watkins album appeared on the desks of key congressmen who assured the passage of the bill [to preserve Yosemite as a state park]. Personal associations and networking would remain a key to Billings's success throughout his career.

Billings's sense of conservation grew as an emotional response to awesome natural wonders like Half Dome, El Capitan, and the Calaveras grove of Sequoias. His response to the grand and the picturesque would also stimulate his interest in the romantic landscape art of the mid- to late-19th century, especially the luminous scenes of the Hudson River School and the expansive paintings of Albert Bierstadt. Billings's art collection, which is preserved as part of the mansion collection, reflects these interests.

In 1862 Frederick Billings married Julia Farnly of New York, and late in the following year, the couple moved back East. In 1864 they returned to Woodstock

and resided at The Maples, a large brick house on Bond Street that belonged to Frederick's sister. That year Frederick read *Man and Nature* by George Perkins Marsh. He was deeply impressed by this geographical treatise by his former neighbor. The book proved a catalyst that helped Frederick Billings's concept of conservation to mature. Places of striking natural beauty and wonder, like Yosemite, were self-evidently important; they were easy to identify, and people might rally to their preservation. But the general landscape—man's more ordinary home—needed protection and husbandry to ensure its ability to sustain humankind. Billings marked the passages in Marsh's book that illuminated this concept.¹²

Looking around Woodstock after so many years away and having witnessed how quickly California had changed, Frederick Billings could see the damage that development had wrought in Vermont. By the 1860s, at least 75 percent of Vermont's forest cover had been cleared. Most of the hills between Woodstock and Royalton were bare and in many areas overgrazed by Merino sheep. Erosion scarred the hills and choked the streams. The wild game and fish that Billings remembered were gone. Marsh's book was a persuasive synthesis, and the Vermont landscape gave ample evidence that Marsh was right.

In 1869 Frederick and Julia Billings bought the Marsh estate and farm. Charles, the younger brother of George Perkins Marsh, was the last of the family to live there, and he was ready to sell. Frederick Billings was probably the wealthiest inhabitant of Woodstock by far, and it seemed suitable that he should acquire the town's most prominent piece of real estate. However, in 1869 the Marsh estate gave only a glimmer of its potential. Frederick Billings immediately set about a thorough campaign of remodeling, landscaping, and construction. By the time that Caroline Marsh visited

late in the year, renovation of the house was well under way.

Beginning in 1869 and continuing well into the 1880s, Billings also developed his farm and his Mount Tom forest park. As he planned the network of carriage roads that would wind through the mountain forest, connecting vistas and tree plantations and circulating the Pogue, Billings predicted that it was "to be my monument!"¹³ Similarly, in 1871 Billings established the foundation of his dairy herd of purebred Jersey cows which would bring the farm national renown at the Chicago world's fair three years after Billings's death.

At the same time that he was developing his Woodstock estate, Frederick Billings became involved in the Northern Pacific Railroad. In 1869 he purchased his first shares of stock, and in 1870 he was elected to the Board of Directors. Following the Panic of 1873, Billings orchestrated the reorganization of the railroad, positioning it for its successful completion of the line to the West Coast. Among Billings's achievements was the successful development of the Bonanza Farms in the Dakotas which demonstrated the agricultural viability of the dry plains as a grain-producing area, encouraging settlement and the purchase of railroad land holdings along the route. The Bonanza Farms were progressive in their application of technology, science, and industrial organization to agriculture. However, the extensive wheat culture that they encouraged contributed to the environmental disaster of the Dust Bowl.

In 1879 Billings was elected president of the railroad—Billings, Montana, was later named in his honor. He was not, however, to preside over the line's completion. In 1881, in a famous corporate maneuver using the so-called Blind Pool, Henry Villard wrested control of the railroad from Frederick Billings. When the line was completed in 1883, Billings was there, but not in command—he was respected and was proud of the ac-

accomplishment. He and Julia rode the line west repeatedly in subsequent years, viewing the grandeur of the Rockies and the Cascades from their private Pullman car, *Glacier*. In so doing, they reflected another of Frederick's visions—that of the railroad's role in opening up the new national parks of the West to tourists.

When Villard ousted Billings from the Northern Pacific presidency, Frederick was freed to devote more time and energy to his Woodstock estate. In the 1880s, the last decade of Billings's life, he redoubled his efforts to perfect his mansion, farm, and forest park. In these activities he put into practice his concepts of stewardship, progress, and conservation, embracing the ideas of Marsh.

Frederick Billings's conservation activities were most visible in Woodstock, but he made an impact on the State of Vermont as well. In 1883 Frederick was appointed to Vermont's new Forestry Commission and he took a special interest in the commission's work, ultimately writing most of its report and funding its second printing. The report found that as much as 90 percent of Vermont's forests had been cleared. In many places, as a result, the water supply was damaged or failing. The State lacked any systematic forestry culture. The report's recommendations echoed both Marsh's ideas and Billings's experience and business sense: timber was a commercial crop to be cultivated; wetlands must not be drained needlessly; trees should be planted in public places, and Arbor Day should be celebrated; forest arson should be prevented, in part through severe penalties; migratory sawmills, lumber, and timber "cutting should be taxed; timber farms should receive relief for fencing; forestry should be studied scientifically, at a variety of levels.¹⁴

Billings applied the principles at home. By 1882, he had expanded his land holdings from the original 250 acres to 600 acres, largely with the addition of ad-

jacent forest lands (by 1900 the estate would include 2,000 acres). He pursued an ambitious, systematic program of planting stands of Austrian larch and Norwegian spruce, in addition to native species. In 1893, at a Northeastern States foresters' meeting, Frederick Billings and his farm manager, George Aitken, would be credited with "the progress of the forest movement in Vermont." The Vermont state forester commented that Billings's Mount Tom tree farm represented "the most interesting example of forestry in the state."¹⁵

The 1880s were also years of philanthropy for Frederick and Julia Billings. In 1883, following the death of George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Billings purchased Marsh's library for the University of Vermont. The purchase was meant both to secure the significant collection and to provide Marsh's widow with income. To provide a suitable repository for the collection, Billings also gave a new library building to his alma mater. Characteristically, Billings selected the brilliant, sometimes difficult Henry Hobson Richardson for the project. Today known as Billings Center, the library building remains the most significant piece of architecture on the University of Vermont campus.

Billings also exercised his philanthropy in Woodstock. He built a memorial chapel at the old white Congregational Church, and later, he provided funds for the remodeling of the church. Henry Hudson Holly was the architect for both of these projects. After Frederick's death in 1890, Julia Billings continued his philanthropy, making gifts to a number of mutual interests, including the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California.

With help from Samuel Kilner and George Aitken, Julia Billings carried on Frederick's work for many years after his death. After her death in 1914, the children of Frederick and Julia Billings, most notably Mary Montagu Billings French and Elizabeth Billings, main-

tained the estate in the tradition of stewardship that they had inherited from their parents.

LAURANCE SPELMAN ROCKEFELLER

On September 27, 1991, in a ceremony in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, President George Bush presented the Congressional Gold Medal to Laurance S. Rockefeller "in recognition of his leadership on behalf of natural resource conservation and historic preservation." In his remarks, the President said, "We honor a quiet, gentle man whose life and work sum up a half century of American civic virtue."

In accepting the medal, Laurance S. Rockefeller said, "This is the first Congressional Gold Medal to be awarded to a conservationist. Conservation has increasingly become a part of the nation's agenda over the past half century. . . . Now we know that concern for the environment and access to parks is not frivolous or peripheral; rather it is central to the welfare of people—body, mind, and spirit."¹⁶

The Congressional Gold Medal is the nation's highest civilian award, and Laurance S. Rockefeller was the 97th person to be so honored. The bill that authorized the award listed his achievements as follows:

- enhancement of the National Park System, including a donation of 5,000 acres on the Island of St. John for the Virgin Islands National Park;
- service as chairman of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (1958 and after), leading to the establishment of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Wilderness Act, the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers, and other landmark conservation programs;

- service as chairman of the White House Conference on Natural Beauty (1965), which brought the concept of natural beauty to urban areas, increased state and local awareness of environmental issues, and led to the Highway Beautification Act;

- collaboration with Lady Bird Johnson in her efforts to beautify the United States and its capital and assistance in creating the Lyndon Baines Johnson Memorial Grove in Washington, D.C.;

- service to Presidents Nixon and Ford as chairman of presidential advisory committees on environmental quality and service on other federal advisory groups including the Public Land Law Review Commission and the National Park Foundation;

- 30 years of service as member and chairman of the New York State Council of Parks in expansion and modernization of the state park system through an innovative bond program that was replicated across the nation;

- service as principal advisor on environmental matters to New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, including assistance in developing the Adirondack Park Agency, the Hudson River Valley Commission, the first state water pollution bond issue, and the first comprehensive state environmental and conservation agency;

- 40 years of service as member and president of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, including major donations to expand the park system;

- contributions to the environmental quality of New York City through efforts on behalf of the New York Zoological Society and the Bronx Zoo, the New York Aquarium, Central Park, and other parks in the city;

► contributions to the environmental aesthetics of Woodstock, Vermont, through promotion of the placement of power lines underground, the initiation of watershed planning, and the preservation and interpretation of historic properties and objects;

► long-time service in three significant private conservation organizations: Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc., the American Conservation Association, and Historic Hudson Valley, Inc;

► leadership of other private conservation organizations, including Resources for the Future, the National Parks and Recreation Association, and the Conservation Foundation; and

► over 40 years of humanitarian work and benefactions to the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in the fight against cancer.¹⁷

If the Congressional Gold Medal were being awarded to Laurance S. Rockefeller today, the list would also include donation of 555 acres of land, buildings, historic furnishings, and a preservation endowment for creation of Marsh-Billings National Historical Park.

Laurance S. Rockefeller has successfully adapted and used the intellectual traditions of the late-19th- and early-20th-century American conservation movements to provide leadership in American conservation throughout his long career. Working with Republican and Democratic administrations alike, he framed a new vision of conservation stewardship and of the relationships of citizens, business, and government in achieving its goals. He personally took the lead both in articulating a vision and in implementing it—publicly, politically, and in practice.

In 1958 President Eisenhower appointed Laurance S. Rockefeller chairman of a new Outdoor Recreation

Resources Review Commission. Nonpartisan in character, the commission had a broad charge to propose a national agenda for outdoor recreation and conservation. The commission delivered its findings to the Kennedy Administration in early 1962. It proposed a new national recreational policy and made 50 specific proposals which earned widespread acclaim and bipartisan political support. It led to the creation of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the National Wilderness Preservation System, and the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers. In subsequent years, Laurance S. Rockefeller continued the work he had begun: as a vigorous chairman of the White House Conference on Natural Beauty, the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Recreation and Natural Beauty under the Johnson Administration, and the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Environmental Quality under Presidents Nixon and Ford.

During these years, conservationism matured, gaining national stature and priority. The language reflected this, as the expressions "natural beauty" and "outdoor recreation" gave way to broader concepts of "environmental quality." Laurance S. Rockefeller played a leadership role in the national movement, helping to steer and press forward, and providing a broad perspective reaching back into his family's roots in conservation stewardship.

Recently, Laurance S. Rockefeller commented that, for him, the impulse for conservation was rooted in a humanistic desire to help fellow humans find and do those things that would enhance their healthy relationship with their environment. This concept, he believes, differs somewhat from the view of his father, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who thought that humans had a moral or religious obligation to conserve and protect nature—stewardship implied personal duty. For Laurance S.

Rockefeller, conservation should bring humans and nature together harmoniously. His concept of "conservation for people" offers ways both of preserving precious natural resources and of using them as retreats for renewal of the human spirit.¹⁸

Today, Laurance S. Rockefeller looks back over a career that includes—in addition to conservation work—numerous successful venture capital investments in high-tech innovation, humanitarian efforts in support of the leading edge of cancer treatment and research, and the development of environmentally sensitive resorts in places of exquisite natural beauty. At the intersection of these activities is a perspective that humans, possessed with insight and self-knowledge and armed with technology, can shape and direct their lives, cultures, and surroundings in ways that will enhance both their own personal health and well-being, and the well-being of their environment. In this sense, conservation is an interaction between humans and their resources that must be fostered in healthy relationships. Likewise, support of conservation should occur at a range of levels—personal, local, business, and governmental—reflecting that conservation is both the right thing and, in the long run, the rewarding thing to do.

In 1934, Mary French, a granddaughter of Frederick Billings, and Laurance S. Rockefeller were married in the old white Congregational Church in Woodstock. Mary had grown up spending summers in Woodstock, living in the mansion, and roaming the Mount Tom forest on her pony. With his marriage to Mary, Laurance adopted Woodstock as his summer home, and as the years passed his affection for the Vermont town grew. Woodstock became one of his important conservation interests. In many respects, Laurance S. Rockefeller's activities in Woodstock are a microcosm of his conservation career.

After Mary French Rockefeller's mother, Mary Montagu Billings French, died in 1951, Mary Rockefeller came to own the mansion and its surrounding acreage. Beginning in 1955 and continuing for ten years, Mary and Laurance Rockefeller remodeled the mansion, making a wide variety of improvements to the house, its grounds, and its outbuildings. Theodore Muller was architect for the project, and Zenon Schreiber was landscape architect. Although the remodeling was thorough, it was sensitive to the historic character of the property. The overriding retention of Victorian detail and furnishings is remarkable, considering that the Victorian style was regarded as unfashionable during the 1950s. The sensitivity of the remodeling is visual testimony to Mary and Laurance Rockefeller's awareness of the significant history of the house. Their sense of the house's heritage was affirmed in June of 1967, when Lady Bird Johnson visited Woodstock to dedicate the mansion as a National Historic Landmark.

In 1954 the Billings Farm was incorporated as an active commercial dairy operation. The farm held title to both the farmland in the Ottauquechee intervale and much of the Mount Tom forest. The farm prospered and expanded under farm manager Harold Corkum, who installed a modern bottling works and organized a small fleet of delivery trucks to serve the community. Later, in 1960, the farm joined with Starlake Dairy in the construction of a new processing plant in Wilder, Vermont, and products under the name "Billings Dairy" appeared throughout the region. In 1974 Laurance S. Rockefeller purchased the Billings Farm, which, when viewed in combination with Mary F. Rockefeller's ownership of the mansion, reassembled the core of Frederick Billings's estate.¹⁹

Laurance S. Rockefeller has always said that his interest in Woodstock flowed simply from the fact that it was Mary's home. His active participation in the shap-

ing of Woodstock's future grew as a natural consequence of their shared interests and their love of the outdoors. He saw the dangers that unwise development could pose for Woodstock, and drawing upon his experience in conservation and preservation elsewhere, he worked to guide the town in environmentally sound directions. He firmly believed that landscape and townscape must be considered together—that one could not be preserved without the other.

With this philosophy in mind, he purchased and replaced the aging Woodstock Inn, greatly improving the country club and ski areas as well. As a unit, the Woodstock Resort Corporation has become a mainstay of the economic health of the community, while helping to preserve the ambience of the small New England town. In one of Laurance's greatest gifts to the community, he funded the underground routing of electrical and telephone wires throughout the village, greatly enhancing Woodstock's historical and aesthetic appearance. He also protected the village by acquiring many acres of open space to ensure their preservation.²⁰

Laurance S. Rockefeller's activities in Woodstock combined and put into practice the conservation agenda that he had helped the nation embrace and his personal affection for the community, its history, and the heritage of Mary's family. The conservation philosophy and principles that underlay the work of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission and the Citizens Advisory Committees that he chaired are reflected in the projects that he undertook in Woodstock. In 1968 Mary and Laurance Rockefeller created the Woodstock Foundation, Inc., as a philanthropic vehicle for the betterment of Woodstock. Laurance later described the foundation's objectives as follows:

"Through the Woodstock Foundation, it is my hope, in the broadest sense, to help preserve the environment and historical integrity of Woodstock, and more specifi-

cally the Billings Family heritage that has been so important to the community for more than 100 years.

"My long-range goal is to eventually include the Mansion, the Farm and related facilities, and the forests as an integrated unit to the approximate scope and extent that existed during the time of Frederick Billings. Other properties that I have bought will supplement the Family properties, and help to protect the larger Woodstock area from deterioration through unwise development."

The foundation's activities were intended to "add to the balance of Woodstock and have a beneficial effect on the long-term economic vitality and stability of the community." Primary objectives would include the preservation of open space, the preservation of the historical values of rural Vermont, the expansion of the outdoor recreational opportunities that are inherent in the natural beauty of the Woodstock area, the encouragement of the best practices of forest management, and the creation of broad educational values of benefit to Vermonters and visitors to the area.²¹

In 1973 the Woodstock Foundation established the Vermont Folklife Project. The mission of this research and collecting project was to study and preserve the rapidly vanishing remnants of traditional farm life in the region of East Central Vermont. This vision resonated with Laurance S. Rockefeller's perception of the special human values of traditional Vermont culture—values that included a self-reliant work ethic, a close human relationship with the land, and a farm-family-based sense of husbandry. Through the 1970s the folklife project assembled artifacts, oral histories, and photographs, generating a significant collection. The folklife project also led to the concept for a new farm museum that would interpret rural Vermont farm culture around 1890 as well as the Billings Farm itself.

In June 1983, Mary and Laurance Rockefeller formally opened the Billings Farm & Museum. Today, after a decade of operation and more than 430,000 visitors, the museum is recognized as being among the nation's premier farm museums. Situated at the Billings Farm, the museum has a dual mission of education and preservation. As an educational museum it collects, cares for, and interprets the heritage and values of the Billings Farm and of the surrounding region of rural Vermont, and it also preserves the Billings Farm as a significant landscape and a historic place.

The creation of the museum gave an educational purpose to the Billings Farm. As the museum evolved, the farm increasingly came to be thought of as a historic site. In the late 1980s the museum restored the farm's 1890 Farm House, a pivotal part of Frederick Billings's progressive farm. As the concept for Marsh-Billings National Historical Park emerged, the historical relationship of the farm to the rest of the estate became increasingly apparent. With the creation of the park in 1992, the land and buildings occupied by the Billings Farm & Museum—which remain in Laurance S. Rockefeller's ownership—were designated the "protection zone" of the park. The Billings Farm & Museum remains an independent project of the Woodstock Foundation; its role will continue to evolve as an operating partner of the national historical park.

Late in the summer of 1991, Mary and Laurance Rockefeller and Park Service Director James Ridenour—joined by Senator James Jeffords and representatives of the other members of Vermont's congressional delegation—presented the concept for a national historical park to the Woodstock community in a public forum. Mary F. Rockefeller opened the meeting, and explained that she and Laurance had "thoughtfully and prayerfully considered what is the best long-term future of our home here, which is so dear to both of us."

Laurance S. Rockefeller expressed his vision of a park that would operate so as to enhance Woodstock's resources.²² The legislation for the creation of the park rapidly worked its way through both houses of the Congress, and was signed into law by President Bush on August 26, 1992. On the last day of 1992, Mary and Laurance Rockefeller deeded the property to the United States, and on January 11, 1993, they handed over the deeds to Secretary of the Interior Manuel J. Lujan in a ceremony in his Washington office.

The creation of Marsh-Billings National Historical Park fulfills an essential part of Laurance S. Rockefeller's vision for Woodstock. The park, in combination with his other Woodstock interests, will enhance and help to ensure Woodstock's integrity for decades to come, reflecting Laurance S. Rockefeller's ideals for the role of conservation in American society.



ENDNOTES

1. Public Law 102-350, August 26, 1992.
2. William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), especially chapter 8, "That Wilderness Should Turn a Mart."
3. Harold Fisher Wilson, *The Hill Country of Northern New England: Its Social and Economic History, 1790-1930* (New York: AMS Press, 1936) was long the standard source on rural decline in northern New England. Hal S. Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), and H. Nicholas Muller, III, "From Ferment to Fatigue? 1870-1900: A New Look at the Neglected Winter of Vermont," Center for Research on Vermont, *Occasional Paper No. 7* (Burlington, VT, 1984), have revised Wilson's work from the perspective of the New Social History. Harold A. Meeks, *Time and Change in Vermont: A Human Geography* (Chester, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 1986) provides a good historical geography and agricultural-economic history.
4. Lewis Mumford, *The Brown Decades: a Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1931), 78, called *Man and Nature*, "the fountainhead of the conservation movement," as quoted in David Lowenthal's introductory essay to the 1965 John Harvard Library edition of Marsh's *Man and Nature* (Cambridge, MA), ix.
5. Marsh's correspondence with Spencer Baird is quoted in David Lowenthal, *George Perkins Marsh: Versatile Vermonter* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 248.
6. David Lowenthal, Introduction to *Man and Nature, Or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* (Harvard edition, Cambridge, MA, 1965), xxii.
7. George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature, Or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* (Harvard edition, Cambridge, MA, 1965), 43.
8. An Address Delivered before the Agricultural Society of Rutland County, September 30, 1847 (Rutland, 1848). *Report on the Artificial Propagation of Fish, Made under the Authority of the Legislature of Vermont* (Burlington, 1857).
9. The Marsh house in Burlington stood on the site of the current Abernethy Block.
10. George Perkins Marsh, *The Camel; His Organization, Habits and Uses, Considered with Reference to His Introduction to the United States* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1856).
11. George Perkins Marsh, *Irrigation: Its Evils, the Remedies, and the Compensations* (43 Cong. 1 sess., U.S. Sen. Doc. 55, 1874).
12. Robin W. Winks, *Frederick Billings: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 275.
13. *Ibid.*, 300.
14. Journal of the Vermont House of Representatives of the State of Vermont, Biennial Session, 1884 (Montpelier, 1885), discussed in Winks, *Frederick Billings*, 295-297.
15. Winks, 298.
16. H.R. 3625, To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Laurance S. Rockefeller (November 8, 1989), 5. Remarks by the President and Laurance S. Rockefeller at the presentation (September 27, 1991).
17. H.R. 3625, 1-5.
18. Interviews with the author and others (Summer 1993).

19. Thomas M. Debevoise, Outline of LSR's Involvement In Woodstock Since the 1950s, (n.p., 1992) 1, 3. Peter S. Jennison, *The History of Woodstock, Vermont, 1890-1983* (Woodstock: Countryman Press, 1985), 32-33.
20. Debevoise, 2.
21. Laurance S. Rockefeller's objectives for the Woodstock Foundation, Inc., are quoted in Peter S. Jennison, *History of Woodstock*, 275-276.
22. Public Forum Proposal Summary and Remarks by Mary F. Rockefeller, Laurance S. Rockefeller, and David A. Donath (n.p., August 12, 1991).

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THE AMERICAN
CONSERVATION MOVEMENT
AND THE WOODSTOCK SITE



DAVID LOWENTHAL

The history of conservation in America is inseparable from the history of resource use and misuse. But for the degradation that became evident to late-18th and early-19th-century observers, no reform efforts would have been launched; there would be no conservation story.

Both stories, destruction and restoration, need to be told together at this park for at least three reasons. First, it is hardly possible to appreciate why conservation reforms took the form and gained the support they did without an historical and ecological grasp of the risks perceived and the evils combatted. Second, it is essential that visitors realize that the story is by no means over—conservation is a continuing struggle against incessant erosive and other forces in nature and in human nature. Third, the story of American conservation becomes much more dramatic and effective seen as a complex and continuing conflict of values than as a simple tale of triumph. It is a tale that needs to include villains as well as heroes.

To tell such a story demands innovative and interactive interpretation, with site demonstrations, models, and panoramic displays illustrating manifold aspects of

resource loss and recovery. It will be vital to demonstrate on the ground and with virtual-reality techniques the specific human impacts noted by Marsh and other early observers, notably deforestation, erosive runoff, torrential destruction, and silting, together with modes of countering and correcting these.

To explain why such changes have taken place, the park should supplement terrain-focused displays with pictorial narratives of the stories of environmental ideas generated and inspired at this site. Certain themes stand out for Marsh's part of the story.

Overcoming ignorance: How did 19th-century observers collect and collate data to show that environmental impacts were widespread and mounting? How did they persuade others, less schooled, less traveled, less able to draw comparisons or contemplate long-range futures, to adopt their conserving views? Marsh had small faith in the untutored peasantries or indigenous peoples often seen today as fonts of ecological wisdom.

Overcoming greed: How were issues of private ownership of land and resources addressed? Marsh saw aggrandizement that harmed the earth as a moral matter to be rectified by example and education. He also recognized, as some today are prone to forget, that environmental degradation is rooted in unintended, as well as in deliberate, alterations of the environment.

Mounting concerted action: Why did early reformers feel government leadership and control essential to restrain entrepreneurs and landowners? How far might their views be valid today? What is the state's appropriate role? Is it a good thing, for example, that this Park will be under national stewardship rather than privately owned?

Environmental philosophy: What attitudes toward nature and culture fueled environmental reform? Was the technological optimism of Marsh's time a useful spur? Can it and ought it be recovered today?

Park interpretation should clearly distinguish Marsh's view that nature must be mastered and improved, which became Gifford Pinchot's pragmatic philosophy, from Thoreauvian adulation of wild nature, which underpinned John Muir's Western preservation efforts.

Material heritage as collective memory: Marsh was a keen advocate of just the kind of venture that engages us here. One of his early lectures (1847) urges the collection and display of agricultural and household implements, so that future generations would be able to realize what their forebears and precursors had to cope with and how they did it. The annals of common everyday endeavor were for him more consequential than any history of great deeds and great men. This park can suitably honor Marsh as a pioneer of folklife museums as well as of conservation.

Marsh's own role in the site-specific stories to be told is complicated by his early departure from and subsequent distaste for the Woodstock milieu. He left the management of the family property to his brother Charles, seldom revisited, and came to feel that life in Vermont, Woodstock even more than Burlington, was unbearably isolated and frigid; indeed, winter in Woodstock was one reason why he never returned home during his twenty-one years in Italy. Marsh had little to do with the specific improvements subsequently made by Billings.

Nonetheless, Marsh's Woodstock background is highly consequential for Marsh-Billings National Historical Park in at least three ways:

- ▶ his childhood upbringing and family concerns;
- ▶ his site-specific and regional observations on environmental degradation, and the elaboration of his ecological insights from New World to Old World locales; and

▶ his continuing interest in the artifacts and architecture of rural life everywhere, vivified by Vermont comparisons.

All three themes can be graphically and effectively illustrated in this park.

FREDERICK BILLINGS



ROBIN W. WINKS

Frederick Billings is the linchpin between George Perkins Marsh and Laurance S. Rockefeller. But for him there would be no Marsh-Billings mansion today, no Farm Museum, no National Historical Park. One could not have done without the other: Marsh, the father of ecology, the author of *Man and Nature*; Billings, the practical man of business who honored Marsh, studied his work, and purchased and protected his home while furthering a shared interest in scientific agriculture; Rockefeller, himself a steward of the nation's natural heritage, the person with the insight and imagination to see the special role Vermont generally, and Woodstock specifically, had played in that American heritage, and who made possible this new unit of the National Park System. Billings was the bridge.

Born in nearby Royalton, Vermont, in 1823, Frederick Billings grew to maturity in Woodstock, to which he and his family moved in 1835. At school, young Frederick and Charles Marsh were friends, and it

would be through Charles that Billings would purchase the home and land on which the mansion now stands, 34 years and a continent of adventures later. Frederick Billings would die in the home, in the upstairs bedroom, in 1890, at age 67.

In 1864, when George Perkins Marsh published *Man and Nature*, with its cogent sub-title *Physical Geography as Modified By Human Action*, Frederick Billings was in Woodstock, awaiting his second child, a daughter, Laura. He read Marsh's work and remarked upon it. Marsh would observe that it was "desirable that some large and easily accessible region of American soil should remain as far as possible in its primitive condition, one of the earliest suggestions that there should be a system of national reserves, or parks, to be at once a museum for the instruction of students, a garden for the recreation of the lovers of nature, and an asylum where indigenous trees . . . [and] beasts may dwell and perpetuate their kind." Billings had been, especially during his years of residence in California, an early conservationist, at a time when neither he nor anyone else had expressed a clear philosophy or methodology for conservation. A reading of Marsh, and five years later residence in Charles Marsh's former home, gave coherence to his already strongly held view that stewardship—one form of philanthropy—was a necessary duty for those who loved their land and who had the means to express that love through maintaining a sense of continuity with the past. Billings's copy of George Perkins Marsh's book remains today in his library.

Early in 1849 Frederick Billings had left Vermont for California, accompanying his sister Laura (after whom he named his second daughter, and whose name Laurance S. Rockefeller carries) and his brother-in-law on the second vessel to reach San Francisco harbor at the onset of the gold rush. Laura died within the month;

Frederick—joined by a brother for a time—remained for a decade, during which he became one of the shapers of the nation's most westerly state.

Frederick Billings made his first fortune in California, not from gold but from the law, which he had studied in Vermont, in Burlington, Montpelier, and Woodstock. It was he who drew together the legal firm of Halleck, Peachy, and Billings, or HPB as it was known. HPB in time became one of the two or three most successful law firms in the state, specializing in land litigation; it owned the largest and best-built office building west of St. Louis, the great Montgomery Block that would survive even the San Francisco earthquake; and the partners in the firm, Billings foremost among them, would through their research help to establish much of California's early land law. The senior partner, Henry Wager Halleck, had been secretary of state and was an authority on Spanish land records; the other partner, Archibald Cary Peachy, had been appointed a professor of law at William and Mary College in Virginia—though he had never taken up the post—and would seek a political career in California. It was Billings who minded the store, who carried out the most assiduous legal research undertaken up until that time in American legal history, and it was Billings who realized the larger fortune.

This fortune provided the bridge for Frederick Billings's entry into railroads. After leaving California permanently in 1865, following his marriage to Julia Parnly of New York City, he invested in several railway enterprises. Then, in the same year that he purchased the Charles Marsh home together with its 270 acres, he also bought his first share in the Northern Pacific Railroad. Ten years later he was its president.

Frederick Billings no doubt is best known for his work with the Northern Pacific. For years he was chairman of the railroad's Land Department, helping to

further the strategy by which the company, brought to the verge of bankruptcy by overexpansion, poor management, and the depression of 1873, was revitalized. It was he who, in the face of bankruptcy proceedings, worked out a plan for the reorganization of the company so that it would be restored to solvency. It was under his presidency that the railroad began its westward march once again, across Dakota and Montana (helping create a city in his name along the Yellowstone River), eventually to the western sea. To be sure, in 1881, he would lose the railroad to Henry Villard, creator of the famous "blind pool," in what was perhaps the first hostile takeover in American business history. But he had been the bridge between the overexpanded Jay Cooke and the ambitious Villard, who soon would bring the line once again toward bankruptcy; and as the bridge who kept the railroad afloat, the line being built, and public confidence high, it was Billings who warranted much of the credit when the last spike was ceremonially driven in 1883.

During all this time Frederick Billings had given thought to Vermont and its future. He once ran, unsuccessfully, for governor. He was a member of Vermont's first Forestry Commission and, in 1884, wrote most of its report, recommending a range of steps to rectify the desperate condition of Vermont forest cover, drawing heavily on the observations made by George Perkins Marsh in *Man and Nature*: improved education, scientific agriculture, and reforestation among the steps. He set out to make his farm along the Ottauquechee into a model, particularly in dairying. He acted as a constant benefactor to Woodstock, restoring and expanding churches, providing bridges, scholarships, libraries. Concerned that George Perkins Marsh's collection of books would be broken up and lost, he purchased the entire library and presented it to his alma mater, the University of Vermont, together

with a handsome new Richardson Romanesque building to hold it. All his life Billings effectively tithed himself, beginning in his teens, with substantial donations to a variety of needs in California, New York, and Vermont.

Through this time Billings showed a clearly expressed interest in what today we call conservation, though the term was scarcely used during his lifetime. He urged on the Mayor of San Francisco the creation of what became the Golden Gate Park. He was one of the earliest advocates of preservation of the Yosemite Valley, and when President Lincoln signed the bill creating Yosemite National Park in 1864, he hoped to be appointed to the park's commission, a hope forestalled by his marriage and decision to return to the East Coast. He spoke of the need to preserve the natural scenery of the Marin peninsula, of the Calaveras Big Grove—which would become California's first state park—and of the Puget Sound region, especially Mt. Tahoma, as Mt. Rainier was then called. He was among those who advocated the creation of Yellowstone National Park and early saw the value of that vast land in fulfilling Marsh's thought about protecting areas in their primitive conditions so far as possible.

Frederick Billings's story is a Vermont story. Marsh-Billings National Historical Park must tell the story of Vermont, as it will tell the story of the three stewards who have made the park possible. Vermonters have always thought of themselves as distinct from all other New Englanders, and they are surely right. Site-specific geography shapes character. Billings believed that he represented the values of Vermont: hard work, thrift, family, preparing for the future, duty, stewardship. He always referred to himself, even during the years he was winning his fortune in California, as Frederick Billings of Woodstock. However long he was away, he felt Vermont was deeply part of himself, and

when he returned he often remarked that no one, in business or in politics, should do anything to disgrace the good name of the state.

The significance of this site, with its rich particularity, is that it attests to the continuity of values. Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller form a continuum: in philanthropy, in concern for the environment, in readiness to take action to achieve ends that help create and shape an environmental ethic. Marsh anticipated the national park idea; Billings advocated specific reserves: Yosemite, Yellowstone, and others; the Rockefellers have created a number of the nation's great national parks, from Acadia to Grand Teton to the Virgin Islands. The sense of continuity, forward and backward in time, that Frederick Billings's life provides is central to the story that should be told here. It was in his lifetime that most of what we see within the park was shaped.

Stewardship has always meant sensitivity to site and attention to the impact of one's own actions. St. Thomas Aquinas, who first saw stewards as both inheritors and givers to others, made this clear. So too did the early English writers on stewardship, including those like James Stephen who were among the first to use the term as we use it today. There must be extreme sensitivity to the site, to the concerns of the community of Woodstock. Stewardship will, in all future planning, require great attention to the appropriate sensitivities that Billings would have wished to observe.

LAURANCE SPELMAN ROCKEFELLER



RUSSELL E. TRAIN

It is a privilege to join with you in exploring the history and evolution of conservation stewardship in America as illustrated by the lives of George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Billings, and Laurance S. Rockefeller, and particularly as these are manifested here through Marsh-Billings National Historical Park.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote: "There is properly no history; only biography." That may be too broad a generalization, but I can say with absolute certainty that no single person's life has more profoundly influenced the course of conservation in America—both in terms of positive action and in terms of the conceptual basis for that action—than that of Laurance S. Rockefeller. His is truly an extraordinary conservation record—and one that continues to be written.

That the lives of Marsh, Billings, and Rockefeller and their common concern for conservation should have come together here at Woodstock—all linked by Billings's granddaughter, Mary French Rockefeller—is an extraordinary circumstance, in fact a circumstance so extraordinary that one is tempted to conclude that something more than mere happenstance has been at work!

Laurance's conservation achievements are part of a Rockefeller family commitment which spans four generations, starting with John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and continuing strongly today with Laurance's son, Larry. It is a family commitment which has found expression in the protection of unique portions of America's natural heritage, in the building of citizen conservation organizations, in the development of ideas and the building of a conservation ethic, in environmentally sensitive investment, in dedicated public service, in the promotion of conservation action by government at all levels, and in private philanthropy, which I firmly believe is without parallel in history.

Nor has the family commitment been expressed by only one member of each generation. Laurance's brother Nelson was strongly committed to environmental protection and was in a special position to further that goal—and did—as Governor of New York and, of course, as Vice President of the United States, which I knew from firsthand experience. And among Larry's generation, many of the younger members of the family are deeply concerned environmentalists.

Laurance's father, John D. Rockefeller, was probably the single greatest benefactor in the history of our national parks. He gave the nation such treasures as Grand Teton, Great Smoky Mountains, and Acadia National Parks. He also was instrumental in the efforts to save the redwoods in California and the last cypress stands in Florida. His restorations in Williamsburg and along the Hudson are milestones of conservation history.

Laurance's grandfather, John D., Sr., played a central role in establishing the Palisades Interstate Park. His father continued to help enlarge the park not only along the Hudson opposite New York City but also into the Hudson Highlands. Laurance himself served as a member and President of the Palisades Interstate Park

Commission for 40 years and continued his family's support for acquisition and enlargement of the park.

Laurance learned much of his love of the outdoors during trips out West with his father. It was natural, therefore, that following service in World War II he helped complete his father's vision for the Grand Teton National Park and has remained a principal force for conservation in the Jackson Hole area of Wyoming ever since. Following in that same great tradition, Laurance's land acquisitions and gifts on the island of St. John made possible the Virgin Islands National Park.

Laurance S. Rockefeller's record of public service in the cause of conservation has been, until recently, matched only by the lack of public recognition of that service. Fortunately, in 1990, Congress redressed that situation—at least in some measure—by awarding him a special gold medal in recognition of his leadership on behalf of natural resource conservation and historic preservation. The medal was presented by President Bush at a White House ceremony. Such an award by Congress is rare indeed.

Laurance S. Rockefeller's contributions to conservation go far beyond gifts of land. He has been a major influence in building upon the conservation tradition of the past to forge the environmental progress of the present. Above all, he has injected the concept of use and consideration of humanity into the environmental equation. The environmental movement had been largely concerned with preservation and wilderness concepts. Another, separate strain of social action was concerned with outdoor recreation, health, and physical fitness. Through his work in the New York State Park System and the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, of which he was appointed Chairman by President Eisenhower, Laurance urged balance between use and preservation. Later as Chairman of the 1965 White House Conference on Natural Beauty, appointed by

President Johnson, he led an important transitional event which brought conservationists to consider urban issues, landscape and countryside, and siting of power lines and highways. In January 1969, President Johnson awarded him the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in recognition of this work.

Through his resort development activities, Laurance was instrumental in bringing conservation principles and environmental planning to real estate development. This was a relatively new concept in the 1950s and 1960s when he applied it to developments in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii.

Continuing and building upon his central concern for stewardship of the land, Laurance established and chaired the Task Force on Land Use and Urban Growth which published in 1973 its highly influential report entitled *The Use of Land: A Citizen's Policy Guide to Urban Growth*.

Laurance helped Fairfield Osborn found The Conservation Foundation in 1946 and was Vice Chairman of its board when I became the foundation's president in 1965. I know that Fair was an inspiration to Laurance as he was to me, providing one of our most valued associations. The Conservation Foundation, now merged with the World Wildlife Fund, had long been in the forefront of ecological thinking. It was no mere coincidence, therefore, that in 1965, following closely on the work of Laurance's Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission and the White House Conference on Natural Beauty which he chaired, The Conservation Foundation made its central focus the bringing of ecological principles and environmental values into development decision-making. This work in turn became closely involved with the Congressional development of the National Environmental Policy Act and its revolutionary requirement for environmental impact

statements with respect to all major Federal actions affecting the environment.

Thus, Laurance's conviction that conservation must consider human use and benefit has become central to our environmental thinking today. Indeed, the new global environmental imperative of "sustainable development" is really little more than a logical extension of this concept.

Finally, if I may be permitted one further thought, Laurance S. Rockefeller has been friend and advisor to Presidents, going back to Eisenhower, irrespective of party. He has always worked on a bipartisan basis. That example, carried out in one of the most important and sometimes contentious areas of public policy, is one that this nation needs to look to and to learn from.

The contributions of Laurance S. Rockefeller to conservation—both here and abroad—have been truly extraordinary and enormously influential. I added "abroad" because while most of our focus here has been on the evolution of conservation in the United States, Laurance early understood the global nature of the conservation challenge. Thirty years ago he was helping build resource management training institutions in Africa. His contributions have been made quietly, with modesty, with a wonderful sense of humor—often self-deprecating—with great generosity, with determination, and with a clear and compelling vision. If we are indeed in a time of spiritual fragility, as Roger Kennedy suggests, that vision can help provide a strengthened sense of values and direction for our society.

CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD CONSERVATION

DAVID LOWENTHAL

Conservationists veer from cornucopian optimism to cataclysmic pessimism. The former stress human efforts shaping a fruitful earth, the latter the evils of interfering with nature. I show elsewhere* how extremist views dominate environmental discourse today. To understand this, Marsh's *Man and Nature* poses insights that should be highlighted in Marsh-Billings National Historical Park.

HUMAN IMPACT TRADITIONALLY VIEWED AS BENEFICIAL

Most environmental observers of the 17th and 18th centuries were entrepreneurial optimists, developers and technicians who dammed rivers, drained swamps, cleared forests, dug harbors, domesticated and transplanted plants and animals, and compiled dossiers on their terrestrial effects. Global exploration prompted comparisons of lands long cultivated with new worlds recently or lightly settled. New instruments quantified technology's accelerated impacts.

These impacts were overwhelmingly counted as improvements that promoted general welfare and civil order. The more profoundly nature was manipulated, the more fertile and productive it became. Clearly, God had left nature raw and incomplete for mankind to perfect. Subduing and transforming nature became a hallmark of civilizing progress.

The classic statement was the Comte de Buffon's "The entire face of the earth today bears the stamp of the power of man," making the rude environment he had inherited "perfect and magnificent." Land won from moors, fens, and forests, reclaimed from marshes and seas, embellished and cared for, demonstrated both man's

unique place in nature and his ability to improve it. "Wild nature is hideous and dying," wrote Buffon typifying 18th-century improvers; men alone made it "agreeable and living."

American pioneers were quintessential enactors of Buffon's scenario. To them, untouched nature was repugnant, the forests "howling" and "dismal," the prairie a "trackless waste" to be "transformed into fruitful farms and flourishing cities," to cite blurbs of the time. Trees must become lumber, prairies must become farms. The pioneers' mission was "to cause the wilderness to bloom and fructify"; they invoked Genesis 1:28 to "subjugate" the "enemy"—the wilderness. Pioneers "broke the long chain of savage life" and replaced "primitive barbarism" with "civilization, liberty and law" to ensure a glorious American destiny. A self-imposed duty to subdue the land made the settler proud to say "I vanquished this wilderness and made the chaos pregnant with order and civilization." Even admirers of nature's splendor lauded the civilizing impact; Whitman's "Song of the Redwood Tree" bade farewell to the arboreal giant who "must abdicate his kingship so that man can build a grander future."

No pioneer was more confident than Ira Allen, a rambunctious Green Mountain Boy from the Champlain side who stood for all that Marsh's genteel grandfather Joseph opposed. Anyone clearing Vermont land, boasted Allen, could "see the effect of his own powers. . . . Embellish[ing] the most rude spot, the stagnant air vanishes with the woods, the raw vegetation feels the purifying influence of the sun; he drains the swamp, putrid exhalations flit off on lazy wing, and fevers and agues accompany them."

* David Lowenthal, "Anxiety and Acrimony in Environmental Debate," *National Geographic Research & Exploration* 7 (1991), 266-75.

Adverse side effects such as erosion and flooding were thought easily put right; such degradation seemed limited and repairable even in Europe. When foresters and engineers inveighed against the ignorance of Swiss herders or the greed of French peasants, they expected enlightened regimes to enforce reforms. In America, similar managerial optimism persisted among most conservationists well into the 1950s.

Yet in the New World the effects of exploitation most seriously clashed with pioneer optimism. Land once thought inexhaustible suffered terrible damage in just a few decades. The engrossment of soils cultivated only lightly if ever before; wholesale deforestation for fuel and timber, fencing, and pasturage; wild fauna supplanted by intensively grazing livestock; the spread of Old World crops without the saving grace of regular manuring—all this patently depleted native flora and fauna, induced extremes of flooding and compaction, eroding and exhausting lands less fertile anyway than they initially seemed. Plenty had bred waste; apparent abundance led to prodigal overuse. Men like Benjamin Franklin, William Bartram, and Benjamin Rush saw America's legacy diminished by their forebears' profligate husbandry.

MIXED LESSONS OF MAN AND NATURE

By the 1840s in Vermont, Marsh saw "signs of artificial improvement" everywhere commingling with "tokens of improvident waste." A single generation had ravaged green New England: the conversion of "smiling meadows into broad wastes of shingle and gravel and pebbles, deserts in summer, and seas in autumn and spring [was] too striking to have escaped the attention of any observing person." Like Marsh, "every middle-aged man who revisits his birthplace after a few years of absence, looks upon another landscape."

These observations led to Marsh's classic warnings. Eyewitness accounts of deforestation and grazing impacts on river regimes buttressed his own Vermont experience. Ancient denudation in Mediterranean landscapes that Marsh traversed in the 1850s offered ominous analogues. His magisterial *Man and Nature* drew on observations from both hemispheres along with historical sources and correspondence with French hydrologists, Swiss foresters, and Italian engineers.

Man and Nature revolutionized environmental thought. It had been conventional wisdom that the earth made man; Marsh showed that man made the earth. Confuting the cornucopian mystique, he showed that largely unintended human impacts were often harmful and sometimes irreversible. *Man and Nature* became widely influential. Vivified by local examples, it adduced the causes from universal principles of deforestation, river regime changes, avalanches, desertification, and wildlife extirpation from universal principles. It explained landscape change through social and technological forces familiar to every reader. And its reformist perspective lent hope: Neither innate predisposition nor divine edict, in Marsh's view, compelled men to lay the earth waste; they did so only out of corrigible greed or ignorance. Those who saw the causal connections might mend their ways to restore the balance between forest and arable, nature and culture, mankind and other species.

Marsh stressed that timely understanding could reverse the ill effects of impact. But accelerating degradation made reform needs imminent. Return a quarter of the land to forest cover, curtail the slaughter of wildlife, inculcate environmental awareness, monitor future change, and most might yet be well.

Such exhortations seemed both compelling and practicable. Marsh saw men not as subject to nature but as self-chosen agents in reshaping the globe. Only

taming and improving the earth made savagery yield to civilization, slavery to freedom, endless toil to leisured reason. But progress was neither ordained nor certain; it required ceaseless stewardship.

Marsh was an Enlightenment activist. Men must not passively submit to nature but continually contend with it. "The first command addressed to man by his Creator . . . not only charged him to subdue the earth, but . . . predicted and prescribed the subjugation of the entire organic and inorganic world to human control and human use," begins Marsh's book on *The Camel* (1860). But the power to transform embodied both a promise of well-being and a threat of disaster.

A fruitful and balanced globe had waited for man "to enter into possession." But men might either immeasurably improve or irreparably damage that legacy. Left to itself, the natural fabric usually regained equilibrium; but "man is everywhere a disturbing agent. Wherever he plants his foot, the harmonies of nature are turned to discords. . . . The face of the earth is either laid bare or covered with a new and reluctant growth." As nature was "wholly impotent" to resist man's impact, deliberate alterations could have devastating side effects.

But the risk of damage did not mean that men should halt environmental tampering. On the contrary, they must continue to defy natural forces. Science had "already virtually doubled the span of human life by multiplying our powers and abridging" the time needed to gain a livelihood. Man must continue to subjugate nature, for "wherever he fails to make himself her master, he can but be her slave." In the last days of his life, Marsh commended the forests of Vallombrosa as an artificial assemblage far superior to natural growth.

Marsh felt a deep affinity with wild landscapes. But like many of his time, he admired nature's harmonies while deploring its amorality. "Nature is all plasticity

and indifference," William James later put it, "To such a harlot we owe no allegiance; with her . . . we can establish no moral communion." John Stuart Mill argued that "conformity to nature has no connection whatever with what is right and wrong"; others thought nature more wrong than right. T.H. Huxley and Herbert Spencer reprehended nature as ruthless, cruel, savage, wasteful, selfish; men must subdue it not only to improve their lot but because wilderness was evil and vile.

Social Darwinism reinforced the view that nature was morally reprehensible. Men must not follow nature but overcome "natural" instincts, avoid behaving like beasts; "man is the animal for whom it is natural to be artificial." Nature was red in tooth and claw, human artifice benign and harmonious.

WHAT MADE MARSH'S VIEWS ACCEPTABLE

Conservation debate today displays a rancor absent in Marsh's time. Marsh castigated earth's despoilers for heedless greed as roundly as Rachel Carson did a century later. But unlike in Carson's *Silent Spring*, in *Man and Nature*, he unleashed no bitter diatribes. No entrepreneur or industrialist, no planter or hunter disputed Marsh's accusations, defended the gutting of forests or the slaughter of wildlife as economic, or termed his ecological fears hysterical.

Why were there no rebuttals? First, Marsh's warnings were couched in a climate of environmental improvement and economic progress; he disputed not the desirability of conquering nature but the bungling way it was done. Second, no one took personal offense: despite attacks on "soulless joint-stock companies," Marsh inveighed against man in general rather than specific individuals. Third, his corrective measures—reforestation, planting cover on sand dunes, monitoring environmental impacts—seemed to entail no economic sacrifices and require no draconian remedies.

Self-interest underwrote Marsh's prescriptions. Fourth, no media broadcast his warnings to a fearful public or sought reactions from likely malefactors. Fifth, most in Marsh's day accepted his call for stewardship, though few used resources in that spirit. His ecological admonitions were revolutionary; yet their underlying philosophy inspired broad agreement.

CONSERVATION AS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Marsh had emphasized that victory over nature required vigilant care for the global fabric. But few admirers of *Man and Nature* heeded its cautionary precepts. Conservation concerns now divided into mutually exclusive inspirational and economic components. The minority concerned with aesthetic quality focused like John Muir on preserving wilderness areas that impeded few resource demands—though when they did clash, as at Hetch Hetchy, antagonists did not spare their vitriol.

The majority, eager to maximize resources, opted like Pinchot for public management. Stressing productivity, these conservationists ignored unforeseen side effects. They continued to see environmental impact as mainly benign; centralized control should suffice to constrain selfish or foolish entrepreneurs. But they shared these entrepreneurs' technocratic optimism. Though the environment was ever more altered, most changes still seemed improvements, and few doubted that technology would soon rectify any damage.

Noting America's rapidly disappearing woodlands, the American Nurseryman's Association in 1877 enlisted Marsh's aid in studying European forestry systems to lobby for government aid; with such help, they might even "change the great American Desert into a land of trees and water courses, thus providing for its occupation by a teeming population." Marsh rejected this as folly.

Also unlike Marsh, earth scientists from Charles Lyell on preached that nature's forces vastly exceeded man's, that men could not seriously harm nature. No matter what his machines, man would remain a minor geological force; the worst human mishaps meant only small and temporary setbacks in progressive mastery of a cornucopian earth.

Myriad observations detailed mounting damage. But these untoward effects, seldom widely publicized, were ignored by policy makers. Evidence of impact went unremarked because its scattered and abstruse sources were accessible only to specialists. Meanwhile progressivist thinkers went on believing that science could safely enlarge its power over nature, while environmental determinists left ultimate power safely sheltered in nature's might.

How far we have come from such confidence can be gauged from Sigmund Freud's 1929 accolade to the conquest of nature:

"We recognize that a country has attained a high state of civilization when we find . . . everything in it that can be helpful in exploiting the earth for man's benefit and in protecting him against nature. . . . In such a country the course of rivers is regulated. . . . The soil is industriously cultivated . . . the mineral wealth is brought up assiduously from the depths . . . wild and dangerous animals have been exterminated." **

Many still share Freud's faith in a benign technology. But such blithe neglect of its negative impacts is inconceivable today.

** Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), 3rd ed. (London, 1946), 53-54.

DUST BOWL DOUBTS AND ECOLOGICAL DIALECTICS

Even Dust Bowl calamities left resource managers little perturbed by entrepreneurial error. The **past** was blamed for today's disasters; Americans held fast to the frontiersman's faith that resources, however maltreated, would recover. Producers and conservers alike assumed heedless and wasteful habits were over and done with. Corrective action—the soil conservation reforms and shelter belts of the 1930s and 1940s—seemed to justify them. Global reformers like Fairfield Osborn and William Vogt were termed heretical for their “lamentable lack of faith in man's ability to control his future with new technology.” Marsh's warnings were thought to apply only to **past** impacts.

Yet gloomier perspectives did gain ground in the 1930s. To pessimists, Frederic Clements' equilibrium model of ecology explained a series of environmental disasters. It taught that nature was most fruitful where it was altered least. Flora and fauna undisturbed gradually peaked in diversity and stability. But massive monoculture and extractive uses thwarted or abridged this beneficent climax. Technology and population growth did not improve nature but destroyed it, exhausting nonrenewable resources, endangering renewable ones.

But these evils emanated only from so-called advanced cultures. Exempt from blame were hunters and gatherers and early farmers, respecters of nature's balance. Their environmental wisdom might help moderns to restore “natural” milieus fit to live in and hand down. Ecological instincts ennobled the savage.

By the 1950s this ecological mystique became a conservation precept, almost a religious tenet. Aldo Leopold's “Land Ethic”—“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the

biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”—bade fair to become gospel.

The virtues of stability and passive noninterference mirrored reformers' views about human nature, too. They invested nature with traits they felt should govern mankind: balance, integrity, harmony, stasis, diversity. The ecological utopia became a moral order, benign, caring, holistic. To “replace the chaos of a world torn by human greed and voraciousness with a well-ordered moral universe,” we were adjured to limit population, technology, and consumption.

Ecology itself had by then disowned much of the Clementian paradigm. It was nonecologists who now extolled equilibrium states, maximum diversity, stability, and noninterference. Yet these concepts continued to dominate biology textbooks; even today's environmental-impact literature deploys outdated succession-to-climax images. Nature is the normative good, technology the evil destroyer. This turns on its head Marsh's ecological perspective, viewing the conquest of nature as dangerous but essential.

In sum, the concept of nature as a fabric to be perfected by human ingenuity gave way to the view that technology debased nature and curtailed its benefits. Environmental interference was anathematized, wilderness revered. In the state of nature envisioned by Marsh and his technocratic successors, rational managers would cultivate an ever more artificial environment. In the state of nature sought by later reformers, human impact should dwindle to regain environmental stability. By the end of the Second World War, “ecology” was a token of right thinking even in official environmental agencies, including the National Park Service.

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Prior to his appointment as regional director in 1994, Barbee was the superintendent at Yellowstone National Park. He joined the Park Service as a seasonal ranger in 1962 at Rocky Mountain National Park. He has since held superintendencies at Redwood National Park, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, and Cape Hatteras National Seashore. He received an undergraduate degree in wildlife management from Colorado State University.

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Prior to becoming a park management consultant, Byrne was the federal manager of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, where he directed protection of the Trail corridor. Previously, he was superintendent of George Washington Memorial Parkway and assistant superintendent of Yosemite National Park. Byrne has an undergraduate degree in civil engineering and a

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Donath has been director of the Billings Farm & Museum since 1985. Prior to coming to Woodstock, he directed the Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He is involved in several historical organizations, including the American Association for State and Local History, the Vermont Historical Society, the Forest History Society, and the Woodstock Foundation. He is also active in the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums and the Woodstock Historical Society. Donath has an undergraduate degree in education, and a master's degree in history from the University of Vermont, and has completed coursework toward a doctorate in American history at the University of Wisconsin.

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Dower directs the Countryside Commission in its mission to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the English Countryside and promote public enjoyment of it. Trained as a town planner, he was formerly director of the Peak National Park, England, and the Dartington Institute in Devon, England. He is currently vice president for the European Council for the Village and Small Town (ECOVAST) and was instrumental in the development of the US/UK Countryside Stewardship Exchange.

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Recently retired, Evison has served in a wide range of leadership positions during his 42-year career with the National Park Service, including regional director of Alaska, assistant director of operations in the Washington office, superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and director of the Albright Training Center. He received an undergraduate degree in wildlife management from Colorado State University and a graduate degree in environmental communication from the University of Wisconsin.

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Heckscher is a doctoral candidate in American civilization at George Washington University, specializing in the history of the American conservation movement and American attitudes toward nature. In addition to providing consultation to the National Park Service on Marsh-Billings National Historical Park, she is responsible for research and development of the American Memory Conservation Collection, reviewing all materials in the Library of Congress relevant to the evolution of the early conservation movement. She received a bachelor's degree in English and comparative literature from Harvard University and a graduate degree in literature as a U.S. Marshall Scholar at Oxford University.

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A long-time national leader in the field of conservation, Train has been chairman of the World Wildlife Fund since 1985, and has also served as the organization's president (1978-1985) and founding trustee (1961). President of the Conservation Foundation (1965-1969), he was then appointed under secretary for the Department of the Interior (1969-1970), chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality (1970-1973), and administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency (1973-1977). Train is the recipient of numerous awards for his public service in conservation, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom; the Albert Schweitzer Medal of the Animal Welfare Institute; Aldo Leopold Medal of the Wildlife Society; and Conservationist of the Year Award of the National Wildlife Federation (1974 and 1988).

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Prior to his appointment to the post of Secretary for Resources by Governor Pete Wilson in 1990, Wheeler served in several leadership roles within the field of conservation, including vice president, World Wildlife Fund and Conservation Foundation; executive director, Sierra Club; founder and president, American Farmland Trust; executive vice president, National Trust for Historic Preservation; deputy assistant, Secretary of the Interior; legislative counsel and legislative attorney for the Department of the Interior. He received his undergraduate degree from Hamilton College, and *juris doctor* from Duke University School of Law.

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Author of numerous books, including *Frederick Billings: A Life*, Winks holds an undergraduate degree and a master's degree in history from the University of Colorado, a master's in anthropology from the University of New Zealand, and a doctorate in history from Johns Hopkins University. His specialties include comparative British and American history and conservation history. He holds the Townsend Chair in the Department of History at Yale University. He received the Department of the Interior Conservationist of the Year Award in 1988. He has been a regular advisor to the National Park Service and chairman of the Secretary of the Interior's National Park Service Advisory Board.

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**SPECIAL THANKS TO
WORKSHOP GUESTS &
STAFF**

We gratefully acknowledge the participation and contributions of many individuals who generously shared their expertise, energy, and enthusiasm to make the workshop a success.

Emily Lind Baker, American Memory Project,
Library of Congress

James Bressor, Governor's Office, State of Vermont

Nash Castro, Woodstock Foundation

Howard Dean, Governor of Vermont

Henry Diamond, Woodstock Foundation

Carl Fleischhauer, American Memory Project,
Library of Congress

Charles H.W. Foster, Kennedy School of
Government, Harvard University

Darlyne S. Franzen, Billings Farm & Museum

Clayton W. Frye, Jr., Woodstock Foundation

Prosser Gifford, Scholarly Projects,
Library of Congress

Frances Kennedy, The Conservation Fund

Paul Lennett, Community Liaison,
Town of Woodstock

Randall Mayhew, Community Liaison,
Village of Woodstock

David O'Connor, Kennedy School of Government,
Harvard University

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Gilbert Fox); p.11, Levy; p.18, Heckscher; p.23,
Donath.

Design consultation provided by Heritage
Partners, Inc.

Designed by Victoria Bass, National Park Service

 Printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink

Planning, Design and Engineering
National Park Service - North Atlantic Region
15 State Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02109



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