



Sportsmen and the evolution of the conservation idea in Yellowstone : 1882-1894
by Sarah Ellen Broadbent

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History
Montana State University

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Abstract:

This thesis examines the historic role of sportsmen in preserving Yellowstone National Park's wildlife and in establishing protective legislation and effective management of park resources. Although Yellowstone had initially been established in 1872 to protect the region's geologic features, over the decades of the 1880s and 1890s, sportsmen helped expand the goals of preservation to include wildlife, watersheds, and forests. Using primary source documents such as Forest and Stream magazine and archival records of Yellowstone National Park, this study demonstrates that sportsmen had a wider vision of conservation than generally given credit by historians and had a critical impact on changing management policies in Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding national forests.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the historic role of sportsmen in preserving Yellowstone National Park's wildlife and in establishing protective legislation and effective management of park resources. Although Yellowstone had initially been established in 1872 to protect the region's geologic features, over the decades of the 1880s and 1890s, sportsmen helped expand the goals of preservation to include wildlife, watersheds, and forests. Using primary source documents such as *Forest and Stream* magazine and archival records of Yellowstone National Park, this study demonstrates that sportsmen had a wider vision of conservation than generally given credit by historians and had a critical impact on changing management policies in Yellowstone National Park and the surrounding national forests.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1991 the controversial issues of hunting and protecting wildlife in national parks came head to head on the borders of Yellowstone National Park. That year the State of Montana issued hunters permits to shoot bison as they migrated out of the park in search of food. The plight of the bison attracted national attention and animal rights groups rallied to stop the hunt. Wayne Pacelle, director of The Fund for Animals, lead the successful fight against hunting bison on the borders of Yellowstone. In the *Billings Gazette* he summarized his objectives, "We have turned public opinion against the Yellowstone hunt. There is a national disgust for what's going on. Now we must move against all hunting."¹ This story is reminiscent of one that happened approximately one hundred years ago, although at that time the group trying to save the animals was the hunters. After the park was formed in 1872, poaching of the few remaining bison in the nation was a problem in Yellowstone. Sportsmen took up the cause of saving the

¹ "Animal Group Plans Assault on Hunting," *Billings Gazette*, October 1, 1991.

bison and other big game animals in the park. Their activities resulted in passage of the Lacey Act of 1894, which curtailed poaching in Yellowstone and ensured the preservation of the bison.

These stories hint at the complex relationship between Yellowstone National Park and sportsmen. Although sportsmen have been interested in the park throughout its history, their role in its early development and management are not clearly understood. This paper examines the long-standing yet often overlooked relationship between Yellowstone and sportsmen for the years 1882 to 1894. Specifically, I will focus on how a particular group of sportsmen, members of the elite sporting group called the Boone and Crockett Club, affected early management in Yellowstone National Park. The Boone and Crockett Club took a keen interest in America's first national park. Club members including Theodore Roosevelt, George Bird Grinnell, and other luminaries in the Progressive conservation movement, visited the park, hunted and fished in the Yellowstone region, frequently wrote about it in the pages of a leading sporting journal, *Forest and Stream*, and lobbied for legislation to protect Yellowstone's treasures and expand its boundaries. Why were the people that formed this hunting club so dedicated to a federal reserve that prohibited hunting? What was the role of sportsmen in the early development of Yellowstone? What was the relationship between the sporting movement (clubs and

magazines) and the conservation of Yellowstone? What values were associated with Yellowstone during those early years? How was the National Park defined? What role did Boone and Crockett Club members play in the creation of the first forest reserve on Yellowstone's borders, and what does that tell us about the early history of the national forests? What was the relationship between the efforts to protect and expand Yellowstone during the 1880s and the Progressive conservation movement around 1900? These are the questions I will seek to answer.

Yellowstone was created as the first national park in 1872 by the Organic Act. This act was vague giving no clear definition of how the park was to be managed or explaining its purpose. For the first decade after the park was set aside, tourism was low and park issues remained relatively quiet. In 1882 things began to change with the arrival of the railroad near the park borders, and with that came increasing interest in tourism. In the years following the railroad's arrival the debate over the purpose of the national park intensified. This thesis looks at a period of development between 1882 and 1894. The first chapter examines an early legislative struggle between Boone and Crockett Club antecedents and the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company over a proposed concessions lease. During this struggle a small group of sportsmen began to articulate a conservation agenda for the park. Out of this

debate grew a movement by sportsmen for legislation that would strengthen park management and extend the boundaries. Throughout the 1880s antecedents of the Boone and Crockett Club battled with the powerful railroad lobby over this legislation. It was during these struggles that sportsmen began to articulate a conservation agenda for Yellowstone; giving definition to the vague Organic Act by describing Yellowstone as a forest and watershed reserve, and as a place to preserve some of the big game animals of the West. Chapter 2 covers the legislative struggle and development of values associated with Yellowstone throughout the 1880s. In 1891 the first forest reserve was created on Yellowstone's boundary, and in 1894 the Lacey Act was passed, giving strength to park management. These were the goals that Boone and Crockett Club members struggled to accomplish for over a decade. Chapter 3 covers these events.

The events in Yellowstone during the 1880s and 1890s address conservation history in a few ways. Few histories extensively explore the role of sportsmen in the conservation movement. From today's standpoint, with the controversial debates about animal rights, eating meat, and hunting, focusing on self-proclaimed "hunting riflemen" to understand the first national park set aside to protect and preserve the natural environment may seem strange. The irony reveals both a change in attitudes about hunting in American culture, and an absence of an understanding of the

extent sportsmen affected the conservation movement. The current anger and hostility directed toward hunting does not typically consider sportsmens' role in the conservation movement that started toward the end of the nineteenth century. Many of the people involved with the start of the conservation movement, which saved the remaining big game species and set the foundation for the current environmental movement, were sportsmen. Because of the negative image of hunting in todays' culture, we may fail to see the significance of hunters' ideas and actions concerning wildlife in the past.

Not only is there a lack of connection between hunting and the conservation movement in contemporary thought, but also in the histories written about the development of the conservation movement. In the 1890s Americans began to redefine their relationship with the natural world. Because of changes in the way people were living, such as industrialization and urbanization, and an increasing awareness that the resources in the country were not unlimited, the conservation movement began.² A number of historians have been written about the developing conservation movement around the turn of the century, but the role of the sportsmen has quite often been limited or left out.

² Clayton Koppes, "Efficiency/Equity/Esthetics: Towards a Reinterpretation of American Conservation," *Environmental Review* (1987): 127-145.

Ideas about Americans' relationship with the natural world have evolved over a long period of time dating back thousands of years to the time when agriculture began. Roderick Nash details these changing ideas in an extensive book called *Wilderness and the American Mind*.³ He notes that ideas have evolved from a hostile fear of wild areas to a recent appreciation of them, and are reflective of how Americans define themselves as a nation. First, the mission of the pioneers was to conquer and develop the vast wildlands from coast to coast. Toward the end of the nineteenth century these ideas began to change. Changes in the country such as the settlement of the West, the railroads connecting the nation, immigration, and urbanization all affected how people viewed the natural world. Romantic ideas about nature arose. Urban people began to define nature as a place to be purified from the unnatural way of life in the cities.

It was during this period that the conservation movement began. Americans began to realize that there was no longer an abundance of unclaimed natural resources, that natural resources were exhaustible, and that the idea of immediate short-sighted use of the resources was not

³ Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

necessarily the best.⁴ Increasingly Americans attempted to use natural resources more efficiently.

The beginnings of the conservation movement have been associated with the progressive political reform movement active in the early 1900s.⁵ This movement advocated wise-use utilitarianism, reliance upon experts for guidance, and a need to correct the ills of American society. Progressives attempted to clean up some of the problems in society, such as poverty in the inner city and poor conditions in the factories. Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot were leaders in this utilitarian manner of thinking, and lead the nation in efforts to conserve resources. Progressive ideals were applied to conservation mainly through a reliance on professionals to manage the forests to produce maximum yield and preserve the resources for future generations. Historian Samuel Hays writes "Conservationists envisaged, even though they did not realize their aims, a political system guided by the ideal of efficiency and dominated by the technicians who could

⁴ Koppes, "Efficiency/Equity/Esthetics, 127-145.

⁵ Samuel P. Hays is a historian that has written extensively on environmental history from the conservation movement through the environmental movement, see the following works: *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); "From Conservation to Environment: Environmental Politics in the United State Since World War Two," *Environmental Review* 6, no. 2 (1982): 14-41; *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

best determine how to achieve it."⁶ Hays effectively explains how Americans applied this "gospel of efficiency" to their relationship with the natural world.

While different studies cover the political and economic influences, and the evolving beliefs about the developing conservation movement, the active role of the sportsmen seems to be forgotten. One historian, John Reiger, has focused on the connection between hunters and the conservation movement.⁷ Reiger argues that hunting groups spearheaded the conservation in the 1870s when numerous hunting groups and sporting magazines were being formed. This date for the origins of the conservation movement, is earlier than that given by other historians who tie the beginnings closer to the turn of the century when the Progressive movement was stronger. The sporting movement was interested in reforming hunting practices, mainly market hunting which was viewed as very destructive to the dwindling numbers of wild game. Sportsmen were opposed to killing game solely for money. Rather they promoted a special nonutilitarian relationship with nature. Hunting was more than killing an animal; the tracking and other skills needed developed an intimate relationship between hunters and the natural world.

⁶ Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, 3.

⁷ John F. Reiger, *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation* (New York: Winchester Press, 1975).

As sportsmen worked to reform hunting practices, they formed a strong political movement that advocated protection for the nation's game and forests. Although game was their first love, sportsmen were also interested in the growing forestry protection movement, and the management and protection of national parks. Early on sportsmen became politically active in protecting game and forest resources. These activities were significant in the early development of the conservation movement.

The extent of the role of sportsmen in the formation of the conservation movement has been debated, most notably by Historian Thomas Dunlap who agrees with Reiger that hunters played a role, but not to the extent Reiger claims. Dunlap points out that Pinchot, a leader of progressive conservationists, pushed a program for the redistribution of power, wanting resource decisions to be made at the federal level by experts, taking the power from state and local authorities to gain maximum yield from the resources.⁸ This is at the heart of the movement. Dunlap claims the hunting movement lacked experts or a concern for economic developments. He agrees that hunters did play a role in the conservation movement, and that outdoor magazines did influence the public ideas about wildlife, "but none of that makes hunting central to the conservation crusade or the

⁸ Thomas R. Dunlap, "Sport Hunting and Conservation, 1880-1920," *Environmental Review* 2, no. 1 (1988): 55.

movement's intellectual fountainhead."⁹ Because of the absence of sportsmen in many historical accounts and the disagreement over the extent of their role, the association between sportsmen and the conservation movement remains an unresolved topic.

A number of histories on the park exist, but analysis of the role of sportsmen is missing.¹⁰ These books tell the story of early exploration of the park, the first civilian management, and the coming of the army to save the park from destruction by outside interests. But besides Reiger, few

⁹ Dunlap, "Sport Hunting and Conservation," 56.

¹⁰ Marie M. Augspurger, *Yellowstone National Park: Historical and Descriptive* (Middletown, Ohio: The Naegele-Auer Printing Co., 1948); Richard A. Bartlett, *Nature's Yellowstone: The Story of an American Wilderness That Became Yellowstone National Park in 1872* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974); idem, *Yellowstone: A Wilderness Besieged* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985); idem, "The Concessionaires of Yellowstone National Park: Genesis of a Policy, 1882-1892," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (1983): 2-10; Merrill D. Beal, *The Story of Man in Yellowstone*. Rev. ed. (Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming: The Yellowstone Library and Museum Association); Hiram M. Chittenden, *The Yellowstone National Park: Historical and Descriptive*. 5th ed. (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Company, 1905); Aubrey L. Haines, *Yellowstone National Park: Its Exploration and Establishment* (Washington: USDI, NPS, 1974); idem, *The Yellowstone Story*, Vol. I. and 2 (Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming: Yellowstone Library and Museum Association, Colorado Associated University Press, 1977); Duane H. Hampton, *How the U.S. Cavalry Saved Our National Parks* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971); idem, "Opposition to National Parks," *Journal of Forest History* January (1981): 37-45; Paul Schullery, *Yellowstone Ski Pioneers: Peril and Heroism on the Winter Trail* (Worland, Wyo.: High Plains Publishing Company, Inc., 1995).

historians extensively explore the role of sportsmen in the conservation movement and Yellowstone in particular.

This case study of the influence of sportsmen in the development of Yellowstone advances this debate. The heart of the issue is the extent of sportsmens' involvement in the conservation movement. I have looked closely at how sportsmen influenced park management and worked to expand park boundaries. This focus helps clarify sportsmen's ideas and actions in one park, instead of broadly examining the development of the whole conservation movement. The findings can be used to test Reiger's and Dunlap's views to see which is more accurate in the Yellowstone situation.

A better understanding of the relationship between Yellowstone and sportsmen can be achieved by considering broader issues of why national parks and national forests were created. At the heart of the relationship between Yellowstone and sportsmen are ideas about how one group valued the park, and how those values influenced park development and management. The values they promoted helped to shape how Americans viewed Yellowstone and the first national forest.

Congress created Yellowstone in 1872, 44 years before the creation of the National Park Service. The reasons why people valued the park and wanted it set aside were different from todays'. The cultural motivations for the protection of Yellowstone are not well understood. Alfred

Runte in *National Parks: The American Experience* connects the creation of national parks to what they symbolized to American culture. People created national parks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century because of what he describes as scenic monumentalism. They saw the parks as a way to differentiate themselves from the Europeans. Runte also argues that concern for wildlife motivated park creation only after the 1930s. But in parks with large wildlife populations, such as Yellowstone, wildlife was a valued aspect much earlier. The attitudes about wildlife changed rapidly between the 1870s and the 1920s. Sportsmen's involvement and concern over Yellowstone wildlife and forest and watershed reserves reveals additional values, beyond scenic monumentalism, that were influential in the development of Yellowstone.

The origin of the national forest system is also addressed during this period of Yellowstone history. Beginning in the 1870s numerous pieces of legislation to create forest reserves were introduced in Congress, but they all failed. It was not until 1891 that legislation that allowed the President to set aside forest reserves was passed. At that time the land southeast of Yellowstone, which had been proposed as an extension of the park in the 1880s, became the nation's first forest reserve.¹¹

¹¹ For papers discussing the early history of forest reserves see Harold Steen, ed., "The Origins of the National Forests: A Centennial Symposium (Durham: Forest History

Historian Mary Culpin has written of the efforts to extend park boundaries started by General Sheridan and continued most notably by Arnold Hague, along with William H. Phillips and George Bird Grinnell. Related to this crusade were attempts at protective legislation and opposition to the railroad lobby. John Reiger has also examined the significant influences of Boone and Crockett Club members, particularly George Bird Grinnell, in the creation of the reserve. For years Grinnell wrote of the need for forestry protection in *Forest and Stream*. He linked this need with the Yellowstone protection crusade. This case study connects and expands upon these works.

Yellowstone has long been a place where ideas of conserving the nation's wildlife and natural resources has been debated. This focused look at Yellowstone during the 1880s and 1890s reveals an early stage in the conservation debate, and exposes a developing group, sportsmen, as key players. Today the National Park Service, state agencies, and environmental groups struggle to control the expanding bison population. Understanding how sportsmen saved the few remaining bison more than a century ago reveals how ideas of

Society, 1992). Note works by Mary Culpin, "Yellowstone and its Borders: a Significant Influence Toward the Creation of the First Forest Reserve, 276-282; John Reiger, *Wildlife, Conservation, and the First Forest Reserve*," 106-121; and Ron Arnold, *Congressman William Holman of Indiana: Unknown Founder of National Forests*," 301-313.

conservation, Yellowstone, national forests, and sportsmen
have evolved.

CHAPTER 2

FROM TOURIST RESORT TO GAME REFUGE:

SPORTSMEN AND THE LEASING CONTROVERSY, 1872-1882

Last year nearly three million people visited Yellowstone National Park. Many came to see Old Faithful Geyser, some viewed the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone and Yellowstone Lake; nearly all watched for wildlife on their travels among the park's scenic features. Seeing a bear dig for roots in Hayden Valley, watching the herds of bison and elk roam through the Lamar Valley, or catching a glimpse of the occasional moose wade through the swampy meadows are a major part of the experience visitors have come to expect in Yellowstone. Yet as historians have noted, the intent behind the creation of Yellowstone had little to do with the region's wildlife. Rather the purpose was to preserve Yellowstone's unusual thermal features and make them part of a growing commercial tourism industry.

Management principles and values were not further developed until nearly ten years after the park was created. By that time two groups had a strong interest in Yellowstone: the Northern Pacific Railroad Company and sportsmen. The first was behind the creation of the park

and had an interest in developing tourism, while the latter had hunted in the region and were interested in protecting park game. In the early 1880s these two groups found themselves involved in an extended struggle over a lease for concessions operations. Sportsmen, drawn to the park because of an interest in game, soon found themselves addressing the broader issues of park management and values. It was during this leasing debate that sportsmen began to articulate a conservation agenda for the park. They worked as early conservationists to expand the purpose of Yellowstone beyond tourism to include providing a safe refuge for game animals. Their activities proved to be very influential in the evolution of the park idea.

To understand sportsmen's activities in Yellowstone, one must understand Yellowstone in the 1870s. When Yellowstone was created as the first national park in 1872 the financial and legal means to manage the park were not provided or even adequately defined. The legislation creating the park placed the park under the control of the Department of the Interior but was vague about how the park was to be financed and managed. In order to ensure that the Act pass the Forty-second Congress, the park's boosters claimed that the park would require little management or money.¹ Congress did create the Yellowstone National Park, and it survived for nearly ten years in this condition.

¹ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 1, 179.

In 1872, Americans, similar to the legislators in Washington, D.C., had few ideas of what a national park was all about. Yellowstone was the first national park, and at that time it was a new experiment. Historian Alfred Runte has analyzed why national parks were created in *National Parks: The American Experience*. He connects the creation of national parks to what they symbolized to American culture. According to Runte, people created national parks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century because of what he describes as scenic monumentalism. People saw the parks as a way to differentiate themselves from the Europeans, But in 1872 the national park concept was in its formative state.

Because of the lack of management in the park, hide hunters were able to slaughter park wildlife in alarming numbers during the 1870s. Elk, bison, and deer were killed for their hides, and the meat was usually left to rot. Although the Organic Act that established the park outlawed against the "wanton destruction of the fish and game found within said Park, and against their capture or destruction for the purposes of merchandise or profit," it did not provide a means to enforce this rule.² Because the park lacked adequate staff and legislation to stop the hide hunters, the intentions of those who created the park in 1872 were not carried out.

² Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 55.

In the 1870s a number of small expeditions visited the Yellowstone region and reported the destruction of game and geologic features. Captain William Ludlow led an expedition in 1875 and recommended that the park be placed in the hands of the War Department until a civilian superintendent and staff could be hired to protect park features.³ The Belknap party also visited the park in 1875. A member of this party, William E. Strong, wrote how the act creating the park was not enforced and how game would disappear if the destructive practices continued.⁴ The reports from these early trips helped to document the need for better park protection.

Philetus Walter Norris, who also visited the park in 1875, attempted to rectify this problem. He became the second superintendent of Yellowstone in 1877 and in his first annual report recommended that the northeast corner of the park be turned into a game refuge, protected by game keepers. In 1880 Superintendent Norris was able to hire Harry Yount who was stationed in the Lamar Valley to protect the animals from poaching in the winter. This job was far too large for just one game keeper.

³ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 1, 204.

⁴ William E. Strong, "A Trip to the Yellowstone National Park in July, August, and September, 1875" (Washington, D.C., 1876) 80 (also in Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 1, 207).

This was the scene when the Northern Pacific Railroad surveyed for possible tracks to the park in the summer of 1882. The building of the Northern Pacific was a part of the great expansion of railroads that followed the Civil War. The Northern Pacific, Great Northern, Union Pacific, Central Pacific, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, and the Southern Pacific blazed trails across the western United States to the Pacific Coast. In 1883 tracks of the Northern Pacific were completed to the Cinnabar Terminus just north of the park. Both Yellowstone National Park and the West were affected as the rails connected the East and West coasts.

The entry of the railroads into the West resulted in far-reaching changes. The majority of the railroad companies received government subsidies. Land grants were a common way for the government to assist the railroads in completing tracks. Through this process railroad companies became very powerful land owners. They changed the population of the West by attracting increasing numbers of settlers to the region. Better transportation and the sale of railroad-owned land drew new emigrants from Europe. The railroads were also influential middlemen, providing transportation between the markets of the East and the natural resources of the West.

Since the creation of the park, the Northern Pacific wanted Yellowstone developed into a summer tourist resort.

Aubrey Haines writes of the strong influences of the railroad in Yellowstone exploration, creation, and keeping the park free from potential concessions during the 1870s.⁵ It was expected that the railroad would reach the park shortly after it was created in 1872, but it was delayed during the 1870s due to financial difficulties. Ferdinand V. Hayden explained the situation in his report describing the bill that created the park to Washington, D.C., dated February 21, 1878, "At the time of the passage of the bill it was supposed that the Northern Pacific Railroad would be extended to Montana within a year or two. This road would have passed within about forty miles of the northern boundary of the park. The officers and friends of that road gave assurance that a narrow-gauge branch would at once be extended to the park for the accommodation of visitors. The failure of this road retarded the development of the park for years."⁶ Hayden went on to explain that as the railroad failed to make progress, interest died and the park "remained to this time in its natural condition." By 1883 the railroad completed tracks off its main line to the

⁵ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 31.

⁶ House Committee on the Public Lands, *Letter from the Secretary of the Interior in regard to the Better Protection of the National Park from Injury*, 45th Cong., 2d sess., 1878, Ex. doc. No. 75 (also in Edmund B. Rogers, comp., "History of Legislation Relating to the National Park System Through the 82d Congress," vol. 7, part 2 [Yellowstone National Park Research Library and Museum, Mammoth, Wyo., 1958] 3-4).

Cinnabar terminus just north of park boundaries. At that time it had developed extensive plans to complete lines to a few attractions inside Yellowstone.

Yellowstone had one major problem that hindered the railroad's plans for turning the park into a summer resort. The park did not have adequate hotels, restaurants, or transportation to accommodate the increased amount of tourists that would arrive on the rails. To solve this problem the Northern Pacific quietly backed a company that would develop those services.

This company was called the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company. On September 1, 1882, it was granted an agreement for monopoly privileges of the operation of hotels, stages, and telegraph within the park. Acting Secretary of the Interior Merritt L. Josslyn made this agreement with Carroll T. Hobart, a division superintendent of the railroad, and Henry T. Douglass, a post trader in Fort Yates, Dakota Territory, who had strong Washington political connections.⁷ Rufus Hatch, a businessman who provided financial backing for the company, soon became involved with the agreement.

The Yellowstone Park Improvement Company quickly began construction in the park in the fall of 1882 and their

⁷ Senate, *Letter from the Secretary of the Interior*, (11 Dec. 1882), 47th Cong. 2d sess., Ex. Doc. No. 10, 2-7 (also in Rogers, comp., "History of Legislation," vol. 7, part 2, 2-7).

operations soon came under criticism. Their practices of cutting park timber to build facilities and killing park game to feed employees came under attack. Their interest in Yellowstone was making a profit. This powerful interest quickly came into conflict with the preservation of park features.

The excessive amount of power granted in the agreement was also criticized. Understanding the controversial nature of this deal, the Secretary of the Interior Henry M. Teller deliberately stayed away from the office when the negotiations were made.⁸ Although the park needed facilities for visitors, the agreement was viewed by some as one-sided in favor of the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company. Shortly after the agreement was made the excess of the privileges granted were hotly debated.

This debate was just one element of the politics of the period. The time following the Civil War is often referred to as the Gilded Age. It was a time of government corruption and excessive business power, with corrupt deals between the two. The agreement between the railroad-backed company and the Department of the Interior was viewed by some in the 1880s as one of those scandalous affairs.

Due to the controversial nature of the deal with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company, the need for better park management and a clearer definition of what the park

⁸ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 32.

was for intensified in the early 1880s. The increased commercial interest in Yellowstone posed new dangers to the preservation of the park in its natural state. Also, the controversial nature of the agreement needed to be investigated. The time was at hand for those with an interest in the Yellowstone to step forward and present an alternative route from the destructive course the park was on in the early 1880s.

Three men, General Philip Sheridan, George Bird Grinnell, and George Graham Vest did step forward into the battle against the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company agreement. These men had all travelled to the park and developed a concern for it. Their concern grew into a crusade to protect Yellowstone and its wildlife. Each acted in his own powerful ways, as an army general, a magazine editor, and as a United States Senator to help implement their similar visions of the national park.

One characteristic these men had in common was that they were associated with the sporting movement. Sporting clubs were forming during the 1880s, but many were not completely organized. One of these clubs was the Boone and Crockett Club. It's records indicate these men were all members.⁹ The Boone and Crockett Club was a sporting club formed in 1887 by George Bird Grinnell and Theodore

⁹ Boone and Crockett Club. Officers, Constitution and List of Members for the Year 1903, Boone and Crockett Club, Papers, Boone and Crockett Club, Missoula, Montana.

Roosevelt; General Sheridan was a regular member while Senator Vest was listed as an associate member. Senator Vest was also a member of the Woodmont Rod and Gun Club of western Maryland, while Grinnell was editor of the leading sporting periodical.¹⁰ Understanding the association between these men and the sporting movement helps add to the understanding of the actions of these men, and connects the sporting movement with the activities in Yellowstone in 1882. These men helped to connect the reform activities of the sporting movement with the problem of market hunting in the park.

The separation of hunting into two opposing elements, sport and market hunting, heightened in the early nineteenth century. Historian John Trefethen explains that as people, such as southern planters, began to gain both wealth and leisure time, hunting as a sport became more popular in America. The first known hunting club, Carroll's Island Club, was formed in 1832 near Baltimore by Col. William Slater. In 1844 the New York Sportsmen's Club formed, becoming one of the first groups that fought for the protection and preservation of game. Sport hunters were against game sales, spring shooting, and lax game laws.

¹⁰ Reiger, *American Sportsman*, 103.

These groups formed in the east to protect the water fowl from total destruction by commercial hunters.¹¹

In the years before the Civil War, sport hunters began to further define themselves by developing a code of proper sportsmanship. Definition of the sporting movement accelerated after the Civil War. Historian John Reiger explains how this code outlined the values and proper methods associated with sport hunting. This code further separated the sport hunter from the market hunter, for it was not sporting to hunt game for a profit. The ideas and values associated with this code were expressed in the sporting magazines, such as *American Sportsman*, *Forest and Stream*, and *Field and Stream*, that were launched during the 1870s.¹² Reiger explains that these magazines taught readers about sport hunting, including the changing situation of wildlife. The magazines campaigned for the preservation and management of wildlife, and focused on the destructive situation in Yellowstone. To help the public better understand the significance of game laws, *Forest and Stream*, the leading outdoor periodical, published and distributed free a book of game laws once a year. The

¹¹ James Trefethen, *An American Crusade for Wildlife* (New York: Winchester Press, 1975), 72-73.

¹² Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 21.

magazines explained to the public why the game laws were important.¹³

Sport-hunting clubs also continued to be defined and organized after the Civil War. The magazines and clubs helped to facilitate communication and organize sport hunters into active lobbying groups for the cause of wildlife preservation. The Boone and Crockett Club is one example of the powerful associations made in the sporting clubs. Its members included many important figures of the early conservation movement such as Theodore Roosevelt, George Bird Grinnell, Gifford Pinchot, Philip Sheridan, Charles Sheldon, John F. Lacey, William Hornaday, Horace Albright, Stephen Mather, and Aldo Leopold. This sporting club brought together powerful individuals concerned with preserving wildlife. Both the magazines and clubs helped sport hunters develop ideas about wildlife and implement ways to support their ideas of game management.

Yellowstone had long been a place where people came to hunt. Native Americans, trappers, market hunters, and sportsmen were all drawn to the abundant supply of game in the region. But during the 1870s the destruction of game caused by market hunting in Yellowstone and across the nation caused alarm in the sporting movement. Increasingly sporting groups and magazines spoke out against that type of hunting. Drawn to Yellowstone to help preserve the

¹³ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 60.

remaining game by reforming market hunting, sportsmen entered a larger debate over park management and values.

The response of Sheridan, Grinnell, and Vest to the problems Yellowstone was facing in the early 1880s provides an excellent example of sportsmen's influences on early park ideas about management and values. In Yellowstone their efforts were not limited to game; they fought for better park management and they taught the American people about their national park. They began to broaden the purpose of Yellowstone beyond tourism to include a wider conservation agenda. In doing so they began to refine and clarify the vague Organic Act.

General Sheridan had been associated with the Yellowstone region since 1869. He had emerged at the young age of thirty-four as a hero of the Civil War. His military career then moved to the West in 1869 when he became the commander of the Division of the Missouri. This region included the area east of Chicago to the western boundaries of Montana, Wyoming, and New Mexico, reaching as far north as Canada and as far south as the Rio Grande. Yellowstone was a part of this vast region but the general did not have time to visit the area until 1881. Grand stories of Yellowstone inspired the general to send out expeditions in the 1870s. These included the Hayden, Barlow, and Ludlow expeditions. On the Barlow expedition, Mount Sheridan, west of Heart Lake, was named in his honor.

In the summer of 1881 General Sheridan visited the Yellowstone region. He summarized his travels in a report that made recommendations for improving park management. At the time of his visit the park received an annual appropriation of \$15,000 to pay the salary of the superintendent and the game keeper, and other minor expenses. Sheridan recommended that the appropriations be increased, an engineer be hired to help improve the roads and trails, and members of the cavalry be seasonally stationed in the park to protect the geysers and prevent forest fires.¹⁴

During the summer of 1882, Sheridan again travelled through the park and reported his findings. He was disturbed by the activities associated with the nearing of the railroad. Sheridan reported that with the arrival of the railroad, the park had been rented out to private parties for the purposes of making money. He disagreed with this use of the park, stating that "The improvements in the park should be national, the control of it in the hands of an officer of the government..."¹⁵ Sheridan expressed

¹⁴ Philip Sheridan, *Report of Lieut. General P.H. Sheridan, Dated September 20, 1881, of His Expedition Through the Big Horn Mountains, Yellowstone National Park, Etc.*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1882) 9.

¹⁵ Sheridan, *Report of an Exploration of Parts of Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana, in August and September, 1882*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1882) 17.

concern that the nation could lose control of the park to the commercial interest.

A second concern was the continued slaughter of game. One winter as many as 4,000 elk were killed in and around the park. Animals such as elk, mountain sheep, antelope, and deer were slaughtered in great numbers.¹⁶ Decimation of these animals by hide hunters endangered the survival of some species in the West. Sheridan was alarmed by this and sought to change the situation in Yellowstone.

To help solve park management problems he recommended converting Yellowstone into a refuge for game, extending the park boundaries, and protecting this area with the army. This was similar to a plan for park management that was suggested by Captain William Ludlow in 1875.¹⁷ These ideas would help to remedy mismanagement that had occurred since its creation and would also help preserve the remaining game species.

General Sheridan worked to implement this plan by inspiring fellow sportsmen.¹⁸ "I respectfully make an appeal to all sportsmen of this country, and to the

¹⁶ Philip Sheridan, *Report of an Exploration in August and September, 1882*, 17.

¹⁷ William Ludlow, *Report of a Reconnaissance from Carroll, Montana Territory, on the Upper Missouri, to the Yellowstone National Park, and Return, Made in the Summer of 1875* (Washington, D.C., 1876), 61.

¹⁸ Paul A. Hutton, "Sheridan's crusade for Yellowstone," *American History Illustrated*, 19 no. 10(1985): 12-13.

different sportsmen's clubs, to assist in getting Congress to make the extension I describe, thus securing a refuge for our wild game. If authorized to do so, I will engage to keep out skin hunters and all other hunters, by use of troops from Forts Washakie on the south, Custer on the east, and Ellis on the north, and, if necessary, I can keep sufficient troops in the Park to accomplish this object, and give a place of refuge and safety for our noble game. If any of the game which will naturally drift to this place of safety, break out again, let it be killed, but let its life be made safe while in the National Park: it will then soon learn to stay where it will be unmolested."¹⁹ This soon developed into the idea of the park as a game "reservoir" that could perpetually restock surrounding hunting areas.

This appeal to sportsmen was reprinted by magazine editor George Bird Grinnell in *Forest and Stream* and in a senate report on the conditions in Yellowstone by Senator George Graham Vest.²⁰ In the winter of 1882, these two eastern associates responded to Sheridan's request. Grinnell, who was acquainted with Sheridan through his explorations of the West in the 1870s, publicized park

¹⁹ Sheridan, *Report of an Exploration in August and September, 1882*, 18.

²⁰ Senate Committee on Territories, *Report to Accompany Bill S. 2317*, (5 Jan. 1883) 47 Cong. 2d sess., S. Rept. 911 (also in Rogers, "History of Legislation," vol. 7, part 2, 5); "Their last refuge," *Forest and Stream* 19(14 Dec. 1882): 382.

events in his magazine *Forest and Stream*. Senator Vest, who had travelled through the park with the general in 1882, was easily convinced of the need for protective legislation and took up the cause in Washington, D.C.²¹ Both Grinnell and Vest soon became strong advocates of improving Yellowstone management. Their actions reflected the desires of General Sheridan.

Grinnell's main contribution in the leasing battle was publicizing the events and conditions in Yellowstone in the pages of *Forest and Stream*. He used his position as the editor of *Forest and Stream* to alert his readers of the leasing controversy and the people involved. He taught his readers about the poor situation of Yellowstone wildlife, Yellowstone management, and attempted to instill a sense of public ownership of the park. He also worked to inspire his readers to support legislation that would remedy the Yellowstone situation. In doing so Grinnell helped to nationalize his concern for wildlife and the Yellowstone situation.

Grinnell's concern for wildlife began at an early age. Since his youth in the East, Grinnell had been exposed to wild game. He often visited his uncle's home, which contained a large collection of mounted birds and mammals. The widow of the great naturalist John James Audubon was his

²¹ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 1, 268, vol. 2, 209; Hutton, *Sheridan's Crusade*, 13.

school teacher. These early influences helped develop an interest in wildlife that continued through his college years at Yale. In 1880 he received his Ph.D. by passing exams in Osteology and Vertebrate Paleontology.

It was during his time at Yale that Grinnell was exposed to the West. He began a working relationship with paleontologist Othniel C. Marsh. Marsh introduced Grinnell to the West by accepting him as a volunteer on a six-month scientific exploration in June of 1870. Grinnell would return to the West on many occasions, including a trip with Major Frank North in 1872, an exploration of the Dakotas under George Armstrong Custer in 1874, and an exploration through Yellowstone with Captain William Ludlow in 1875. On these early trips, Grinnell acted as a scientist and collected specimens for museums in the East. He was introduced to great explorers and hunters such as Major North, "Lonesome" Charley Reynolds, and General Philip Sheridan. He also saw first-hand the plight of wildlife in the West. Conserving the remaining wild species and places became a passion for the young Grinnell.

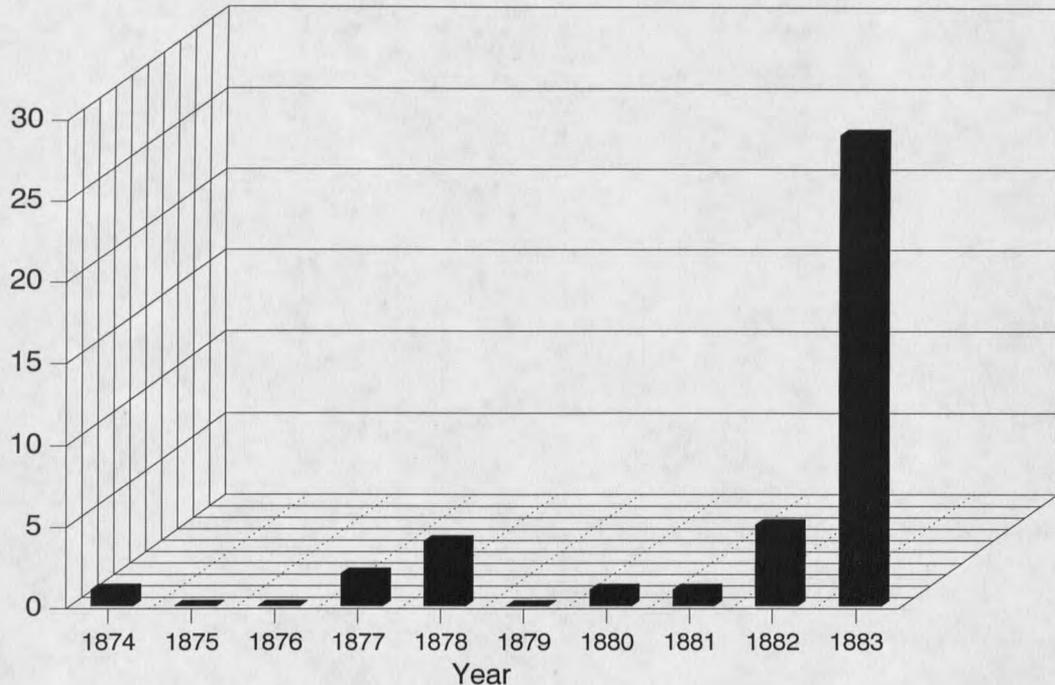
Forest and Stream was established by Charles Hallock in 1873. It was taken over by George Bird Grinnell soon thereafter, and became a leading forum for sportsmen, naturalists, and others interested in the protection of natural resources. The owner and editor position of *Forest and Stream* seemed like a natural place for the young George

Bird Grinnell. In this position he was able to publicize his concerns for wildlife and the national park.

The Yellowstone leasing debate was the first major park story *Forest and Stream* covered extensively. Since the magazine's creation it had published periodic stories about Yellowstone, they were mainly descriptive of the park and had yet to focus intensely on one issue. During the period from December of 1882 to March of 1883 the magazine's coverage of Yellowstone more than doubled that of the previous 9 years. At least 26 articles were written concerning the leasing event.²²

²² The following articles appeared in *Forest and Stream*: "Their Last Refuge," 19(14 Dec. 1882): 382-83; "Leasing the National Park," 19(21 Dec 1882): 401; Min-ta, "One Opinion of the Grab," 19(21 Dec 1882): 410; "The Park Grab," 19(4 Jan. 1883): [441]; "The Park Monopolists Checked," 19(11 Jan. 1883): 461-463; Ichthus, "Game and Forests in the Park," 21(17 Jan. 1884): 494; "An Important Park Order," 19(18 Jan. 1883): 481; "The People's Park," 19(18 Jan. 1883): 481; "What the People Think," 19(18 Jan. 1883): 486; "What the Press Thinks 19(25 Jan. 1883): 506; "The Park Saved," 19(25 Jan. 1883): 501; E. S. Holmes, "The Yellowstone Park," 20(1 Feb. 1883): 11; Nessmuk, "Grab and Greed," 20(1 Feb. 1883): 6; Occident. [Letter], 20(1 Feb. 1883): 11; Editorial. [Vest bill] 20(1 Feb. 1883): 11; [Park Concessions], 20(1 Feb. 1883): 11; "Friends of the Park," 20(8 Feb. 1883): 22; P. "The Yellowstone Region," 20(15 Feb. 1883): 42-43; "Park Protection," 20(15 Feb. 1883): 41; Angler, "The Big Game and the Park," 20(22 Feb. 1883): 68; Harry Oelrichs, [Untitled Letter], 20(22 Feb. 1883): 68; "The Park and the Senate," 20(22 Feb. 1883): 61; "The Park Grab," 20(1 Mar. 1883): 81; "Mr. Vest's Victory," 20(8 Mar. 1883): 101; "Senatorial Opinions on the Park," 20(8 Mar. 1883): 107; "The Park Leases," 20(15 Mar. 1883): 121; "The National Park," 20(22 Mar. 1883): 141.

Yellowstone-Related Articles



Grinnell provided extensive coverage of the agreement between the Acting Secretary of the Interior and the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company. In a December 21, 1882, article entitled "Leasing the National Park," Grinnell explained the details of the agreement.²³ Starting with the first story Grinnell characterized it as a scheme by the Northern Pacific to make money in the national park at the expense of the public. He was proud of *Forest and Stream's*

²³ "Leasing the National Park," *Forest and Stream*, 19(21 Dec. 1882): 401.

role in uncovering this scheme. "That the *Forest and Stream* was the first newspaper in the land to see the enormity of this job, and to raise its voice against this cool and farefaced attempt to appropriate the people's property, is naturally a source of satisfaction to us...It is the duty of this journal to do all in its power to protect the interest of the people, to guard against any invasion of their rights, and to sound the note of warning and alarm when these rights are threatened...."²⁴

Grinnell also provided descriptions of the people involved with the leasing controversy. He supported the efforts Senator Vest and Congress made to investigate Yellowstone affairs and produce legislation to resolve the problems. Editorials and letters to the editor that were full of praise and support for the senator's actions were printed. On the other hand, men associated with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company were portrayed as corrupt swindlers, and their ill intentions for the park were exposed. He characterized the leasing controversy as the "park grab," and Hobart, Douglas, Hatch, and others associated with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company as corrupt men attempting to make a profit at public expense. The deal made with Acting Secretary Jocelyn was portrayed as an underhanded scheme by monopolists. The company's cutting

²⁴ "The People's Park," *Forest and Stream*, 19(18 Jan. 1883): 481.

of timber, killing of game, and ambitions to use Yellowstone as a large cattle ranch were all covered. Grinnell was extremely strident in his descriptions of good and evil in the park leasing controversy.

Grinnell also explained why these activities mattered to his readers. A story entitled "Their last refuge," described the dire situation of wildlife in the country and the sporting movement's desire to shape Yellowstone into a refuge for big game. The article mentioned two major threats to wildlife. First, with the arrival of the rails and the increasing numbers of settlers moving into the West, wildlife was losing habitat. Second, hide hunters' destructive practices were destroying wildlife populations at an alarming rate. The original act creating the park, Captain Ludlow's 1875 report, and General Sheridan's 1882 report were all reprinted in this article. Grinnell, like General Sheridan and Captain Ludlow before him, saw Yellowstone as a game refuge and wanted to shape its management in that direction. "The region offers no inducement to the farmer, for it is rugged and mountainous, nor to the stock raiser, for the altitude of a large portion of it is so great, that cattle cannot be grazed there in winter. It was hoped and believed that here was a reservation which would be protected from the inroads of the skin hunter, where game might be free from molestation, and so add to the attractions of the Park. The language of the

statute [Revised Statutes of the United States, sections 2474 and 2475, Act approved March 1, 1872] quoted above warranted such a belief."²⁵

In the *Forest and Stream* coverage of the leasing debate Grinnell lobbied readers to include game as an additional valued feature of the park. When the park was created, game was of some interest in Yellowstone, but it seemed of lesser importance than the geysers, canyon, and other geologic wonders. As described earlier, Yellowstone was created as the first national park with vague legislation that did not provide a clear definition of the purpose of the national park. It seems Grinnell attempted to help his readers define a more clear concept of the national park. This attempt was focused on the plight of wildlife. He viewed Yellowstone not as money-making tourist trap, but as a place where game could survive and multiply. In Grinnell's writings, the national park was portrayed as one solution to the problem of game destruction.

Just as Grinnell's articles attempted to persuade readers about the value of game in the national park, he also attempted to instill ideas of the people's ownership of the park. Repeatedly he referred to Yellowstone as the "people's park." Yellowstone was a place where people would visit, not a pristine wilderness removed from people. For

²⁵ "Their Last Refuge," *Forest and Stream*, 19(14 Dec. 1882): 382.

this reason he argued for development that would benefit the people rather than the developer's pocket books.

By the winter of 1882 Grinnell had developed a fear of excessive commercial power in the park. He viewed Yellowstone as a place for all to have free and equal access and the agreement with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company threatened this idea. The major problem with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company agreement was the amount of control it was granted. For example, the agreement allowed the company to prohibit camping near the major attractions in the park, but it allowed the company to build hotels in those special areas. Grinnell was concerned that the natural wonders would become money-making shows for the tourists. Repeatedly, Grinnell warned against Yellowstone becoming a second Niagara Falls. He asked "How would our readers like to see it become a second Niagara—a place where one goes only to be fleeced, where patent medicine advertisements stare one in the face, and the beauties of nature have all been defiled by the greed of man?"²⁶ Concerns that the public maintain access, development not overshadow the major features, and the public be properly reimbursed for leasing their national park were voiced.

²⁶ "Mr. Vest's Victory, *Forest and Stream* 20 (8 Mar. 1883): 101.

While Grinnell worked on influencing attitudes, he also presented legislative solutions to the problems. To implement his ideas about park management he took on a strong political focus in his coverage. Details of all the legislative events in Washington were covered. He worked to inspire readers to take action to support protective legislation and he lobbied Congress and park officials to take the proper action.

In addition to editorials informing readers about the Yellowstone situation, Grinnell printed letters telling what his readers and other newspapers thought. These articles revealed how Grinnell's efforts for Yellowstone were supported by his readers across the country and by other major newspapers. In an article entitled "What the People Think," the supporting attitudes of four individuals from Bozeman, Montana Territory; Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland Ohio; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania were printed.²⁷ These articles told of personal Yellowstone experiences, praised the activities of *Forest and Stream*, and condemned the leasing scheme. The location of these individuals show that *Forest and Stream* reached and inspired an audience across the country. It provided a forum for teaching and communicating between outdoorsmen interested in the park.

²⁷ "What the People Think," *Forest and Stream* 19(18 Jan. 1883): 486.

In an article entitled "What the Press Thinks," it was reported that "different newspapers are waking up" to the scheme in Yellowstone.²⁸ Grinnell reprinted articles from the New York Commercial Advertiser, the Distiller and Brewer (St. Louis), the New York Herald, the New York Times, Harper's Weekly, and the Knickerbocker to support this contention. Grinnell proudly reported that coverage of the leasing scheme spread from *Forest and Stream* to major newspapers.

The articles in *Forest and Stream* provide an excellent example of how the leading sporting magazine was used to help shape ideas about Yellowstone. The activities of sporting groups are more difficult to trace in the leasing scheme, but are found in the *Forest and Stream* reporting and in the Edmond Rogers "History of Legislation Relating to The National Park System Through the 82d Congress."²⁹ First, in the legislative history of Yellowstone, a few sporting groups are mentioned. The Sportsman Association of Western Pennsylvania submitted a resolution to Congress concerning Yellowstone and the Kent County Sporting Club of Grand Rapids, Michigan, created a petition and sent it to Congress. *Forest and Stream* printed a copy of this petition that asked Congress to create legislation that would support

²⁸ "What the Press Thinks," *Forest and Stream* 19(25 Jan. 1883): 506.

²⁹ Rogers, "History of Legislation," vol. 1, part 1, 10-11.

General Sheridan's requests.³⁰ Grinnell also reported that important game protective associations, such as the Cuvier Club and the Michigan State Association, substantially endorsed Vest's bill.³¹ These activities show that Yellowstone was of interest in the growing sporting movement, and sportsmen's associations were lobbying for good management of the park.

While Grinnell campaigned for Yellowstone in the pages of *Forest and Stream*, Senator George Graham Vest of Missouri led the crusade in Washington. Vest was a career politician born in Kentucky in 1830. He served as a judge advocate in General Price's Confederate Congress in 1862, and then in the House of Representatives of the Confederate Congress from 1862 to 1865, and then in the Confederate Senate. In 1879 he was elected to the United States Senate and served until 1903.

The Senator was a member of the Sheridan party that visited the park in 1882, and he returned to the park the following summer with President Arthur and General Sheridan. Those trips into the Yellowstone region seemed to have a great effect on the fifty-two year old Senator, for until 1903 when he left public office, he championed the Yellowstone cause in Washington, D.C. His legislative

³⁰ E.S. Holmes, "The Yellowstone Park," *Forest and Stream*, 20(1 Feb. 1883): 11.

³¹ "The People's Park," *Forest and Stream*, 19(18 Jan. 1883): 481.

efforts on behalf of Yellowstone reflected a strong desire to help the national park develop sound management, with proper funding, and a legislative framework to protect the park's natural features.

In the winter of 1882-1883 legislative activity concerning Yellowstone intensified and took on a new character. In the previous ten years of the park's existence various pieces of legislation concerning the building of wagon roads, appropriations, and animal protection are mentioned in the legislative record. But between December of 1882 and March of 1883 the debate about Yellowstone management intensified.³² Discussion of Yellowstone, stirred by the agreement with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company, soon expanded into an investigation of general park management. The entry of the railroad into the Yellowstone region spurred long-needed attention in park affairs.

Senator Vest began his legislative battle for Yellowstone that winter and led Congress in investigating Yellowstone affairs. On December 7, 1882, the Senate directed the Secretary of the Interior to forward "copies of any contracts entered into by the Interior Department in regard to leasing the Yellowstone National Park...together with such other information as to the condition and

³² For a summary of the legislative history see Rogers, "History of Legislation," vol. 1, part 1, 1-11.

management of said Park as he may think important."³³ Copies of the leasing agreements arrived shortly thereafter. On January 9, 1883, this request was extended to include copies of all letters relating to leasing.³⁴ These legislative efforts show how Congress, under the leadership of Vest, investigated the controversial agreement for Yellowstone concessions.

This investigation of the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company quickly expanded into a review of the general state of affairs in the park. On December 12, 1882, the Senate instructed the Committee on Territories to investigate what legislation, if any, was needed to protect Yellowstone, preserve the game, extend the boundaries, and regulate leasing of the park.³⁵

Senator Vest was the chairman of the Committee of the Territories and led the investigation into the Yellowstone situation. The committee summarized their findings in a report submitted January 5, 1883. This report was very critical of the Yellowstone situation. First, the committee did not believe that the Secretary of the Interior had the power to make the type of agreement he had with the

³³ Senate Res., 47th Cong., 2nd sess., 7 Dec. 1882 (also in Rogers, "History of Legislation," vol. I, part 1, 7).

³⁴ Ibid., 9 Jan. 1883 (also in Rogers, "History of Legislation," vol. I, part 1, 8).

³⁵ Ibid., 12 Dec. 1882 (also in Rogers, "History of Legislation," vol. I, part 1, 8).

Yellowstone Park Improvement Company. The agreement with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company gave too much power to a monopoly. Not only was it beyond the scope of power granted in the 1872 Act, it was not in the public's best interest. Referring to this agreement, it was pointed out that no one could camp within one mile of the principal points of interest without the permission of the lessees. The committee concluded that "The virtual and real effect of the contract and lease is to put the entire Park, containing 3,300 square miles, under the control of the lessees for a term of ten years at a nominal yearly rent of a few thousand dollars."³⁶

The committee recommended efforts to safeguard the park and incorporated their ideas into legislation. The accompanying piece of legislation with the report was Senate bill 2317. That bill came to be known as the Vest bill.³⁷ The legislation was similar to the suggestions found in General Sheridan's 1882 recommendations. In fact, the committee printed pieces of his report in their summary of the Yellowstone situation. The suggestions included

³⁶ Senate Committee on the Territories, Report No. 911.

³⁷ House Committee on the Public Lands, *H.R. 7439*, (29 Jan. 1883) 47th cong. 2d sess., Printers no., 8879 (also in Rogers, "History of Legislation," vol. 2, append. A); U.S. 47th Cong., 2d sess., S. 2317; Senate Committee on Territories, *Report to Accompany Bill S: 2317 (5 Jan. 1883)*, 47 Cong. 2d Sess., S. Rept. 911 (also in Rogers, "History of Legislation," vol. 7, part 2).

extending the boundaries to provide game a secure retreat from the skin hunters; using the calvary to protect the park wonders; placing the park under the criminal jurisdiction of Montana Territory; and providing sufficient funds for park management. The Vest bill, which incorporated these reforms, had wide support in the scientific societies, by the press, and by Governor John Schuyler of the Montana Territories, but it failed to pass.³⁸

Senator Vest refused to give up his fight for protective legislation and was able to include some of his ideas in the Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill for March 3, 1883.³⁹ That act increased the appropriations for the park to \$40,000, a jump from about \$18,000 the previous year.⁴⁰ The ability of the Secretary of Interior to grant leases was also limited. Leases were not to "include any of the geysers or other objects of curiosity or interest in said park, or exclude the public from the free and convenient approach thereto; or include any ground within one quarter mile of any of the geysers; or the Yellowstone Falls, nor shall there be leased more than ten acres to any one person or corporation."⁴¹ Also, the Secretary of Interior was granted permission to call upon the Secretary of War to

³⁸ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 1, 268.

³⁹ U.S., *Statutes at Large*, vol. 22, 626.

⁴⁰ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 480.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 472.

provide troops to protect against the destruction of wildlife and natural wonders.

Grinnell reported the passage of this legislation in an article entitled "Mr. Vest's Victory." In this article Grinnell wrote of the powerful opposition to Vest's efforts, such as politicians, the press, the lobby, and many colleagues. "Only the people were on his side."⁴² The passage of this piece of legislation was viewed by Grinnell as a major victory in the movement for park protection.

The legislation proved to be very important for the future park management. It provided the legal framework for the Superintendent to expand his staff to include assistants to help management the park. It also provided the legal framework for the army to assist in the management of the park. In 1886 the calvary arrived, and they managed Yellowstone until the creation of the National Park Service in 1916; they left the park in 1918. So the results of the legislative debate in 1882-1883 proved to be very significant in the development of Yellowstone management.

Another important park rule that was established during the leasing debate was the prohibition of hunting in the park. The Secretary of the Interior sent a letter to the park Superintendent, dated January 15, 1883. In that letter he prohibited the hunting of a number of game animals in the

⁴² "Mr. Vest's Victory," *Forest and Stream* (8 Mar. 1883) 101.

park and created some fishing regulations.⁴³ The letter reflected the growing concern over the park situation in Washington, D.C.

A lease, reflecting the modifications required by the Sundry Civil Service Bill of 1883, was granted to the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company in the spring of 1883. As the debate in *Forest and Stream* and the legislative investigation in Washington, D.C. reflect, this modification was only one of the significant events of 1883.

Of broader significance to the future of the national park was the publicizing of the plight of game and the national park, and the attempts to change the conditions in Yellowstone through legislative efforts. Sheridan, Grinnell, and Vest were crucial players in the nationalizing of these concerns and the resulting reforms to Yellowstone management.

Although, it may seem surprising that a group of sportsmen would work toward a resolution to ban hunting in the park, they did this to support the survival of "proper" hunting in the region. The sporting movement was not attempting to end hunting, rather it was trying to eliminate destructive hunting practices in Yellowstone and across the nation. Game protection in the park would ensure a supply of animals on the park's borders. Sportsmen attempted to

⁴³ "An Important Park Order," *Forest and Stream*, 19(18 Jan. 1883): 481.

strike a balance to ensure that proper hunting would continue in the Yellowstone area.

At the beginning of this chapter I described the activities of Sheridan, Grinnell, and Vest as early examples of conservationists. It is important to understand their activities in terms of conservation and park conception histories. Obviously these men were attempting to shape ideas about the national park. But do their efforts constitute conservation activities? This story and the men involved do not easily fit with some histories of the conservation movement that have focused on professional foresters such as Gifford Pinchot. How do we explain these activities? Were their efforts really the beginnings of the conservation movement or something unrelated? I believe they were the early stages of the movement.

An interesting way to reconcile this event in Yellowstone history with other interpretations of the origins of the conservation movement is to understand it as an early stage of that movement, not yet fully developed. The leasing story reveals the actions of an army general, a magazine editor, and a senator, all associated with the developing sporting movement, to save Yellowstone in a troubled time and help lay a foundation for park management. At the time these people were not professional conservationists for the terms and jobs associated with conservation were just forming. As Historian Stephen Fox

states, "Conservation began as a hobby and became a profession."⁴⁴ These early efforts by Sheridan, Grinnell, and Vest represent that amateur state where the need and desire for preservation is known, but the refined methods for accomplishing the task, such as hiring professionals or creating government bureaus or organizations, were still being defined.

These men spread their personal concerns about wildlife and park management to a larger audience. They taught people who had never seen a wild elk or been to the national park to care about these things. This process of taking a local interest and broadening it to a national concern is a process that Stephen Fox attributes to the early conservation movement. The *Forest and Stream* coverage of the Yellowstone leasing scheme provides a nice example of this activity. Grinnell was attempting to stir public interest in and affection for the park and its game so they would help support protective legislation. His efforts seem to be an early example of this type of conservation activity.

Understanding the Yellowstone leasing story as an early stage of the conservation movement adds information to the origins of that movement. First, sportsmen were very influential in the Yellowstone situation. And second,

⁴⁴ Stephen Fox, *John Muir and His Legacy: The American Conservation Movement* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1981) 107.

sportsmen's interest in game influenced the development of the national park concept. Early on Yellowstone was valued for its game, and management was shaped to reflect that value.

The value of wildlife that is apparent during the Yellowstone leasing debate reveals additional information about the developing notions concerning national parks. Clearly in the early 1880s wildlife was a valued characteristic of the national park giving rise to a concern that interested Congress and *Forest and Stream* and resulted in increased funding, protective legislation, and recommendations to extend the park.

The leasing debate was one early event that reveals the importance of the sporting movement in the development of Yellowstone. Efforts by sportsmen publicized Yellowstone conditions and worked to correct the problems through federal powers. The events of 1882-1883 did not solve the problems of Yellowstone or big game, but they did lay the groundwork for future solutions.

CHAPTER 3

GAME, FORESTS, AND WATERSHEDS:

SPORTSMEN AND THE BATTLE FOR PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION

In the summer of 1986 President Bill Clinton and family returned to the Yellowstone area for another summer vacation. The Clintons enjoyed the Yellowstone wilderness, floating the Snake River, riding horses under the Tetons, and touring the Mammoth Hot Springs terraces. While in the park the President also accomplished official business, taking a stance against the development of a mine near the northeast corner of Yellowstone. This one influential politician was able to stop plans to reopen mining operations, ensuring the preservation of the wilderness in that area. Over 100 years ago a handful of influential people worked in Yellowstone for conservation. Like President Clinton, these individuals enjoyed the experience of visiting Yellowstone and also used their trips to politicize their ideas for preserving and managing the park.

It was during the 1880s that sportsmen took a lead role in shaping ideas about Yellowstone, expanding upon vague ideas of conservation found in the Organic Act. The conflict over park management, between the sportsmen and

railroad interests, that began in the winter of 1882-1883 continued throughout the 1880s. A small group of men associated with the Boone and Crockett Club advocated protective legislation, boundary extensions, and monitored park management, while railroad interests attempted to extend tracks into the park. It was during these struggles that sportsmen articulated a broad conservation agenda for Yellowstone. Game, forests, and watershed protection were the values conveyed to fellow sportsmen, Congress, and the nation. Throughout the 1880s the mission of Yellowstone was clarified by sportsmen to include conservation of natural resources.

Interest in park affairs by the sportsmen and the railroad made the inadequacies of park management very apparent. A series of civilian superintendents, some with very controversial administrations, ran the park in the early 1880s until that system was replaced by military management in 1886. Superintendent Conger served from March 1, 1882, to September 9, 1884. Conger was the brother of U.S. Senator Omar D. Conger, who was a strong supporter of the Northern Pacific Railroad.¹ Conger was followed by Superintendent Carpenter, who received his appointment through the political influence of his brother who was

¹ Chris J. Magoc, "The Selling of Wonderland': Yellowstone National Park, The Northern Pacific Railroad, and the Culture of Consumption, 1872-1903," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of New Mexico, December 1992, 175.

governor of Iowa. Carpenter also had strong associations with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company, and held the position a short time due to controversy surrounding a land claim. The trend of superintendents with affiliations with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company changed with the appointment of Superintendent Wear on July 1, 1885. Wear was the last of the civilian superintendents, and received his position on the recommendation of fellow Missourian Senator George G. Vest. Senator Vest said of him, "Colonel Wear is about forty years old, active, intelligent and honest. He commanded a regiment in the Union Army during the war, and was a gallant officer. He is now a State Senator from the city of St. Louis. He is an earnest sportsman and in every respect a gentleman."² It was hoped that Wear could clean up some of the problems that the previous administrations faced, but as it turned out he did not have enough time in office, Congress ending his appointment in 1886 when they failed to appropriate money for the management of the park. The military, under the command of Captain Moses Harris, assumed management of the park. Harris served as superintendent until June 1, 1889, and during that time he helped to establish respect for the weak rules and regulations.

² "A new park superintendent," *Forest and Stream*, 24 (28 May 1885): 345.

All of the superintendents, civilian and military, were troubled by the same problem, a lack of power to protect and manage the park. This problem stemmed from the vague nature of the Organic Act that created the park; it did not provide for a system of management or a clear definition of the mission or purpose of the first national park. It also created ambiguity in park management. Who really was in charge of Yellowstone? The concessions interests, who were governed by weak guidelines and leases, and were backed by the powerful Northern Pacific Railroad? Or the federal system of the superintendent and his assistant superintendents, who were limited by weak rules and regulations and limited funding?

Two groups, sportsmen and the railroad interests attempted to influence how the park was managed through legislation throughout the 1880s. Lead by Senator Vest in Washington, D.C., sportsmen repeatedly introduced protective legislation, attempted to extend the park boundaries, and monitored the park management. Vest's legislation had provisions for a judicial system with the power to enforce rules in the park, the appointment of adequate staff to manage the park, and provisions to extend park boundaries to include valuable forest and game lands. Versions of Vest's

legislation passed the Senate in three different Congresses during the 1880s, but failed to pass the full Congress.³

The railroad interests attempted to block these legislative efforts, and gain railway access inside the park. The Northern Pacific Railroad had been involved in Yellowstone since its creation. In an extensive study of the Northern Pacific's activities, Historian Chris Magoc contends that the railroad was the real political force behind the creation of Yellowstone and continued to influence Yellowstone affairs through the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company and the holdings of timber and mineral rights in the Yellowstone area.⁴ During the 1870s the railroad experienced financial difficulties, which put a damper on interest in Yellowstone. But by the 1880s their presence in the park was shown through their backing of the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company and their interests in building a railroad line through the park. Repeated legislation was introduced to allow a railroad through the northern part of Yellowstone, to provide an outlet to mines in Cooke City, and as opponents of the railroad argued, to allow tourist transportation in the park. The leasing debate discussed in first chapter revealed the suspicions

³ Louis C. Crampton, *Early History of Yellowstone National Park and its Relation to National Park Policies*, (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1932) 63-66.

⁴ Chris Magoc, "The selling of Wonderland," 38, 79. For extensive information on the activities of the Northern Pacific Railroad in Yellowstone, see Magoc's dissertation.

between sportsmen-conservationists and those interested in concessions operations development. During latter part of the 1880s the battle with the railroad interests grew to include the railroad construction issue.

A small group of men associated with the Boone and Crockett Club stand out in the 1880s debates, George Bird Grinnell, Arnold Hague, William Hallett Phillips, and George Graham Vest. They used their influence to battle for Yellowstone on a national level, mainly in Congress, in the sporting magazine *Forest and Stream*, and by lobbying the Secretary of the Interior. A common link between these men was that they were all antecedents of the Boone and Crockett Club. This club did not form until 1887, but in the years proceeding that, these men were very active in Yellowstone protective activities.

Just as Yellowstone management was being formulated in the 1880s, so too was the Boone and Crockett sporting club. Yellowstone protection was a major objective after the club formed in 1887, and it seems to have been a cause that drew members together in the early 1880s. The key players in the Yellowstone protection-conservation drive were also founding members of the elite sporting club. Grinnell, Hague, and Phillips were all at the original meeting of the club. All had worked together over concerns for Yellowstone. Because the key players in the Yellowstone legislative battles were associated with this club I have identified them as

sportsmen. All did hunt or fish with the probable exception of Arnold Hague. But the Boone and Crockett club was an organization these men helped to form, and in the 1890s implement their conservation ideas. It was through the organization of the sporting movement that great strides in Yellowstone conservation were accomplished.

The activities of early Boone and Crockett Club members reveal that a clear set of conservation values related to Yellowstone. Conservation of the forests and watersheds, preservation of the game, and protection of the natural geologic wonders were the values these men conveyed about the park. These values were generally written about in the legislation that created the park, but that legislation did not provide sufficient park staff to protect these resources. They presented a vision of what the new national park was for and why it deserved protection, expanding upon the vague legislation that created the park. Their influential positions helped them spread these ideas to a wide audience and fend off those with alternative ideas about the national park.

This was the situation in Yellowstone and the legislative battles that dominated Yellowstone affairs in the 1880s. A closer examination of Boone and Crockett Club antecedents reveals how they helped the ideas of Yellowstone evolve to include a broad conservation agenda. A camping trip during the summer of 1883 proved to be important for on

this trip Senator Vest met Arnold Hague, both of whom were central figures in the conservation crusade. General Sheridan led this trip that included a number of dignitaries: President Arthur, Senator George Vest, Secretary of War Robert Todd Lincoln, and Governor of Montana territory J. Schulyer Crosby.⁵ The visit was part of a large camping trip through the West, lasting twenty-eight days and covering 350 miles on horseback. Fishing was a major activity. Senator Vest wrote, "We found the best fishing in the Gros Ventre and Snake rivers, particularly in the latter. In one afternoon's fishing of two hours the President and myself caught in the last named stream one hundred and ten pounds of trout, and among them a fish weighing three and a quarter pounds."⁶

In addition to successful fishing, this trip brought together influential individuals, introduced them to Yellowstone and its needs, and introduced Yellowstone protection advocates to each other. Two other trips into the region by officials of the railroad and the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company were also conducted.⁷ Trips through the region seemed to be influential political lobbying tools

⁵ "Seeing the Yellowstone Park," *Forest and Stream* 20(26 July 1883): 501-502.

⁶ G.G. Vest, "Notes of the Yellowstone trip," *Forest and Stream* 21(8 Nov. 1883): 282.

⁷ For information on these three trips, see Magoc, "The selling of Wonderland," Chapter 4, 153-216.

during the summer of 1883. Sheridan's trip renewed hope in Yellowstone conservationists who had battled for protective legislation the previous winter. George Bird Grinnell wrote in *Forest and Stream*, "The gentlemen who are about to visit the Park are incurring responsibilities in the matter which we are glad to see them assume, for we are confident that this pleasure trip will next winter, in Washington, bear abundant fruit."⁸

That December, a key member of the camping party, Senator Vest introduced legislation for the protection, management, and reshaping of the Yellowstone boundaries.⁹ This bill did fairly well in the first session of the Forty-Eighth Congress, passing the Senate on March 4, 1884. But it failed to pass the House that session. Almost a year later, in the second session of the forty-eighth Congress, the bill was debated, amended and passed by the House on February 13, 1885. Despite these hopeful events the Senate bill 221 failed to pass both the House and the Senate. This legislation was a continuation of an attempt at protective legislation made in 1882-1883 by Senator Vest. Although it again failed to pass the Congress, Vest had additional support for Yellowstone protective legislation from the recently appointed park geologist, Arnold Hague.

⁸ "Seeing the Yellowstone Park," *Forest and Stream* 20(26 July 1883): 501-502.

⁹ Senate bill 221, Dec. 4, 1883, 48th Congress. 1st session.

Senator Vest met with Arnold Hague during his visit to the park on the Presidential camping trip, giving the two opportunity to discuss the needs of the Yellowstone. During that visit Vest requested that Hague write him a letter with his recommendations for the park. And in the winter of 1883-1884, Hague wrote two almost identical letters to Senator Vest and the Secretary of the Interior.¹⁰ In the following years these men would become significant Yellowstone conservationists. Vest led the legislative battle in Washington while Hague provided the scientific recommendations behind the legislation.

Arnold Hague was appointed Yellowstone geologist in 1883; this was the beginning of a strong association with the park that would last the rest of his life. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, on December 3, 1840. Hague attended Albany Boys' Academy and at the age of 21 entered the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale. After Hague graduated he spent a few years abroad studying and returned in 1866 with a liberal education in chemistry, mineralogy, and geology.

At Yale, Hague made a few interesting and influential acquaintances. Classes were small for many potential

¹⁰ Arnold Hague to the Secretary of the Interior.. Files microcopies of the record in the NA: No. 62 Roll 2, Rec. of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior Relating to Yellowstone National Park 1872-1886, Letter received 1883-1883; "The Yellowstone Park bill," *Forest and Stream* 22(13 Mar. 1884): 124-125.

students were off at war. The small class size created an atmosphere where Hague had close contact with his instructors and fellow students. One of these classmates was O.C. Marsh, who would become George Bird Grinnell's instructor at Yale and introduce the young Grinnell to the West. Another classmate was Clarence King, who offered Hague a position as an assistant geologist on the Geological Survey of the Fortieth Parallel. After the United States geological survey was restructured under one head in 1879 and Clarence King was appointed to that position, Hague once more received an appointment as a United States geologist. He served in this position for the rest of his career. In 1883 John W. Powell became Director and assigned Hague to Yellowstone National Park. There Hague became one of the leading scientific experts on the park. He also became a leading advocate for better park protection and management, and extending park boundaries.

Hague's association with and ideas for Yellowstone led him into membership in the Boone and Crockett Club. His membership is interesting for Hague was not a big-game hunter. Historian John Reiger explains that Hague was allowed membership in the club because of his protective activities for Yellowstone.¹¹ This suggests a bit of the complexity of the sporting and conservation movements. There were not distinct lines between conservationists and

¹¹ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 119.

sportsmen, rather they were mixed together in the Boone and Crockett Club. Hague represented that mixture, being a early Yellowstone conservationist, a member of the Boone and Crockett Club, and not a big-game hunter. The activities and ideas of early club members, such as Grinnell and Hague, show how the early Boone and Crockett Club combined the sporting movement with the conservation movement.

In Hague's letters to Senator Vest and the Secretary of the Interior the conservation agenda of the Boone and Crockett Club antecedents was clearly articulated. The ideas presented would be repeated throughout the legislative debates of the 1880s. He prioritized the resources associated with Yellowstone and recommended measures that would ensure that those resources were protected. Unlike today, the concept of a national park was not well defined. Americans were still developing an appreciation and understanding of the value of a national park. Because Yellowstone was the first park created, it was a novel concept in Americans' minds, and only a few had visited the park. So Hague's explanations of why Yellowstone resources were significant helped to shape ideas about why the park was of value and justify why Yellowstone protection and management were important. The values explained by Hague would be repeated over and over by sportsmen-conservationists in the 1880s debates.

In Hague's view, the most important resource in Yellowstone was the forest. "The most important object to be gained in carefully preserving this national reservation is the protection of the dense forests which now cover not only the greater part of the Park's plateau and neighboring mountains, but a large area of rough mountainous country immediately adjoining the present park limits."¹² Forestry protection was significant for it was linked with the protection of watersheds. Lands covered by dense forests were of value to the nation for they helped to protect watersheds by moderating runoff from high-elevation lands to lower-elevation agricultural lands. Reserves of water helped to irrigate the arid West, which was of great importance for western settlement. Without a good water supply, the farmers that were rapidly settling the area would not be able to grow crops. So Hague linked the protection of Yellowstone forests with the ability to settle western farm lands, which had a significant value to the livelihood of the nation. The focus on the economic significance of the forest and watershed resource was an idea that would grow and become of major importance in the national conservation crusade led by Theodore Roosevelt at the turn of the century.

A second important resource of Yellowstone was its game. Hague explained, "Next in importance to the

¹² Arnold Hague to the Secretary of the Interior, 1-2.

maintenance of the forests of the Yellowstone Park is the preservation of the large game."¹³ Game in the West was rapidly losing habitat because of settlement and decreasing in numbers because of over hunting. Yellowstone provided a safe refuge for remaining big game species, where they could safely live and repopulate the surrounding public lands. The idea of Yellowstone as a game refuge was repeatedly mentioned by sportsmen-conservationists in their efforts to promote protective legislation.

Natural objects of scientific interest were the third group of resources mentioned by Hague. These natural objects included the geysers and hot springs. Hague mentioned the Mammoth Hot Springs and how they were being destroyed by tourists. Increased management was needed to care for and protect these objects of scientific interest.

Because of Hague's interest in forests and watersheds and game, he recommended that the park boundaries be changed. Small pieces of land were to be cut off the northern and the western boundary of the park so the boundaries would match the territorial lines. Boundaries on the eastern and the southern side of the park were to be extended. The extension included prime forest land with the sources of major streams in them. Also the land to the east of the park had been "regarded by old hunters as one of the

¹³ Arnold Hague to the Secretary of the Interior, 10.

best game regions to be found in the Rocky Mountains."¹⁴ The boundary extensions would serve the dual purpose of protecting valuable forest reserves and providing addition refuge for the game.

Hague's suggestions were reflected in Vest's legislation. He provided a new technical expertise in the park, and would come to be recognized as a park expert. George Bird Grinnell was an acquaintance of Hague and supported his recommendations. During the summer of 1884 Grinnell accompanied Hague on a trip through Yellowstone, giving the two time to become familiar with ideas for Yellowstone needs.¹⁵ In *Forest and Stream* Grinnell identified Hague as a park expert and strongly supported his recommendations for park protection and boundary expansion. "This bill commends itself to all who are interested in the Park from purely unselfish motives. Its provisions are approved by Mr. Arnold Hague, of the U.S. Geological Survey, whose acquaintance with the Park is so extensive as to entitle his opinion to the greatest weight."¹⁶

¹⁴ Arnold Hague to the Secretary of the Interior, 9.

¹⁵ Grinnell wrote a 14 part article on this trip and printed it in *Forest and Stream* beginning on January 29, 1895. These articles told of the camping experiences on their journey through Two-Ocean Pass in the southern part of the Yellowstone region. See George Bird Grinnell, "Through Two-Ocean Pass" *Forest and Stream* 24(29 Jan. 1895).

¹⁶ "The care of the National Park," *Forest and Stream* 24(29 Jan. 1885): 1.

Similar to Arnold Hague, fellow Boone and Crockett Club antecedent George Bird Grinnell worked in his own field of expertise to support Vest's legislation. Grinnell used his position as the editor of the sporting journal *Forest and Stream* to explain the details of Vest's bill, the actions taken by Congress, and tell his readers about potential problems for the legislation. Grinnell wrote a number of articles between the winter of 1884 and the spring of 1885 concerning Vest's legislation.¹⁷ He used his newspaper to nationalize the problems in Yellowstone and lobby for support for the conservation crusade. In these numerous articles the agenda for protecting Yellowstone's natural resources became clear, and it was conveyed to sportsmen across the nation.

On February 7, 1884, in the "Yellowstone Park Bill," Grinnell explained the details of the bill as reported by the Senate committee on the Yellowstone Park. The bill extended the park thirty miles to the east and ten miles to the south, while the north and west boundaries were reduced to match the territorial boundaries. It also provided for protection by placing the park under the jurisdiction of

¹⁷ Articles of support for the Vest bill found in *Forest and Stream*: "Yellowstone Park bill," 22(7 Feb. 1884): 21; "Yellowstone Park matters," 22(13 Mar. 1884):121; "The Yellowstone Park bill," 22(13 Mar. 1884): 124-125; "The future of the Park," 22(10 Apr. 1884): 201; "The care of the National Park," 24(29 Jan. 1885): 1; "Topography of the Yellowstone Park," 24(5 Feb. 1885): 22-23; "The Park bill in Congress," 24(19 Feb. 1885): 61; "It failed to pass," 24(12 Mar. 1885): 121.

Gallatin County in Montana, appointing a superintendent and fifteen assistant superintendents, and creating penalties for the killing for wildlife.

In addition to reporting on the facts of the bill, Grinnell updated his readers on a potential problem for the legislation, the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company. Grinnell viewed the Improvement Company as detrimental to the park resources. Accommodations were needed in the park, but the power of the concessionaires was continuously questioned by Grinnell. But that spring the company had internal difficulties that Grinnell predicted would disarm its ability to interfere with the passage of the legislation. Grinnell wrote, "The Company and its principal organizers being in difficulties, they may perhaps have less time to devote to lobbying in Washington this winter, and so the friends of the Park may have less trouble in securing the legislation which is so essential to its protection... Our readers will watch with interest the efforts which will be made by the land grabbers and for the Park during the remainder of this session of Congress. Public opinion insists so strongly, however, on adequate legislation on this subject, that we cannot doubt that it will be had."¹⁸

The following month Grinnell printed two articles concerning the Yellowstone legislation, one noting that the

¹⁸ "Yellowstone Park bill," *Forest and Stream* 22(7 Feb. 1884): 21.

legislation had passed the Senate and the other reprinting the text of the bill and Arnold Hague's letter of recommendations for the legislation.¹⁹ Overall Grinnell was pleased with the bill stating, "On the whole, the bill, as passed, is a vast improvement on the laws we have hitherto had in relation to the Park."²⁰ One source of disappointment was the proposed size of increase of the park. Grinnell would have like the park size doubled rather than increased by two-fifths.

In April of 1884 Grinnell wrote another article of support, praising the work of Senator Vest and urging Congress to take action on the bill. Despite the overwhelming public support, the House failed to pass the bill that spring. The first session of the forty-eighth Congress ended, and supporters of the legislation were forced to wait until the following winter.

With the opening of the second session of the Forty-eighth Congress, Grinnell renewed his efforts. In a long article entitled "The care of the National Park," Grinnell explained modifications made to Vest's bill by the House Committee on the Territories. The suggested boundaries had changed. The northern boundary of the park was reduced;

¹⁹ "Yellowstone Park matters," *Forest and Stream* 22 (13 Mar. 1884): 121; "The Yellowstone Park bill," *Forest and Stream* 22 (13 Mar. 1884): 124-125.

²⁰ "Yellowstone Park matters," *Forest and Stream* 22 (13 Mar. 1884): 121.

following the forty-fifth parallel to the Yellowstone River, then following the Lamar River to the meridian of 100°10, then east to the meridian of 109°30. This was done to remove opposition by those with an interest in building a railroad line to the Cooke City mines. The boundary proposal would allow a line to Cooke City that would be outside of the park boundary. Also the jurisdiction of the park was to be under the Territory of Wyoming. These were significant modifications to the bill that made it much less appealing to Grinnell, but he still urged passage.

In this article Grinnell expanded upon the ideas of game and forestry protection written about in Hague's letter. Regarding the forests, Grinnell wrote, "The forests of the Park protect the heads of two of the most important rivers of the North America, one, the Snake, flowing into the Pacific, the other, the Yellowstone, finding its way into the Atlantic. These streams after leaving the mountains flow for long distances through arid regions which are only cultivable by means of irrigation, and should the forests about the heads of these rivers be cleared away, their volume would be so diminished that the farmers, who now and in the future will depend on them for their water supply, would be absolutely unable to raise crops."²¹ And regarding game, "The indigenous wild animals of Western

²¹ "The care of the National Park," *Forest and Stream* 24 (29 Jan. 1885): 1.

America are surely worth preserving. It is becoming well known that the large game of the Rocky Mountains is disappearing at a rate which is so rapid as to pass the belief of those who have not closely watched the subject... It is in the Yellowstone Park, if anywhere on this continent, that these different species must survive, and it is here that they should be conserved to be a benefit to science and the people, long after they shall have become extinct everywhere else throughout their former range."²²

In Grinnell's argument for passage of the Vest bill he wrote one of the early ideas of the early conservation movement; preservation for future generations. "The people have been aroused to the importance of preserving the Park, and they have spoken on this subject in tones that are unmistakable. They demand that this Park shall be cared for, and that they and their children's children may have the opportunity to see here for all time what our country was before it had been touched by the hand of civilization; what its fauna and flora were before ruthless butchery had exterminated the one, and importations of species from foreign localities had confused the other."²³ That statement revealed how the battle to protect Yellowstone was actually one of the early battles of the conservation

²² "The care of the National Park," *Forest and Stream* 24(29 Jan. 1885): 1.

²³ "The future of the Park," *Forest and Stream* 22(10 Apr. 1884): 201.

movement. Well before the turn of the century, Grinnell and other friends of the park were promoting the value of preserving wildlands for future generations, a cornerstone of the conservation movement.

On February 19, 1885, another article appeared in *Forest and Stream* entitled, "The Park bill in Congress."²⁴ Grinnell explained that the bill was in the hands of a conference committee of the House and Senate and was very optimistic about its passage. But on March 12, 1885, Grinnell reported that the bill failed to pass. Wording in the amended bill was written in such a way that the northeast boundary line of the park did not make sense. The committee was not able to come to an agreement so the bill lapsed. The failure of this bill was a disappointment to sportsmen-conservationists, but they soon began work on their next legislative attempt.

The legislative efforts in 1884-1885 reveal how Yellowstone sportsmen-conservationists began to work together and clarify why Yellowstone was to be valued. Vest led the legislative battle in Congress, Hague provided scientific support from the park, and Grinnell nationalized their concerns in *Forest and Stream*. The conservation ideas of forest and watershed, game, and natural wonder protection were clarified and presented in these debates as reasons for

²⁴ "The Park bill in Congress," *Forest and Stream* 19 24 (19 Feb. 1885): 61.

preserving and protecting and expanding the park. The focus on scientific expertise and the value of forest and watershed are two characteristics of the early conservation movement described by historian Samuel Hays. As the Yellowstone conservation crusade developed in the 1880s it began to take on a clear resemblance to the conservation crusade of the Progressive Era.

Grinnell's coverage of Yellowstone affairs was not limited to the Vest bill, he also kept close track of the affairs of the superintendents and reported their activities in *Forest and Stream*. He advocated stronger park management and cleaning up perceived injustices in the park. In the spring of 1885 this proved to be quite disastrous for Superintendent Carpenter. He had been appointed in September of 1884, obtaining this position through the political influence of his brother, the governor of Iowa.²⁵ Grinnell was critical Carpenter in part because of his strong affiliations with the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company. Within a year of his appointment Grinnell claimed credit for Carpenter's removal.

The scandal that led to Superintendent Carpenter's removal was associated with the Vest bill. During February of 1885 Carpenter was engaged in lobbying activities in Washington, D.C.²⁶ This allowed him the most current news

²⁵ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 451.

²⁶ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 1, 315-318.

concerning the Vest bill. That information placed Carpenter at the center of a scheme to grab land that would be freed up if the Vest bill passed. Carpenter was to telegraph from Washington, D.C., to notify interested parties when the Vest bill passed. Those with the early warning could then go out and lay claim to valuable land that would be freed up on the northern boundary. By February 20, 1885, it looked so likely that the Vest bill would pass that Carpenter sent the message. By that time news of the scheme had leaked out in Gardiner and Mammoth Hot Springs, and many rushed to lay claim. Robert Carpenter's name appeared on a claim post in an area within the park that was to be released after passage of the bill. Due to this scandal Carpenter was investigated by Secretary of the Interior Lamar, and shortly thereafter removed from his position as superintendent.

A key figure behind publicizing this scandal was George Bird Grinnell. He used *Forest and Stream* to expose the problems of Carpenter's administration and requested his removal. In a series of articles in the spring of 1885 he condemned Carpenter's job performance as superintendent.²⁷ Grinnell wrote that he had neglected his duty as Superintendent, devoted his time to working in the interest

²⁷ The following articles were printed in *Forest and Stream*: "Remove the superintendent," 24(9 Apr. 1885): 201; "A change needed," 24(23 Apr. 1885): 245; "The Park superintendent" 24(30 Apr. 1885): 265; "The Park needs a superintendent," 24(14 May 1885): 305; "A new Park superintendent" 24(28 May 1885): 345.

of the Improvement Company, made it impossible for the Assistant Superintendents to do their duty, and had participated in the park land grab.²⁸ Carpenter's association with the Hobart brothers was a main concern of Grinnell, who had long been wary of their intentions for the park. In Grinnell's view, this association made Carpenter unfit for the position of superintendent, and the controversy associated with the land claims gave Grinnell ample evidence to ask for Carpenter's removal.

Grinnell took credit for the removal of Carpenter in an article entitled "A new park superintendent." "Carpenter's removal is the direct result of the ventilation of his acts by the *Forest and Stream*. We said last spring that 'the new Superintendent of the Park will have an opportunity during the season that is coming to show what stuff he is made of. He may be sure that his actions will be scrutinized closely. If he does his duty he will be applauded, but if he fails it will soon be known.'²⁹

This episode in Yellowstone history in the spring of 1885 shows how George Bird Grinnell used his position to influence the day to day management of Yellowstone. Grinnell used *Forest and Stream* to ensure that the park was managed according to his ideas and hopes. Grinnell did not

²⁸ "A change needed," *Forest and Stream* 24(23 Apr. 1885): 245.

²⁹ "A new park superintendent," *Forest and Stream* 24(28 May 1885): 345.

want the park managed by the Yellowstone Park Improvement Company, and he lobbied for management that would conserve the resources in the park. In this way he helped to define the national park. It was not a place to be run by concessionaires, but a place to be managed by a superintendent devoted to the ideals of the sportsmen's conservation agenda. This episode shows how, in addition to protective legislation, early Boone and Crockett Club members attempted to influence park management to fit their vision of a national park.

During the summer of 1885 another key Boone and Crockett Club antecedent arrived in the park. William Hallett Phillips was appointed special agent by the Secretary of the Interior to investigate conditions in Yellowstone. During the coming years Phillips proved to be an influential sportsmen-conservationist, and soon after he arrived he joined Hague, Grinnell, and Vest in promoting a conservation agenda. By profession Phillips was a lawyer who practiced mainly before the Supreme Court. But he was also an outdoors man and a devoted angler. His legal background and devotion to Yellowstone made him a strong figure in the crusade to protect the park.

William Hallett Phillips came from an old, well-known Washington, D.C., family.³⁰ He was a popular man in

³⁰ The main source of information on Phillips death comes from his obituary notice, "William Hallett Phillips," *Forest and Stream* XLVIII(15 May 1897): 381.

Washington, D.C., and counted among his friends Theodore Roosevelt. After his death by drowning in a sailboat accident in 1897, Roosevelt wrote that Phillips had been a favorite guest at his home. In a letter to William Howard Taft notifying him of Phillip's death, Roosevelt said, "Mrs. Lodge has been fairly prostrated by the accident, and I dread the effect on Mrs. Roosevelt, for I hardly know any man who had made such a place for himself in the hearts of so many people."³¹

Like his friend Theodore Roosevelt, Phillips was an original member of the Boone and Crockett Club. Phillips was an avid angler and an outdoorsman, but not a big-game hunter. Historian John Reiger explains that Phillips, like Hague, was allowed membership based on his extensive work for Yellowstone National Park.

Phillips began his investigation into Yellowstone affairs in Mammoth Hot Springs on July 26, 1885, and remained in the park until September 6, 1885. That summer he became acquainted with Arnold Hague and Superintendent Wear, both of whom were stationed in the park. During his stay in Yellowstone he investigated and reported on its general condition including the park leases, tourist accommodations, road-system needs, and the management. He also voiced strong opposition to the entry of the railroad

³¹ Theodore Roosevelt to William Howard Taft; May 10, 1897, in E.E. Morison, ed., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951) 611.

into the park. Phillips summarized his findings that summer in a report submitted to Congress.³²

A main concern of Phillips was the lack of management and protection in the park for both the visitors and the park itself. He believed that the park needed federal judicial management, as was intended in the Organic Act. Phillips explained, "It seems strange that Congress should have up to this time neglected to provide any government for the Park, except by the provision of the organic act which places it under the exclusive control of the Secretary of the Interior, whose duty it is made to frame the publish such rules and regulations as he may deem necessary for the care and management of the same. The Park has now assumed such national importance as to imperatively call upon Congress to provide some system of justice by which the Park and the public visiting it can be protected."³³ Because of the lack of detail in the Organic Act, Phillips provided some suggestions.

Phillips suggested the creation of a federal judicial system that would provide law enforcement in the park. At the time, under the law of the Territory of Wyoming, two justices were holding court in the park, one at Mammoth Hot Springs and one at the Lower Geyser Basin. Phillips

³² Senate Executive Document No. 51, 49th Cong. 1st sess., 12 Jan. 1886.

³³ Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 51, 2.

disagreed with this arrangement because he felt the national park should be managed at the national level, and recommended that a federal judicial system be set up in the national park, giving the assistant superintendents the powers of deputy marshals and appointing two U.S. commissioners to the park. He explained, "It would seem too plain to call for argument, that in a national park, the national laws and regulations should be enforced by a national tribunal."³⁴

In addition to the recommendations concerning the judicial system, Phillips suggested a number of points that would help improve the management. He suggested posting the rules and regulations created by Superintendent Norris and amended by Secretary Teller in 1882, and offered recommendations for two additional ones. The first was to limit the posting of advertisements in the park; this was suggested in an effort to protect the natural wonders. A second suggestion was the prohibition of any shooting of park animals. At the time certain animals, such as bears, could still be killed. Phillips argued that this endangered the large game. Phillips also gave recommendations on licensing guides, increasing the assistant superintendent force with men familiar with the West, road improvement, and leases.

³⁴ Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 51, 5.

Phillips was a lawyer and attempted to base his recommendations on the legislation that created the park. His recommendations represented an attempt to fill in details lacking in the Organic Act, while maintaining and interpreting the spirit of that legislation. "Three objects were sought and accomplished by Congress in the establishment of the Park: First, a pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people; second, the preservation of the great game of the country, and, third, the preservation of the natural forests in a region where so many of the great rivers of the continent find their source."³⁵

The values expressed by Phillips were similar to those expressed by Arnold Hague, Senator Vest, and George Bird Grinnell. Each of these antecedents of the Boone and Crockett Club presented this conservation agenda in varying ways to the nation, interpreting the Organic Act to the American public. Grinnell was quite pleased with Phillip's comments and reported in *Forest and Stream*, "Taken as a whole the document is a remarkably clear and intelligent statement of the more pressing needs of the Park...It is very gratifying to us that an intelligent gentleman sent out by the Government, and making his observations under the most favorable circumstances, should have reached

³⁵ Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 51, 8.

conclusions identical in most respects with those which we have arrived at after years of investigation."³⁶

After returning to Washington, D.C., Phillips continued to stay in contact with park officials, and worked behind the scenes by lobbying Interior Department officials. Phillips became an ally of Superintendents, representing their interests in Washington. In a letter to Phillips, Superintendent Wear wrote of the difficulties of controlling the hunting in the park and asked for Phillip's assistance. Wear recommended that the Secretary of the Interior change the park rules to allow him to confiscate all the property of poachers when they were apprehended. Wear wrote, "I want you to impress upon the Secretary the importance of making this order at once and making it broad enough to cover all violations of the rules and laws of the Park. Unless there is something of this kind done, I will not be able to hold my own with the hungry hunters who are swarming around the Park."³⁷

Phillips also kept in contact with Captain Moses Harris, who became superintendent in 1886 when the military took over park management. The two men often corresponded

³⁶ "A report on the National Park," *Forest and Stream* 25(3 Dec. 1885): 361.

³⁷ D. W. Wear to William Hallett Phillips, Nov. 5, 1885, Phillips and Myers family papers, #596, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill (referred to as the Phillips papers from this point on).

monthly, with Harris providing Yellowstone news on leasing issues, poachings, concession operations, and often requesting assistance with management. Phillips updated Harris on Washington affairs such as the Vest bill, and lobbied Washington officials on Yellowstone needs.³⁸ Near the end of Harris' administration, he wrote to Phillips thanking him for his help. Harris wrote, "Your support and assistance has been of the greatest value to me, and has helped to encourage me at all times."³⁹

The mutual concerns for Yellowstone between Boone and Crockett Club antecedents became critical during the winter of 1885-1886. At that time these men seemed to join together in support of protective legislation and against the railroad interest. That winter legislative activity concerning Yellowstone increased in Congress. Senator Vest introduced Senate bill 101, that would provide for protection and management and extend Yellowstone's boundaries, while railroad proponents introduced several pieces of legislation that would allow a railroad to run through the northern portion of the park.

³⁸ Letters on the following dates from Moses Harris to William Hallett Phillips are found in the Phillips papers: 7 Jan. 1887; 1 Apr. 1887; 15 Apr. 1887; 8 May 1887; 10 June 1887; 19 July 1877; 6 Aug. 1887; 13 Nov. 1887; 11 Dec. 1887; 21 Jan. 1888; 18 May 1888; 24 May 1889; 15 Apr. 1889; 25 Apr. 1889.

³⁹ Moses Harris to William H. Phillips, 25 Apr. 1889, Phillips papers.

During these debates the alliance among sportsmen-conservationists was revealed. George Bird Grinnell again used *Forest and Stream* as a mechanism to lobby for Vest's bill.⁴⁰ In these articles Grinnell continued to update his readers on the progress of the legislation. He also cited the opinions of Arnold Hague and William H. Phillips concerning park affairs. Grinnell viewed these two men as park experts, and urged his readers to note their informed opinions. Referring to Arnold Hague, Grinnell wrote "The letter is important because it is written by a gentleman thoroughly familiar with the National Park and with that region to the south and east of the present boundaries which it is proposed to add to the reservation. He has also traveled long and extensively in the West and is familiar with the various industries of that great and growing country. Understanding mining, acquainted with the needs of the stock grower and the agriculturist, his opinion on the possibilities of the region to be added to the Park is the highest authority we can have on the subject, and should be

⁴⁰ The following are articles in *Forest and Stream* about Vest's legislation from the winter of 1885-1886 through the summer: "Senator Vest's park bill," 25(31 Dec. 1885): 441; "The Vest bill," 25(31 Dec 1885): 446-447; "Needs of the Yellowstone Park," 26(25 Feb. 1886 Feb.): 81; Arnold Hague, "Mr. Hague on the park," 26(25 Feb. 1886): 89; "The new park bill," 26(6 May 1886): 281; "The Vest park bill," 26(27 May 1886): 345; "The Yellowstone park bill," 26(27 May 1886): 349; "The park railroad bill," 26(1 Jul. 1886): 447-449; "Yellowstone Park matters," 26(15 Jul. 1886): 485.

convincing to every intelligent man."⁴¹ The mentions of Phillips and Hague in Grinnell's articles show how these Boone and Crockett Club antecedents began to associate with each other and work together with regard to the park. It would not be until two years later, in the winter of 1887-1888, that the Boone and Crockett Club actually formed. But in this 1886 battle over Vest legislation, the alliance between these individuals became clear.

The conservation agenda of sportsmen was again presented in the legislative debate for Vest's bill. Arnold Hague wrote to Senator Manderson of the Committee on the Territories, and explained that the most significant feature of the bill was the enlargement of the park.⁴² Hague explained that the enlargement would allow the park to better serve the original purpose for which it was set aside, which based on Hague's interpretation, was to serve as a preserve for the forests and watershed and the game of the region. For these reasons, Hague urged Congress to take favorable action on the bill.

Yellowstone sportsmen-conservationists joined together in writing letters opposing the railroad legislation to

⁴¹ "Needs of the Yellowstone Park," *Forest and Stream* 26(25 Feb. 1886): 81.

⁴² Arnold Hague, "Mr. Hague on the Park," *Forest and Stream* 26(25 Feb. 1886): 89.

Senator Manderson of the Committee on the Territories.⁴³ Letters from Arnold Hague, William H. Phillips, and General Sheridan were printed in the minority section of Senator Manderson's report. Senator Manderson introduced the report as follows, "The undersigned, believing that the construction of this road would be decidedly injurious to the purposes for which the Park was established, and that there are other routes over which railroad can be constructed from points on the Northern Pacific road to the Clark's Fork mining district, report adversely to the bill, and urge that it be indefinitely postponed: and in support of this view calls careful attention to letters from the Hon. L.Q.C. Lamar, Secretary of the Interior, Lieutenant-General Sheridan, Maj. J.W. Powell, Director of the Geological Survey, W.H. Phillips, esq., special agent for investigating Yellowstone Park, of the Interior Department, Prof. Arnold Hague, of the Geological Survey, Lieut. Dan. C. Kingman, Corps of Engineers, United States Army, and others having knowledge of the facts."⁴⁴

A common theme present in the letters from Sheridan, Hague, and Phillips was a need to protect the park's natural resources from destruction by the railroad. Phillips explained, "Besides the expressed objects in the act

⁴³ Senate Report No. 938, and views of the minority, May 5, 1886, 49th Congress, 1st Session.

⁴⁴ Sen. Rep. No. 938, 9.

[Organic Act], it is universally conceded that the two main objects attained in the dedication of this wonderful region were the preservation of the great forests within its limits and of the large game of the West, which had been almost exterminated everywhere except in the country proposed to be embraced within the Park."⁴⁵ Sheridan wrote that the railroad would not pass through the areas of public interest, but it would run through some of the best grazing lands. And Hague wrote of the danger of fire, game destruction, and settlements that would spring up along the railroads. Entry of railroad lines into the park was viewed as very destructive to the natural resources. There was great concern among opponents that it would destroy the forests and watershed, and drive away the game, which would, in effect, destroy the park.

These men believed that the threats presented by the railroad were unnecessary because the mine in Cooke City was very small and had not proven its ability to support a railroad, and alternative rail routes to Cooke City were possible. Arnold Hague wrote of a lack of activity at the Cooke City mines, and his doubts as to whether the mines could support a railway. Also, three different routes were discussed in the senate report, the Yellowstone Route, the Stillwater Route, and the Clark's Fork Route. John W. Powell gave his impressions of the three routes and stated

⁴⁵ Sen. Rep. No. 938, 16.

that the Yellowstone route would be the easiest to build and maintain. But Arnold Hague wanted the Clark's Fork route explored further. He felt that it would be more easily serviced than a route through the park. The feasibility of these routes and the worth of the mines were debated at length in discussions over the railroad legislation. But Yellowstone conservationists pointed out that this was not the heart of the issue. At issue was how the park was to be used.

Sportsmen-conservationists believed that in addition to providing Cooke City with an outlet, proponents were trying to get a foothold in the park to provide transportation for visitors, and that once tracks were allowed in the park there would be no control over further building of tracks. In a letter from Grinnell to Phillips, Grinnell wrote that he was quite sure there was a greater motive than to provide an outlet for the Cooke City mineral."⁴⁶ Hague also believed that. "In my opinion there are many persons who are interested in obtaining this right of way through the Park who desire to use the road for the purpose of transporting travelers who annually visit the Park in the summer. Having a right of way, and the only one granted by Congress, they anticipate receiving large revenues derived

⁴⁶ George Bird Grinnell to William Hallett Phillips, 27 Mar. 1886, Phillips papers.

from tourists."⁴⁷ During these legislative debates, sportsmen-conservationists came to believe that the real motivation for the railroad line to Cooke City was to get tracks into the park. Once this was accomplished, the railroad would be free to build tracks and transport tourists throughout Yellowstone.

George Bird Grinnell used *Forest and Stream* to crusade against the railroad legislation. In a number of articles from the winter of 1886 into the following summer Grinnell wrote of the railroad legislation that was being debated in Congress.⁴⁸ Repeatedly Grinnell wrote of the destruction to the park that would be caused by the railroad. "A population would follow the railroad and settlements would spring up along the track. Sparks from the locomotives would fire the prairie and the forests, and the visitor would see only blackened wasted, hillsides bristling with

⁴⁷ Senate Rep. No. 938, 17.

⁴⁸ The following articles in *Forest and Stream* concern the legislative battle for the railroad to run through the park to Cooke City: "No railroad in the park," 26(18 Feb. 1886): 62; "A railroad to Cooke City," 26(11 Mar. 1886): 121-122; "Is there an African in the woodpile?" 26(26 Mar. 1886): 161-162; "Railroads in the park," 26(1 Apr. 1886): 181; "Railroad routes to Cooke," 26(8 Apr. 1886): 201-202; "A boom for Cooke City," 26(22 Apr. 1886): 242; "Railroads and the park," 26(13 May 1886): 301; "The report on the park railroad. Views of the minority," 26(13 May 1886): 302-303; "Cooke and the Clark's Fork mines," 26(20 May 1886): 326; "How the case stands," 26(20 May 1886): 325; "Waking up at last," 26(3 Jun. 1886): 365; "The park railroad job," 26(24 Jun. 1886): 425; "The National Park railroad job," 26(1 Jul. 1886): 445; "The park railroad bill," 26(1 Jul. 1886): 447-449; "Yellowstone Park matters," 26(15 Jul. 1886): 485.

dead burned timber, and mountain tops shrouded in smoke. The shriek of the engine and the rumble of the train would drive away the game, and the beautiful and wonderful Park would become commonplace and unattractive."⁴⁹ Grinnell's opposition to the railroad echoed that of opponent's letters printed in the senate report.

These articles reached an important audience, for Secretary of the Interior Lamar sent copies of *Forest and Stream* articles about the railroad issue to Senator Manderson. Lamer explained, "In connection with other documents forwarded herewith, I send you a number of extracts from a representative journal of the American lovers of field sports and students of Forestry, the *Forest and Stream*, to show the deep interest that is being taken in the question under discussion by an immense class of our most thoughtful and intelligent fellow-citizens, and the anxiety and suspicion with which they regard the overtures and representations of the corporations now besieging Congress for authority to penetrate the Park with railroads."⁵⁰

That summer, both the Vest legislation and the railroad legislation failed to pass Congress. In May, the senate committee substituted Senate bill 2436 for Vest's bill 101.

⁴⁹ "No railroad in the park," *Forest and Stream* 26(18 Feb. 1886): 62.

⁵⁰ Senate Rep. No. 938, p. 15.

This bill passed the Senate on January 29, 1887, but failed to pass the House. During the summer of 1886 the Congress also failed to appropriate money to fund the management of the park, so the army was called in to take over. That marked the end of civilian management in the park until 1916 when the National Park Service was created.

Both the sportsmen-conservationists and the railroad interests continued attempts to push their legislation through Congress in the late 1880s. Neither were successful, but they did become more creative in their attempts. In the winter of 1887-1888, Grinnell spurred on a massive petition drive in *Forest and Stream*.⁵¹ Thousands of sportsmen, as well as citizens interested in Yellowstone, from across the country bombarded Washington, D.C., with petitions supporting Vest's legislative attempts. This petition drive shows the wide-spread public support of Grinnell's conservation efforts.

Another approach used by sportsmen-conservationists was the elimination of boundary changes. In the version of Vest's bill presented in the winter of 1887, there was no

⁵¹ The following articles are prints of the Yellowstone Park protective petition in *Forest and Stream*: "The protection of Yellowstone National Park," 30(8 Mar. 1888): 125; "Yellowstone Park petition," 30(29 Mar. 1888): 186; 30(5 Apr. 1888): 206-207; 30(12 Apr. 1888): 224-225; 30(19 Apr. 1888): 246-247; 30(26 Apr. 1888): 270; 30(3 May 1888): 290; 30(10 May 1888): 310; 30(17 May 1888): 330-331; 30(24 May 1888): 351; 30(7 Jun. 1888): 390-391; 30(21 Jun. 1888): 433-434; 30(28 Jun. 1888): 454; 30(19 Jul. 1888): 514.

attempt to extend the boundaries of the park to the east and the south. Although the boundary extensions were important, sportsmen were attempting to simplify the bill for protection by eliminating the boundary extensions.⁵²

Attempts had also been made to reduce the northern boundary of the park, so that the railroad would not have to enter the park to provide an outlet to Cooke City. These attempts did not work.

Vest's bill 283 passed the Senate on March 29, 1888, but later that summer was amended to include a provision allowing the railroad access to the park. This was a move by railroad lobbyists, and of course not acceptable to sportsmen-conservationists. The legislative struggles in the 1880s between Boone and Crockett Club antecedents and the railroad interests ended without success for either group.

Throughout the 1880s the "proper" use of Yellowstone was debated. To what extent was it to be developed for tourism and mining on the northeast corner, or conserved as a preserve for forest, watershed, and game? Both the railroad lobbyists and the sportsmen-conservationists agreed that Yellowstone was a place for the nation's people to visit and enjoy the wonders of nature, but they did not agree on how to manage the park. One side, the railroad

⁵² William Hallett Phillips, "The National Park," *Forest and Stream* 29 (8 Dec. 1887): 386.

lobbyists, favored more extensive development, specifically, allowing railroad tracks into the park to provide an outlet for the Cooke City mines, and, a more hidden agenda, passenger transportation. The other side, antecedents of the Boone and Crockett Club favored conserving the natural resources of the park. Would the park management be controlled by the interests of the Northern Pacific Railroad or would federal management be strengthened enabling it to protect the park resources and manage use and development?

This case study of Yellowstone in the 1880s shows how a handful of Boone and Crockett Club antecedents worked for better management and protection of Yellowstone resources and how they fought to have the boundaries extended and how they mobilized the rank and file of sportsmen. It was not until 1887 that these men were formally joined together in the club, and legislation concerning these issues did not pass until the 1890s. But it was during the debates of the 1880s that progress was made toward the goals of Yellowstone conservation. These activities tell of the footwork done before the legislation was passed, and show who was responsible.

First, the Boone and Crockett Club antecedents clarified a set of values associated with Yellowstone. These were forest and watershed, game, and geyser protection. The Organic Act that created the park was vague, and did not clearly emphasize what mattered most.

Mentions of forests and game and geysers are under a section telling of the power of the superintendent to make rules and regulations for the proper care and management of the park. "Such regulations shall provide for the preservation, from injury or spoilation, of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonders within said park, and their retention in their natural conditions... He shall provide against the wanton destruction of the fish and game found within said Park, and against their capture or destruction for the purposes of merchandise or profit."⁵³ Grinnell, Hague, Phillips, and Vest helped to expand upon these ideas and define the park in their legislative battles.

The values of forest and watershed and game protection that sportsmen-conservationists chose to expand upon in the debates of the 1880s were similar to wider movements around the nation. The Yellowstone debates provide an early example of how these developing ideas were applied to the first national park. Sportsmen-conservationists referenced back to the intentions of the Organic Act when explaining their viewpoints about the park, but a quick read of this act reveals that these men were really creating interpretations. If it was the intent of the park founders to create a forest, watershed, and game preserve, it surely was not explained in the Organic Act.

⁵³ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 471.

In the following decades these ideas would evolve further into forestry conservation and wildlife management. And different government bureaus, the Forest Service and the National Park Service, would focus on these values in different ways as part of their mission statements. The Yellowstone debates of the 1880s reveal an early defining stage in the development of the national park concept.

This period in Yellowstone history shows the complicated nature of the early conservation movement and its association with the sporting movement. Yellowstone conservationists have been identified with the sporting movement by their membership in the Boone and Crockett Club, their writings in a sporting journal, and their outdoor sporting activities. The values they presented concerning Yellowstone help to connect them with both the sporting movement and the conservation movement. The antecedents of the Boone and Crockett Club, and later the club itself, were concerned with more than big-game protection. They placed a high value on forest and watershed protection and its economic significance to the country--this was a cornerstone of the conservation movement of the Progressive Era. Sportsmen-conservationists clarified and promoted values associated with the sporting and early conservation movements during the 1880s.

This illustrates an important point: the mixed or multidimensional nature of the individuals involved in the

conservation crusade in Yellowstone. These men were associated with the sporting movement and they promoted the values of the early conservation movement. Too often historians have focused solely on sportsmen's role in game protection. This is not a complete picture of what they actually did. Understanding that the sporting movement and the early conservation movement were intermixed in both their values and practices is an important point in conservation history.

In the 1890s the connections between the sporting and conservation movement became increasingly clear. The Boone and Crockett Club grew and helped with the passage of the Lacey Act for Yellowstone protection in 1894 and with the creation of a forest reserve on Yellowstone's boundaries in 1891. The president of the club, Theodore Roosevelt, became the president of the United States and led the conservation crusade of the nation. These activities and the people involved link the Yellowstone conservation crusade of the 1880s with the conservation crusade of the Progressive reform moment. That will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

YELLOWSTONE AND THE BOONE AND BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB:

THE FOREST RESERVE AND THE LACEY ACT

Today many environmental groups take a real interest in Yellowstone affairs. They monitor the park service management of issues such as wolf reintroduction, the handling of grizzly bears and bison. These groups profoundly affect park operations. The same was true in the late nineteenth century when a small group of sportsmen in the Boone and Crockett Club took an interest in Yellowstone. Indeed, the Boone and Crockett Club, ostensibly a group devoted to big game hunting, functioned as an early conservation lobby. Preserving Yellowstone was one of the club's primary activities during this period. In the 1890s, members of the Boone and Crockett Club were able to implement their conservation agenda with the passage of the Lacey Act and executive designation of the Yellowstone Forest Reserve, milestones in park history.

A major step in the development of Yellowstone management came with the arrival of the military in 1886. The military brought an order and manpower to the park that had not existed under the previous civilian

administrations.¹ Captain Moses Harris was the first acting military superintendent of Yellowstone, serving from August 20, 1886, to June 1, 1889. Captain Frazier Augustus Boutelle replaced Harris and served until February 16, 1891. George Smith Anderson was the third acting military superintendent serving from February 16, 1891, to June 23, 1897.

Game protection expanded with the arrival of the military. The killing of park wildlife continued to be a problem in Yellowstone. Park employees were fed park game, visitors at times shot game on their tours through the park, and market hunters continued to enter the park to make a living off the supply of game. Although the Secretary of the Interior had issued an order prohibiting hunting and regulating fishing, the illegal taking of animals continued to be a problem in the 1880s. The arrival of the military helped with this problem through an established system of management, which modified to fit the park situation. For example, under the administration of Captain Harris, winter ski patrols of the backcountry were conducted to curbe poaching activities.² In 1890, Captain Boutelle recommended the construction of backcountry cabins to provide shelter

¹ See Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 453-455, for biographies on these military superintendents.

² See Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 23 and Schullery, *Yellowstone Ski Pioneers*, 70-97.

for the soldiers during their patrols.³ In addition to looking for poachers, these patrols surveyed and reported on the conditions of game.

Captain Boutelle also started an extensive program of fish stocking to improve the quality of fishing. Early explorers had found that some waters were barren of fish. Captain Boutelle, an avid angler, also noticed this and recommended a fish stocking program. He wrote to Col. Marshall McDonald of the U.S. Fish Commission for assistance with the problem, and in the fall of 1889 the two began to stock park waters with fish.⁴ This program was the beginning of "fisheries management" that has continued to the present day.

Bison protection and management was another program started under the military management. In 1894 it was believed that the remaining bison in the park were doomed unless some actions were taken. By the fall of 1895, Superintendent Anderson ordered the construction of a pen to house and protect bison on Alum Creek.⁵ This was the beginning of a bison management program that eventually imported animals from other parts of the country, fed and

³ Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 26.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 88-89.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 68 and Schullery, *Ski Pioneers*, 116. The plan to pen bison in the winter of 1895 did not work well. The pens were stocked with hay to attract the bison, but that winter was mild so natural food available.

protected them. It was believed to be a last chance effort to save the remaining bison.

In addition to protecting the game and stocking the fish, the army also aggressively battled forest fires. The soldiers stationed in Yellowstone provided additional manpower to protect the park resources that was lacking under the civilian administrations.

Although the military improved resource protection in the park, it was still hampered by a lack of legal authority to enforce rules and regulations. The clause in the Organic Act which allowed for the expulsion of people violating rules of the park became very significant during the army administration. Legal punishment was limited to creative interpretations of this clause. People who broke the law had their property confiscated and were expelled from the park, but no other punishment was allowed for. So although the army brought order and direction to the management of the park, it was still hampered by a lack of legal authority to punish wrong doers.

Boone and Crockett Club antecedents supported the new order and resource protection efforts under the military management throughout the 1880s and 1890s. While Superintendents Harris, Boutelle, and Anderson managed the park, sportsmen-conservationists George B. Grinnell, Arnold Hague, William H. Phillips, George G. Vest, and Theodore Roosevelt worked for Yellowstone in the East. The

superintendents and the eastern sportsmen followed events in Yellowstone, updating each other on the needs and condition of the park. For example, Grinnell reported on park activities in the pages of *Forest and Stream*. He updated his readers on the conditions of game, told of scouting expeditions, reprinted articles from correspondents in the park (notably Elwood Hofer), wrote detailed articles about the attempts to stock fish, and repeatedly wrote of the sorry condition of bison in the park. He kept his readership informed of the condition of the natural resources, and told how the new military management was handling their duties.

While the management of the park was improving with the arrival of the military, conservation efforts were also becoming more organized with the creation of the Boone and Crockett Club in 1887, which would prove to be very critical for Yellowstone. At a dinner party of friends in December of 1887 Theodore Roosevelt suggested that a group of big-game hunters gather from time to time to discuss subjects of interest.⁶ Initially the club size was limited to 30, but later this number increased to 100. Each member was to have killed one species of big game.⁷ Sport hunting was the

⁶ George Bird Grinnell, ed., *American Big Game in Its Haunts: The Book of the Book; The Boone and Crockett Club* (New York: *Forest and Stream* Publishing Company, 1904), 13.

⁷ "The Boone and Crockett Club," *Forest and Stream* 30(8 Mar. 1888): 124.

central theme of the club, but soon after its formation it became apparent that Yellowstone protection was also a major issue. The significance of Yellowstone to this sporting group was shown in its membership. When first formed, club members included men who had battled throughout the 1880s for park protection—George Bird Grinnell, Arnold Hague, and William Hallett Phillips. Club records show that by 1903 other important Yellowstone conservationists were associated with the club. Col. George S. Anderson was a regular member while Major Moses Harris, Hon. George G. Vest, and Hon. John F. Lacey were listed as associate members. General Philip Sheridan, who had died in 1888, was listed as an honorary member, deceased.⁸ The membership of the club represented many of the influential people in Yellowstone's early conservation crusade.

Other club members were from well-to-do eastern families. Historian John Reiger writes that they were members of the patrician class; they held their meetings at the University Club in Manhattan or the Metropolitan Club in Washington, D.C.⁹ Club members were well educated and held powerful positions in their respective fields.

Not much has been written about the Boone and Crockett Club, and early club records are scarce, but a great wealth

⁸ *Boone and Crockett Club: Officers, Constitution and List of Members for 1903*, Boone and Crockett Club records, Missoula, Montana.

⁹ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 120.

of information exists on the club's first president, Theodore Roosevelt. Of particular interest and relevance to the nature of the Boone and Crockett Club and its interest in Yellowstone was Roosevelt's social background, which provides insight into the nature of the Boone and Crockett Club.¹⁰ Roosevelt came from a class of wealthy old money in New York known as the Knickerbockers. These people prided themselves on their philanthropic activities. They believed it was their social duty to assist the less fortunate. They also prided themselves on traditions, proper social behavior, and being discrete with displays of wealth.

Eastern social structure began to change in the 1870s and 1880s with the arrival of a new class of extremely wealthy industrialists. This group attempted to work their way into the social circles of the more aristocratic old money, and while doing so, broke many of the cultural traditions on which the Knickerbockers had prided themselves. For example, some of the very wealthy newcomers were showy with their money, hosting lavish parties and living in extravagant houses.

The arrival of the new-money industrialists in New York's elite circles was upsetting to Theodore Roosevelt. Kathleen Dalton explains, "Multimillionaires who were 'physically timid' sickened him, just as 'over-civilized,

¹⁰ Information on Roosevelt's background comes from Kathleen Dalton, "Theodore Roosevelt, Knickerbocker Aristocrat," *New York History* 67(1): 39-65.

over-sensitive, over-refined' newcomers who imitated Europeans offended Theodore's keen sense of Americanness."¹¹ This helps explain some of Roosevelt's zeal to control big business once he became president. "In retrospect," Dalton says, Roosevelt stands out as the quintessential aristocrat. His knickerbocker background defined his class attitudes, shaped his post-philanthropic reform interests, and provided him with a political mission: fighting against the nouveau rich plutocracy."¹²

The creation of a well-to-do hunting club that promoted sportsmanship, battled railroad interests in Yellowstone, and promoted conservation is easily understood in the context of Roosevelt's social background. Although many people hunted and fished, elements of the sporting movement had European aristocratic roots. Done properly, hunting was a noble activity that developed character. The Boone and Crockett Club was composed of American "aristocrats," attempting to reform hunting practices. In the case of Yellowstone, club members focused their efforts on conserving the park, its game and forests, and claimed their efforts were for the benefit of all people. The chief opponent of conservation efforts were the railroad interests. Following the Civil War, railroad companies, supported by the government, became an extremely powerful

¹¹ Dalton, "Theodore Roosevelt," 51.

¹² Ibid., 64.

part of industrialization and generated a lot of wealth for the owners. This "new wealth" resulting from industrialization was a social concern for Roosevelt in New York. The Boone and Crockett Club embodied an aristocratic heritage, the rejuvenating qualities of outdoor sport, and a battle against the new money and power of the railroad. The battle in Yellowstone was a small battle, maybe in part reflecting the class struggle between the old money and new industrialists in the East.

The formation of the club facilitated and unified conservation activities by bringing together a small powerful group of elite easterners. The club considered itself a great asset to the cause of park protection, including those that showed a great interest in obtaining legislation to protect the game and forests. "One of the main objects of the society was the preservation of the game and the forests. It brought together a body of men whose motives were entirely disinterested, and who were able to make their influence felt."¹³

Club activity became apparent in 1889 when members appeared before a house committee. Long-time Yellowstone supporters Arnold Hague and William Hallett Phillips were joined by fellow club members Gen. B.H. Bristow and Theodore

¹³ Theodore Roosevelt and George Bird Grinnell, eds., *Hunting In Many Lands: The Book of the Boone and Crockett Club*, (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Company, 1895) 411.

Roosevelt in testifying before the House Public Lands Committee regarding Yellowstone legislation. Captain F. A. Boutelle, the acting military superintendent of Yellowstone, was also present. Protective legislation, railroad access through the park, and boundary reductions were discussed at this hearing. The boundary reduction was proposed to allow the railroad access to Cooke City without entering the park. General Bristow gave a speech in favor of protection urging the importance of better law for park protection.¹⁴

At the 1891 annual Boone and Crockett Club meeting Yellowstone protection was a major point of discussion, and the club's support for Yellowstone protection became very clear. Members discussed the legislative efforts and the hazards facing park resources, and they created a resolution in support of Yellowstone protection. This seemed to galvanize club support for the Yellowstone cause.

The meeting was held on January 14, 1891, at the Metropolitan Club. Fitting with the fine atmosphere of the Metropolitan Club were the dignitaries in attendance including Arnold Hague, William Hallett Phillips, George Bird Grinnell, and (presiding over the meeting) club president Theodore Roosevelt. Also in attendance were a number of Washington officials, including Secretary of the

¹⁴ "The Park bill hearing," *Forest and Stream* 34(3 Apr. 1890): 207.

Interior Noble, Secretary of War Proctor, Secretary Langley of the Smithsonian Institute, and members of Congress.

Grinnell wrote a summary of the meeting in *Forest and Stream*. He explained, "After the cigars had been brought on the president rose, and in a few well chosen words explained the objects of the club and the special reasons which brought this delegation to Washington at this time. This was, he said, to urge the passage by the House of Representatives of the Senate bill for the protection of the Yellowstone National Park."¹⁵ The resolution for Yellowstone protection that was passed at the clubs business meeting was read. It stated that the club, who represented sportsmen across the nation, urged passage of protective legislation and was emphatically against the granting of a right of way for the railroad.¹⁶

After Roosevelt spoke he called upon a few others to tell of their dealings with Yellowstone affairs and their experiences in the area. William Hallett Phillips gave a summary of the legislative efforts that "friends of the park" had been pursuing for the previous eight years. He told of the vague nature of the Organic Act and the need for better protection of the reservation. Secretary Noble spoke of the value of parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite, in a

¹⁵ "Boone and Crockett Club Meeting" *Forest and Stream* 36(22 Jan. 1891): 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

nation where settlement was rapidly filling up the open spaces. He also spoke of the forests and watersheds of the nation and the danger of fires in the park. Professor Langley of the Smithsonian and George Bird Grinnell spoke of the danger to the remaining wild animals in the nation. The park's needs were discussed late into the evening. This early meeting of the Boone and Crockett Club shows the power developing behind Yellowstone conservation generated by the club.

In 1891 one of the major objectives that the Boone and Crockett Club antecedents had worked for in the 1880s finally came to fruition. Land next to the park was set aside as a forest reserve. The creation of this reserve was the result of a growing national interest in forest conservation and the tenacious work of Yellowstone sportsmen-conservationists Arnold Hague and William Hallett Phillips.

Ideas of forestry conservation developed and matured following the Civil War. In 1876 Franklin B. Hough received an assignment funded by Congress to investigate forestry consumption and methods to renew the forests.¹⁷ This helped lead to the creation of the Division of Forestry of the Department of Agriculture in 1881. Bernhard E. Fernow became its chief in 1886. William Henry Brewer, a professor of agriculture at Yale's Sheffield Scientific School,

¹⁷ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 75.

started giving lectures on forestry conservation in 1873.¹⁸ And in sporting journals, such as *Forest and Stream*, the need to conserve and protect the nations' forests was a prominent issue.

Connected with the growing national concern for forestry conservation were the efforts of Yellowstone sportsmen-conservationists. In Yellowstone, they argued for the extension of Yellowstone's boundaries throughout the 1880s, with the goal of protecting forests and watershed and providing a refuge for the game. Repeatedly legislative efforts to extend the park boundaries were blocked by the powerful railroad lobby. But in 1888 the idea of granting the President the power to set aside forest reserves was introduced in a piece of legislation. This legislation failed to pass the Senate but the idea resurfaced in 1891. This became a successful legislative method used for setting aside the land next to Yellowstone.¹⁹

On March 3, 1891, a bill repealing Timber Culture law was passed, and under that piece of legislation the president was given authority to set aside forest reserves. Arnold Hague and William Hallett Phillips quickly drafted a proposal to have the a forest reserve created on Yellowstone's boundary, similar to the extensions they had

¹⁸ Reiger, *American Sportsmen*, 78.

¹⁹ Steen, "The Origins and Significance of the National Forest System," 6.

lobbied for during the 1880s. They sent their recommendations on to Secretary of the Interior John Noble, and he made a recommendation to the President. The President agreed and set aside the land to the southeast of Yellowstone as the nation's first forest reserve. This forest reserve was later renamed the Shoshone National Forest.²⁰

The Boone and Crockett Club and its members played a significant role in the creation of this reserve. After the reserve was created, Secretary Noble wrote to Theodore Roosevelt, president of the club, noting that he had received a copy of the club's resolutions, and thanking him for the club's recognition of his actions. Noble was present at the Boone and Crockett Club meeting held earlier that winter, and was aware of the club's wishes for Yellowstone. He wrote of the assistance provided by the club members Arnold Hague and William Hallett Phillips. "Your associates, Mr. Phillips and Mr. Hague, brought the business to my attention. Having been familiar with the subject, I had no hesitation in immediately advising the President favorably as to the proclamation, and I am glad to see that he has promptly appreciated the situation and acted as he did."²¹

²⁰ Ibid., 7.

²¹ John W. Noble to Theodore Roosevelt, 16 Apr. 1891, Yellowstone Archives, Doc. No. 254.

Grinnell reported the creation of the forest reserve in *Forest and Stream*, and explained the long history of attempts for the extension of the park. "For about ten years we have been working to secure for the Yellowstone Park an enlargement of its area, and proper protection for its forests, game and natural wonders."²² Bills were introduced in four successive sessions of Congress, passing the Senate but defeated in the House. A small powerful railroad lobby was usually the cause of the defeat. This lobby fought against protective legislation that did not allow a right of way for the railroad. Grinnell went on to explain the efforts of Arnold Hague and William Hallett Phillips, and give them credit for their success.

Arnold Hague wrote of the creation of the forest reserve to Captain George S. Anderson, the acting military superintendent in the park. He too mentioned the long struggle to extend the park's boundaries, and that the land in the forest reserve had long been intended to be an addition to the park. Hague also told how the reserve finally was set aside. "Just before the last Congress adjourned it passed a bill repealing what is known as the Timber Culture law, and under this bill the President was given authority to set aside such forest reservations as he deemed proper. Phillips and I brought the matter to the

²² "A new forest reserve," *Forest and Stream* 36(9 Apr. 1891):225.

attention of the secretary of the interior, who took an interest in the matter, and the result was the proclamation of the President."²³ Hague also suggested to the Secretary of the Interior that the land be managed by Yellowstone, practically making it a part of the park in Hague's view.

These letters concerning the creation of the forest reserve clearly show the influential role of Boone and Crockett Club members in its creation. Because of their efforts the land next to Yellowstone was finally set aside. Although not a clear extension of the park, which had been hoped for, it was a major step.

As these letters indicate, Hague and Grinnell viewed the forest reserve as an extension of Yellowstone. This view remained very strong in the following years as discussions of how to manage the forest reserve occurred. Shortly after the forest reserve was formed, Yellowstone Park management was extended over the area. Superintendent Anderson explained that an order on April 14, 1891, placed the reserve under the jurisdiction of Yellowstone, so that the reserve "thus in every respect became a part of the Park itself."²⁴ Management of the forest reserve by the military stationed in Yellowstone was viewed as quite logical by Boone and Crockett advocates.

²³ Arnold Hague to Capt. George S. Anderson, 14 Apr. 1891, Yellowstone Archives, Doc. No. 955, 1-2.

²⁴ Roosevelt and Grinnell, eds., *Hunting In Many Lands*, 378-379.

The idea that the forest reserve was actually a part of the park was again reiterated a few years latter when there were attempts to alter its boundaries. Legislation was introduced that would formally add the reserve to Yellowstone but reduce its size. George Bird Grinnell opposed this reduction, and wrote to the Chairman of the Committee on Territories Faulkner, explaining that the reserve was managed by Yellowstone, "thus practically--if not formally--part of the park."²⁵

The first forest reserve was viewed by sportsmen-conservationists as a boundary extension of Yellowstone; the only difficulty was the manner in which it was created. Because the land was created as a forest reservation, not a formal boundary extension, the land never became a part of the national park, even though that was the intent of sportsmen-conservationists who had fought for the extensions throughout the 1880s.

So out of the drive to extend Yellowstone's boundaries, the first forest reserve was created. This reserve was the first of many that would develop into the national forests we have today. Understanding the origins of this reserve provides an example of the evolving nature of concepts of national parks and national forests. A park is viewed as a place to preserve and a forest a place to conserve and use

²⁵ George Bird Grinnell to Hon. Chas. J. Faulkner, 2 Apr. 1894, Yellowstone Archives, Doc. No. 937, 4.

wisely. This was not the original intent but the way things have evolved because of the initial way the forest reserve was created.

Just as sportsmen-conservationists continued to work toward their goals during the 1890s, so too did the railroad lobby. The efforts to reduce the northern boundary of the park to allow rail access to Cooke City reached a high point in 1892. On February 26, a segregation bill was introduced, and proceeded to pass the Senate. In a letter from Superintendent Anderson to the Secretary of the Interior the situation was described.²⁶ Anderson strongly opposed segregation, and wrote of the destruction to game that would occur if it should occur. And he wrote that T.F. Oakes, president of the Northern Pacific Railroad announced that his company had examined the various routes to Cooke City and under no circumstances would build a railroad to the mines. This segregation attempt, like the others that had proceeded it, failed to pass the full Congress.

The complexity of the Cooke City railroad issue is revealed in this letter. In the 1880s railroad interests included the Northern Pacific Railroad and others with a desire to have a railroad provide an outlet for Cooke City. Tracks in Yellowstone would have given the Northern Pacific access in the park, and provided business opportunities for

²⁶ Anderson to Secretary of the Interior, 3 Dec. 1892, Yellowstone Archives, vol. IV, Letters Sent 140-145.

locals. Those in favor of the railroad to Cooke City at times supported a track through the park, and at other times favored segregation. These suggestions were strongly opposed by sportsmen-conservationists, who frequently claimed the real reason behind the Northern Pacific interest in Cooke City was a track inside Yellowstone which would have provided tourist transportation opportunities. In 1892 the segregation movement reached a high point. Probably local business interests lobbied for segregation, yet the Northern Pacific president had stated his company would not build a track. It seems logical that the Northern Pacific would not have supported segregation as strongly if its real interest was tourist transportation in the park, for segregation would have eliminated the need for tracks in Yellowstone. After this point, the issue of a railroad to Cooke City and the issue of segregation lost strength.

Adding to the complexity of this issue were the varying positions about boundaries taken by park conservationists. Opposition to railroad tracks in Yellowstone was so strong that at times cutting off northern portions of the park, where tracks were proposed, was suggested by sportsmen-conservationists. Suggestions of boundary reductions were made to ensure that the railroad was not allowed in Yellowstone. At most times sportsmen-conservationists were fiercely opposed to segregation attempts. These struggles occurred throughout the 1880s and early 1890s. After 1892

the Cooke City railroad issue lost strength, a major victory for sportsmen-conservationists. After years of struggle, the railroad was not allowed access and the boundary was not changed.

With the weakening of railroad opposition, the route for protective legislation was cleared, and in 1894 the Lacey Act was past. This was an important step in strengthening Yellowstone management, defining a judicial system and giving park managers more power to protect resources. Since the park was created its management lacked authority. The Lacey Act helped to define and establish a judicial system, making all hunting illegal, and providing additional fishing regulations. In essence it gave the park the legal abilities to protect park resources, and prosecute those who broke the law. Even though there were repeated attempts at this type of legislation during the 1880s, all failed until 22 years after the park was created. A strange event helped to secure the passage.

Early in the winter of 1893-1894 a poacher named Ed Howell, who worked out of the Cooke City area, set up camp near Astringent Creek.²⁷ Superintendent Anderson was aware of Howell's activities and sent a scouting party to investigate. On March 11, Scout Felix Burgess left the Lake

²⁷ The information on this event comes from recounts written by Superintendent Anderson, Roosevelt and Grinnell, eds., *Hunting in Many Lands* 395-402, and 403-423; Haines, *The Yellowstone Story*, vol. 2, 63; and Schullery, *Yellowstone's Ski Pioneers*, 98-115.

Hotel, the next day he found tracks, and the following day he found a stash of bison skulls hanging in a tree. Soon after that he found Howell in the process of skinning bison he had just killed. Scout Burgess made a daring capture of Howell by crossing a field of snow, well in range of Howell's rifle. Howell was arrested and brought back to the guardhouse in Mammoth.

At the time of Howell's arrest an expedition through the park sponsored by *Forest and Stream* (called the Yellowstone National Park Game Expedition) was in the park. Grinnell had frequently printed stories of explorations through the park and conditions of game. This group included Emerson Hough, a correspondent for *Forest and Stream*, T.E. "Billy" Hofer, a local guide, and photographer Frank J. Haynes.

Hofer was a mountain man with diverse talents and a history of updating *Forest and Stream* on Yellowstone affairs. He provided Grinnell articles on Yellowstone game, road conditions, and general affairs. He was also a local guide who often worked with Boone and Crockett Club members, guiding them on hunting trips. On this trip he taught the less-experienced reporter about getting around Yellowstone in the winter. This reporting exploration led by Hofer and Hough proved to be very significant.

Hough was visiting with Superintendent Anderson when the news of Howell's arrest came in, and a few days later

Hough was able to interview both Burgess and Howell at Norris as the party was headed toward the Mammoth guardhouse. Soon Grinnell had Hough's story in *Forest and Stream* headquarters and proceeded to publish it. Once again Grinnell publicized wrong doings and Yellowstone to a national audience in *Forest and Stream*, but this event caused a great deal of public concern.

The arrest of Howell created such an outcry for a few reasons. First, for years poaching had occurred and park authorities had very limited ability punish the offenders. Poachers were brought back to Mammoth, often their property was confiscated, and they were ordered to leave the park. Although there were rules against poaching, the management in the park did not have the legal authority to severely punish the offenders. For years Yellowstone conservationists had lobbied for protective legislation in *Forest and Stream* that would create an effective judicial system for Yellowstone management, so the readers of *Forest and Stream* were well aware of the poaching problems.

The second significant point about this poaching incident was that Howell was poaching bison, an animal whose population numbers were greatly reduced during the market-hunting era of the 1870s. Throughout the 1880s, *Forest and Stream* printed articles about the slaughter of park wildlife by market hunters. Bison were the animal in the most danger of extinction. At one time there were millions of these

animals across the plains. But with the settlement of the West reducing their habitat and market hunting reducing their numbers, Yellowstone became important because it contained a remnant bison population. Although *Forest and Stream* had carried on a crusade to protect a number of game animals during the 1880s, bison were viewed as the most endangered.

Within a week of the printing of the article, Representative John Lacey of Iowa introduced legislation for the protection of Yellowstone. Lacey knew first hand the problems with law and order in Yellowstone for on a visit to the park the stage coach he was traveling on was robbed. The robbers escaped punishment because of the doubts existing as to whether any law was applicable.²⁸

The bill Lacey introduced was very similar to bills that had been repeatedly introduced by Senator Vest, and had passed the Senate a number of times. Lacey included recommendations by members of the Boone and Crockett Club in this legislation²⁹ and members of the club went to work in Washington, lobbying influential people.

In a letter to Captain Anderson, the acting military superintendent of Yellowstone, Theodore Roosevelt wrote about his efforts. At the time Roosevelt was the president

²⁸ Grinnell and Roosevelt, eds., *Hunting in Many Lands*, 404.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 415.

of the Boone and Crockett Club. He had served in the New York legislature, run for the governor of New York, and was appointed by the President as a member of the Civil Service Commission.³⁰ He had political connections and used his influence in Washington, D.C.:

"I am going to use the recent unfortunate slaughter of buffaloes for all it is worth for trying to get legislation through. I haven't the least idea whether we will be successful or not. I have seen half a dozen Senators about it already."³¹

William Hallett Phillips also wrote to Captain Anderson about the proposed legislation and the Howell episode. Regarding the legislation, he told Anderson of his recommendations to make the police bill stronger. Regarding Howell, he said "Roosevelt says you made the greatest mistake of your life in not accidentally having that scoundrel killed and he speaks as if he would have shot him on the spot."³² These letters show how club members communicated with each other and worked together for the protection legislation.

³⁰ George B. Grinnell, ed., *American Big Game in its Haunts*, 13-14.

³¹ Theodore Roosevelt to Capt. George S. Anderson, 30 Mar. 1894, Yellowstone Archives, Doc. No. 1286.

³² William Hallett Phillips to Captain George Anderson, 31 Mar. 1894, Yellowstone Archives, Doc. No. 1217-A.

The bill became law on May 7, 1894. It made misdemeanors an offense and helped to define a judicial system, providing park managers with the power to enforce rules and regulations and protect park resources. This legislation had been debated for 14 years, and when finally passed Boone and Crockett Club members claimed credit. In a book about the Boone and Crockett Club published in 1895, edited by Grinnell and Roosevelt the events surrounding the passage of the Lacey Act were written about. These passages show the leading role the club held in the sporting movement and how the Yellowstone protection was a leading objective of the club:

"This law, as finally enacted, owed much to the efforts and labor of members of the Boone and Crockett Club, who for many years had persistently struggled to induce Congress to pass such necessary legislation. The final triumph is a matter of congratulation to every sportsman interested in the protection of game, and fulfills one of the great objects sought to be attained by the foundation of the Club."³³

George Bird Grinnell gave special credit to William Hallett Phillips for his efforts in a *Forest and Stream* article. Much of the work for Yellowstone protective

³³ Roosevelt and Grinnell, eds., *Hunting In Many Lands*, 403.

legislation was done behind the scenes, and it is not easy to show whose efforts were the most significant. But Grinnell identified who he believed was very influential. He wrote of Phillips anonymously and described how he labored on behalf of the park watching legislation, reporting to the Secretary of the Interior, and contributing his legal knowledge. "It is not too much to say that he has done more than anyone else has done, and perhaps more than any one else could have done, toward bringing about the happy result that we announce to-day."³⁴

The identity of William Hallett Phillips was revealed just three years later in 1897 when he died in a boating accident. Grinnell took that opportunity to identify Phillip's efforts in his obituary notice. "It is as the earnest and successful worker in behalf of the Park that we believe he would most desire to be remembered, and it is certain that the great services which he has performed for it are his most fitting memorial."³⁵

The results of the crusade for protective legislation and boundary expansion represented an early conservation victory—a turning point in Yellowstone management. Studying these events illustrates the significant role of Boone and Crockett Club and its antecedents, in the outcome. They

³⁴ "Protection for the Park," *Forest and Stream*, 42(12 May 1894): 397.

³⁵ "William Hallett Phillips," *Forest and Stream* XLVIII(15 May 1897): 381.

acted as an early conservation group in Yellowstone at a time when the ideas of conservation were only just developing.

Boone and Crockett Club members continued to be leaders in conservation efforts following the Yellowstone conservation battle. Future club membership represented leaders of the national conservation movement and national parks movement including Horace Albright, the first superintendent of Yellowstone under the National Park Service administration, and Steven Mather, the first director of the National Park Service. The Boone and Crockett Club was composed of luminaries in the national conservation crusade.

Theodore Roosevelt would go on to become President of the United States in 1901. In that position he led a national conservation crusade and made great strides. Roosevelt used his position to greatly expand the land set aside in national preserves such as national parks, national forests, and national monuments. The events in Yellowstone during the 1880s and 1890s reveal a crucial time of development of ideas about conservation that would grow during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt.

The conservation issues Roosevelt faced as president were similar to those in Yellowstone in the 1880s and 1890s. How was the country going to protect wildlands in the face of a rapidly growing industrialized nation? What values

were to be attributed to these lands making them worthy of preserving? What was the balance of power between the federal government and industries, such as the railroad, in managing public lands? How was the country to deal with industrialization and the excessive power and wealth it created in the hands of a few?

Similar to the conservationists' battle with the railroad interests in Yellowstone in the 1880s and 1890s, Roosevelt battled with big business in Washington, D.C. Early in his administration Roosevelt worked to curb and restrain the power of the railroads. In 1902 he attacked a large railroad holding company, the Northern Securities company, and in 1903, persuaded Congress to pass the Elkins Act, legislation aimed at controlling the power of the railroads. Roosevelt became known as a president that took on the powerful individuals created by industrialization.

Roosevelt's administration also used the power of the media to convince the American public of his ideas, using the press to expose corruption and promote his own conservation ideas. Stephen Ponder has written how Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, the head of the bureau of the Forestry, used the press to forward their conservation cause. "Central to Progressive reform was the presumption that concerned citizens, once informed about the facts of government and personal corruption, would demand reform of the economic excesses and inefficiencies of

industrialization."³⁶ It was hoped that once the public knew of the destruction of natural resources, they would be more supportive of government land management.

The activities of these sportsmen in the 1880s can be viewed as an early example of conservation which Roosevelt would develop during his presidency. Yellowstone sportsmen-conservationists fought for legislation that would ensure proper protection and management and expand park boundaries. To accomplish these ideals they battled against those associated with the railroad interests, exposing the "schemes" in the press to create public support for their policies. These were similar to the values and tactics that Roosevelt used during his presidency. Roosevelt provides a direct link between Yellowstone and the progressive conservation crusade of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Understanding this helps to put Yellowstone conservation activities in the context of the growing national Progressive movement.

In conclusion, this case study has examined the years between 1882 and 1894—a crucial period of development in Yellowstone. The Organic Act creating Yellowstone in 1872 was very vague, leaving a lot of room for interpretation concerning park management. During the 1880s and 1890s, a handful of men worked for more specific management

³⁶ Stephen Ponder, "Federal News Management in the Progressive Era: Gifford Pinchot and the Conservation Crusade" *Journal History* 13(2) Summer 1986: 43.

direction, extending the park boundaries, and stopping attempts to build a railroad into the park. These individuals were associated with the Boone and Crockett Club, part of the sporting movement that grew following the Civil War. Their efforts resulted in the creation of the first forest reserve on Yellowstone's border in 1891, preventing tracks into Yellowstone, and the passage of the Lacey Act in 1894. In the process, they created clearer ideas of the worth of Yellowstone: not just geysers, but game, forests, and watersheds. A few interesting conclusions can be drawn from this study.

First, this study demonstrates the significance of Boone and Crockett Club members in the Yellowstone conservation crusade of the 1880s and 1890s. Various histories of Yellowstone have told of these events and they have told of the actions of individuals, such as George G. Vest; and George B. Grinnell. But few scholars have connected the conservation activities of George B. Grinnell, George G. Vest, Phillip Sheridan, William H. Phillips, Arnold Hague, Theodore Roosevelt, Superintendent Harris and Anderson, with their association in the Boone and Crockett Club.

The connection between Yellowstone and the Boone and Crockett Club reveals the intertwined nature of the sporting and conservation movements. Today there is not a strong publicly perceived connection between hunting and

conservation, indeed, many environmentalists view hunting as a threat to conservation. Yet the Yellowstone situation in the 1880s and 1890s reveals how closely hunting and conservation were intertwined. Sportsmen involved in the Yellowstone conservation crusade were multidimensional, involved with both the sporting and conservation movements.

Another important finding of this study has been the values associated with Yellowstone that the early sportsmen-conservationists promoted. In the process of lobbying for protective legislation and expansion of the park, the conservationists were compelled to articulate a rationale for Yellowstone's significance. Repeatedly the game, forests, and watershed resources were used as justification for legislative action. The sportsmen-conservationists were interpreting and expanding the Organic Act thus creating an ever-more concrete ideal of conservation. In the process of doing so they were also explaining to the Congress and American public why the national park was significant and how it should be managed. In this way sportsmen helped clarify the broader question of what national parks ought to be and why they were important to American society.

Not only did sportsmen help define the national park idea, their interest in game and habitat protection had a significant impact on surrounding areas. By connecting game protection to forest and watershed management, the sportsmen

were instrumental in introducing the idea of national forests. Their lobbying led to creation of the nations first such forest, which they saw as an integral link to the park.

At the beginning of this study I asked why a group of sportsmen was so interested in Yellowstone in the 1880s and 1890s. Why did they work to eliminate hunting in Yellowstone? The answer lies in the fact that they were much more than hunters. They were conservationists born in the growing sporting movement.

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