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Evolution or Revolution: The Cultural Development of American Conservationism from U.S. Grant to Theodore Roosevelt

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to frame an understanding of the legal protections for American wilderness as a result of various cultural and intellectual movements in the United States during the middle to late nineteenth century. The paper considers the rise of scientific analysis of the American West, the humane movement, romanticizing of the West, and increased federal power after the Civil War as principal contributions to the development of conservationism. The paper also considers conservation policies adopted by post-Civil War U.S. presidents from U. S. Grant to Theodore Roosevelt.

KEYWORDS: History, United States History

Many Americans associate conservationism and federal action with the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, and while Roosevelt was the most vigorous promoter of conservationism to occupy the highest office up to that point, the history of land and wildlife conservation and government protection stretched back far earlier than the beginning of the twentieth century. In recognition of “the need for scientific wildlife and land management,” presidents from Ulysses Grant onwards considered themselves “conservationist-minded to some limited degree.”¹ The actions and attitudes of presidents from Grant to Theodore Roosevelt reflected an ongoing shift in how Americans, specifically wealthy and influential Americans centered in the northeast, thought about wilderness conservation. The romanticization of the wilderness, the development of a scientific attitude towards wildlife and the land, recent scientific innovations, and a higher tolerance for the use of federal power combined to create a cultural attitude that led to widespread legal protections for land and wildlife in the period after the Civil War. These developments demonstrated the powerful influence that culture exercised on legal changes and culminated in the explosion of executive action protecting wilderness and wildlife under President Theodore Roosevelt.

The development of post-Civil War conservationism was not new and did not occur in a vacuum. East coast elites like the Adams family pushed for wildlife protections early on during the young republic’s expansion. For example, “in 1828 President John Quincy Adams set aside more than 1,378 acres of live oaks on Santa Rosa Island” in Florida.² Early American artists and sportsmen also pushed for protective areas, such as George Catlin and John James Audubon. However, most Americans during the early nineteenth century did not hold conservationist sentiments. The American principle of property use butted against moves to protect valuable wildlife, with the early anti-conservationist sentiment exemplified by Andrew Jackson who in 1832 “denounced Adam’s tree farm as an un-American federal land grab, an unlawful attempt to deny Floridians timber to use as they saw fit.”³ American culture had a long way to go before the broader public viewed the expansive land protections sought by Theodore Roosevelt as acceptable.

Importantly, however, the idea of a conservationist ethos had begun to germinate among eastern elites. Another intellectual precursor to the larger conservationist culture was Henry David Thoreau, who in 1858 argued for “a need to save wilderness for wilderness’s sake.”⁴ Thoreau’s depictions of a solitary and untouched wilderness as the perfect location for man to find his true

¹ Douglas Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* (New York: Harper, 2009), 14.

² *Ibid.*, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

self touched a cultural nerve in nineteenth-century America that would later be advanced by men like John Muir.⁵ His high-minded approach to naturalism led to the development of a romantic view of the wilderness that men like Roosevelt embraced, but Thoreau was still an exception, even among conservationists. Instead, the conservationist pioneers prior to the Civil War remained “well-to-do Eastern Seaboard hunters [who] loomed over the early campaigns to create wilderness preserves.”⁶

Yet even though America’s elite embraced the conservationist movement, the idea of preserving large tracts of western land remained an unrealistic dream until after the Civil War. Preservation was unlikely because western expansion prior to the Civil War involved pioneer families and settlers who sought to use the vast, available land to their advantage, not protect it for a conservationist or even long-term economic purpose. Only after the Civil War did this cultural attitude begin to change. In *Exploration and Empire*, historian William H. Goetzmann broke down American exploration of the West into three phases, with the third phase occurring from 1860-1900, “when botanists, paleontologists, ethnographers, and engineers sought scientific information.”⁷ Goetzmann wrote that this more scientific age of western expansion “was also a time for sober second thoughts as to the proper nature, purpose, and future directions of Western Settlement. Incipient conservation and planning in the national interest became in vogue, signifying the way that the West had come of age and its future had become securely wedded to the fortunes of the nation.”⁸ Rather than seeking to exploit the natural landscape, Americans and the United States government sought to understand and preserve it and the wildlife it contained.

Some of the reasons why Americans became interested in a scientific understanding of the wilderness were economic. Historian Douglass Brinkley observed that after the Civil War “the U.S. Congress was eager to inventory the mineral wealth west of the Mississippi River,” where the government owned “more than 1.2 billion acres ... but had surveyed only about one-sixth of this land.”⁹ This desire to account for the wealth of the West led to the influx of scientific-minded individuals that Goetzmann described. As trained scientific

professionals began to enter the West with the goal of understanding it—not exploiting it, although that remained an objective—scientific analysis became the primary means of exploring and working on the frontier, rather than merely being a drag-behind.¹⁰

However, professional scientific work in the pursuit of economic gain was not the only factor contributing to a new cultural understanding of the vast wilderness of the West. Additionally, “starting after the Civil War, Americans were faced with the revolutionary impact of Darwinism.”¹¹ Published in 1858, Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* became the most hotly debated intellectual and scientific topic of the age. Darwin’s work revolutionized the way people understood biology, and that revolutionary understanding carried over into how upper-class and politically active Americans understood wildlife—both plants and animals. Rather than an economic resource, fauna were seen as items of profound scientific and cultural interest, as demonstrated by the advent of natural history museums, including the American Museum of Natural History in 1869, which Theodore Roosevelt, Sr. helped to found.¹²

Historian Darrin Lunde noted that the widespread distribution of Darwin’s work made “nature study all the rage in mid- to late-nineteenth-century America” and an important part of a young aristocrat’s education.¹³ The popularity of naturalist science and the opening of the West to scientific exploration created a profitable environment for scientific expeditions to the frontier. One of the most notable of those expeditions was the 1870 Marsh Expedition that traveled across the western prairie in search of fossils. The expedition discovered “over one hundred species of extinct vertebrates new to science” which attracted the attention of the scientific community as well as “the American public at large.”¹⁴ Science, that is science dedicated to understanding nature and the diversity of life, had the attention of Americans back east.

Darwinism and naturalism also had serious implications for recreational approaches to wildlife. Brinkley noted, “The Darwinian naturalists—including young Roosevelt—believed all animals and birds could feel pain; therefore, its deliberate infliction had to be stopped.”¹⁵ Stated in this way alone, the theories of

⁵ Timothy J. Curry and Kiernan O. Gordon, “Muir, Roosevelt, and Yosemite National Park as an Emergent Sacred Symbol,” *Symbolic Interaction* 40 (2017): 248.

⁶ Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸ William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (New York: Knopf, 1966), xiii-xiv.

⁹ Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 74.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹² Darrin Lunde, *The Naturalist: Theodore Roosevelt, a Lifetime of Exploration, and the Triumph of American Natural History* (New York: Crown, 2016), 34.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁵ Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 46.

Darwinian naturalists appeared to contrast sharply with the affinity most Eastern elites held for hunting, an activity they had been engaged in since before the days of John Quincy Adams and the earliest American conservationists. However, according to the naturalists, “hunting, if done correctly, was the *least* violent way for an animal to die.”¹⁶ For hunters who were concerned about the ethical treatment of animals—a sentiment that by the late-1800s was held by more than just radical naturalists—the concern was that animals be treated with respect and dignity, as befitted all creatures that could feel pain. Brinkley observed that hunters “insisted that they follow an ethical code that would protect ‘wild creatures’ from destruction by ‘greed and wantonness.’”¹⁷ The desire to protect the creatures of the wilderness from extinction caused by greed-driven killing frenzies was a principal cause for the eventual creation of dedicated wildlife reserves and parks.

Separate from, but related to, the burgeoning naturalist movement was the more urban-centered humane movement. In 1866, Henry Bergh founded the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.¹⁸ Centered in New York City, the ASPCA sought to funnel laws against animal cruelty through the city council and New York state legislature. Although derided as nothing more than a madman, Bergh’s efforts began to pay off by the mid-1870s as “laws against abuse of animals were starting to be seriously enforced.”¹⁹ The ASPCA saw pain inflicted upon animals in much the same way as the Darwinian naturalists, and the two movements, buoyed by their mutual desire to protect animals and preserve dignity in their treatment, led to growing acceptance of this protective ethos among the New York elite, including the Roosevelt family.

Most importantly, by revealing the unsavory reality of how people treated domesticated animals in New York, Bergh and the ASPCA made the political elite more comfortable with government regulation of animal treatment. Brinkley illustrated the rise of this sentiment with young Teddy Roosevelt as an example: “As a budding sportsman and an advocate of the humane movement, Roosevelt simply wanted hunting and the treatment of domesticated animals *regulated*. Species extinction, torture of animals, over hunting, lack of seasonal bag limits, cock and bull fighting—such activities were anathema to his gentlemanly outlook on life.”²⁰ This idea of protecting animals with the force of

law contrasted with the views of many Americans regarding their freedom to use their own property, echoing the early conflict between Adams and Jackson. However, the more genteel elements of American political life began to recognize the need for regulation of both domesticated animals and the vast wildlife of the West.

The confluence of scientific inquiry into wilderness, Darwinian naturalism, and the humane movement in the late-nineteenth century created an environment susceptible to increased regulatory protections for the wilderness, but another factor was the simple and timeless romanticization of the American West. Brinkley noted that during the 1860s and 1870s, “the interior American West was still a raw wilderness of snow-choked mountains, pristine forest, black lava rock, unknown canyons, and a buffalo-trodden prairie larger than Europe.”²¹ The massive and unfamiliar western landscape served as an object of the American cultural imagination from before the founding of the United States to the modern day. While this sentiment was often cerebral or philosophical, the effects of a romantic view of the West and its wilderness had a concrete impact on the protection of that wilderness.

The use of the photographic camera fostered the development of the western romanticism of the 1870s. Photographers such as W. H. Jackson and Timothy O’Sullivan captured the raw, natural beauty of Yellowstone, Utah’s Wasatch Mountains, and other western landmarks.²² Newspaper reports about the Washburn-Doane Expedition of 1870 and the Hayden expedition of 1871 captured the imagination of the public back east.²³ Western photographers also took dramatic photographs of explorers like George Armstrong Custer and John Wesley Powell. These photographs made their way back east into popular magazines and newspapers, and into the arms of young, aristocratic men with dreams of exploring the vast and unknown wilderness.²⁴ Those young men included Teddy Roosevelt, but also officials in the Department of the Interior and the Corps of Engineers who sought to understand—and protect—the vast western wilderness.

It was those government officials who had power to shape policy throughout the country. This reality was the result of years of increases in federal power since the Civil War. Towers noted that “federal actions during the Civil War

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

²² *Ibid.*, 74.

²³ Louis C. Cramton, *Early History of Yellowstone National Park and its Relation to National Park Policies* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1932), 12-24.

²⁴ Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 74.

era consolidated, in any reasonable definition of the term, the American nation.”²⁵ That consolidation concerned federal efforts to ensure the political rights of freed Blacks and the reintegration of the South into the Union, but it also extended to other areas of federal policy. For example, historian Charles W. Calhoun observed that the Republican Party in the 1880s embraced “government activism” for the purpose of assisting “the nation’s burgeoning industrialization” and economic growth.²⁶

Political scientists Jeremy D. Bailey and Brandon Rottinghaus observed that increased use of executive orders and presidential proclamations denoted the rise of federal executive power during the post-Civil War period.²⁷ Specifically, they explained that “presidents in the 23 years after Reconstruction issued just as many of these proclamations as did presidents in the 70 years before the Civil War.”²⁸ Notably, post-Reconstruction proclamations concerned domestic issues more often than proclamations prior to the Civil War, which typically concerned foreign policy. This suggested that presidents after 1860 were becoming more directly involved in domestic concerns than previous presidents. As a result of these movements and influences, Congress and various presidents began making moves to protect the wildlife and resources of the American West. One of the earliest steps occurred on June 30, 1864, when “Congress transferred the Yosemite Valley from the public domain to the state of California” with the stipulation that the land be protected and not sold.²⁹ While a relatively small step, the Yosemite Grant would set the stage for more substantive federal protections of wilderness. The first of those more substantive protections came eight years later in 1872 when President Ulysses S. Grant “signed into law the act that established the country’s first national park at Yellowstone.”³⁰ The establishment of Yellowstone National Park was an important step in the protection of the American wilderness. Not only did the federal government close off a large section of valuable land to use by private persons, but the reason for doing so was an appreciation “of the West for its majestic beauty,” not solely for the protection of long-term economic resources.³¹

However, concern about economic resources played a central role in other federal land protections of the period, especially in the newly acquired territory of Alaska. Secretary of State William Seward purchased Alaska from the Russian Empire in 1867 and its vast wilderness held many valuable natural resources, from geological riches to animal products. Out of concern that Japanese and Russian fishermen would kill American seals on islands in the Bering Sea, “President Grant set aside the Pribilof Islands to protect them in 1869.”³² Economic concerns drove Grant’s protections of Alaskan wildlife, but the result was the long-term health and survival of the Bering Sea seal population. Rather than exploit the natural environment of the wilderness, economic interests could protect it from devastating damage.

Grant was not the only president prior to Theodore Roosevelt who used federal power to protect the wilderness. President Benjamin Harrison sought to build upon Grant’s earlier work in Alaska and in 1891 he established the Afognak Island Forest and Fish Culture Reserve through an executive order.³³ As with Grant, economic concerns drove Harrison’s actions, and he was willing to use government power to “foster economic development,” including through aggressive wilderness protections.³⁴ Harrison’s activist approach to governmental intervention in the economy extended not only to Alaska. In 1891, “Harrison successfully pushed for a Forest Reserve Act, empowering the president to set aside public lands as national forests,” and he would go on to establish thirteen million acres of reserved forest.³⁵

The Forest Reserve Act of 1891, signed by Harrison, was the most important piece of federal legislation concerning conservation before the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. The vast forests of America were a vital natural resource since the days of the earliest settlers, and their destruction was in process from the moment Europeans arrived.³⁶ States began to investigate forest destruction in the 1860s, and Congress passed a law in 1873 that promoted “the growth of timber on western

²⁵ Frank Towers, “The Threat of Consolidation,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 9, (2019): 626.

²⁶ Charles W. Calhoun, *Benjamin Harrison*, The American Presidents Series, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr (New York: Times Books, 2005), 3.

²⁷ Jeremy D. Bailey and Brandon Rottinghaus, “The Development of Unilateral Power and the Problem of the Power to Warn: Washington through McKinley,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43, (2013) 187.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.

²⁹ Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 75-76.

³⁰ Joan Waugh, *U. S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth*, Civil War America Series, ed. Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 132.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

³² Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 76.

³³ *Ibid.*, 77.

³⁴ Calhoun, *Benjamin Harrison*, 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

³⁶ James L. Huffman, “A History of Forest Policy in the United States,” *Environmental Law* 8, (1978): 240.

prairies.”³⁷ However, these efforts failed to stop the destruction of forests. The Act of March 3, 1891—now known as the Forest Reserve Act—proved to be more successful than previous efforts at forest conservation. The act allowed the president to create forest reserves, within which no person could cut down trees, build roads, mine minerals, or graze animals.³⁸ The act gave the president an unprecedented amount of power when it came to federal land management, and was a clear sign that the nation had become more accepting of federal executive interference into economic spheres.

Grover Cleveland, whose two non-consecutive terms bookended Harrison’s, also used federal power to promote conservation. While governor of New York, Cleveland supported the state legislature in its move to “set aside lands in the vicinity of Niagara Falls deemed necessary to preserving the scenery.”³⁹ He was also a vigorous advocate for conservation of the Adirondack Mountains. Cleveland’s limited conservationist ethos followed him into federal office, and shortly after assuming the presidency for the second time in 1893 he requested that Congress pass legislation strengthening the Forest Reserve Act passed under Harrison.⁴⁰ Congressional representatives from western states ensured that no such legislation passed, but Cleveland did use his authority under the Forest Reserve Act to establish “two reserves in Oregon containing a combined total of four and one-half million acres.”⁴¹

Cleveland’s most expansive use of executive power for the sake of conservation came four years later at the end of his second term. After Congress failed to pass legislation that strengthened the Forest Reserve Act while also providing security for settlers, Cleveland took executive action and “created thirteen new forest reserves, incorporating over 21 million acres of timberland from Washington to Wyoming.”⁴² The reserves were dubbed the “Midnight Reserves” because Cleveland created them only ten days before his term expired.⁴³ Opposition was immediate among states in the West, but Cleveland’s actions were a sure sign that executive authority over conservation would be strongly exercised.

William McKinley inherited the ensuing controversy over the Midnight Reserves, and he continued Cleveland’s policy of standing by their creation while also pushing for a law that respected the proclaimed rights of pioneers in the West. Eventually Congress passed a compromise bill limiting some of the gains made under Cleveland, but McKinley was still generally favorable towards the limited conservation ethos held by Harrison and Cleveland.⁴⁴ Importantly, McKinley welcomed renowned forester Gifford Pinchot—who later became the first head of the United States Forest Service in 1905—into his administration.⁴⁵

The conservation efforts of Grant, Harrison, Cleveland, and McKinley indicated a clear cultural and legislative shift towards active federal legislation and executive action when it came to wilderness protections. Brinkley concluded that the actions of those presidents “proved that the federal government could, when necessary, intervene effectively to help mammals survive as species” and that the government would protect the wilderness environment “if the reason for doing so was economically compelling.”⁴⁶ However, their small steps did not mean that conservation was the primary government approach to dealing with wilderness. Resource extraction, economic development, and respect for private property ownership still dominated the United States government’s handling of the vast lands in the West.

For example, Grant oversaw the continued selling of federal public lands to settlers in an effort to civilize the vast emptiness of the West. Furthermore, in the same year that he established Yellowstone as a national park, Grant “sign[ed] off on a mining act” and in 1873 he signed three land management acts which “were meant to ‘unlock’ the treasures that would employ thousands and enrich business.”⁴⁷ Grant was also hesitant to enforce the conservation laws he did pass. For example, Yellowstone did not have a dedicated service to prevent the poaching of wildlife until military administration of the park was established in 1886, and even then, troops stationed at Yellowstone lacked the skills and support they needed to prevent poaching.⁴⁸ Additionally, “game laws were practically nonexistent in much of the interior west ... up

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 244.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 259-260.

³⁹ Henry F. Graff, *Grover Cleveland*, The American Presidents Series, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Times Books, 2002), 41.

⁴⁰ G. Michael McCarthy, “The Forest Reserve Controversy: Colorado under Cleveland and McKinley,” *Journal of Forest History* 20, (1976): 80.

⁴¹ Huffman, “A History of Forest Policy in the United States,” 260.

⁴² McCarthy, “The Forest Reserve Controversy,” 84.

⁴³ Huffman, “A History of Forest Policy in the United States,” 262.

⁴⁴ McCarthy, “The Forest Reserve Controversy,” 86.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁴⁶ Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 77.

⁴⁷ Waugh, *U.S. Grant*, 132.

⁴⁸ Thomas C. Rust, “An ‘Undesirable Station’: U.S. Army Soldiers at Fort Yellowstone and the Creation of the National Park Service Ranger Program,” *Montana The Magazine of Western History* 67, (2017): 20.

until the 1890s.”⁴⁹ The federal government was embracing wilderness conservation, but without the vigor and financial support necessary to adequately protect the land and wildlife.

Local resistance by some western states also limited how much presidents could accomplish when it came to conservation. This resistance was especially true regarding Cleveland’s efforts to establish forest reserves in Colorado. All four members of Colorado’s congressional delegation were opposed to Cleveland’s conservation efforts, viewing the reserves as a violation of the pioneers’ rights.⁵⁰ Even the creation of Yellowstone National Park in 1872 was not greeted with unanimous enthusiasm by nearby residents, as some feared that the park would keep the area a wilderness and prevent roads and other items of economic development from being built.⁵¹ These sentiments again echoed the perennial debate between frontier settlers and eastern elites—epitomized by Jackson and Adams—about how to deal with America’s vast natural resources.

By the 1890s however, American culture had changed since the Age of Jackson. Opposition to conservation among western settlers remained strong,⁵² but the cultural and intellectual effects of humane naturalism, romanticism, scientific interest in the West, and comfort with federal power created an environment where conservation protections became a legitimate legislative response to dealing with the wilderness. The actions of the presidents from Grant to McKinley demonstrated the development of that environment, especially through the establishment of forest reserves. Yet, as Brinkley observed, “they all lacked long-term vision, concerned instead with only the forest issues and water-shortage emergencies of the moment.”⁵³ However, their actions set the stage for a president steeped in an appreciation for nature and with the energy to utilize the power of the executive office to take dramatic steps in the name of wilderness conservation. Theodore Roosevelt was that president.

Roosevelt took the work that the previous administrations did on conservation and expanded upon it. Instead of remaining a significant but marginal part of a president’s agenda, Roosevelt turned conservation into “a national

priority.”⁵⁴ By the end of his time in office, Roosevelt created over 130 million acres of forest reserves, over 50 wildlife sanctuaries, five national parks (including Crater Lake and Mesa Verde), and 18 national monuments (including Devils Tower and much of the Grand Canyon).⁵⁵ Most importantly to Roosevelt, he created sixteen federal bird refuges, arguing that he had the power to do so because no law prevented him from it.⁵⁶ He shaped the way that conservation in America developed and used his energy and willingness for executive action to ensure that America’s natural resources and wilderness were conserved. Grant, Harrison, and Cleveland had all done impactful work on conservation, but Roosevelt was the paragon of executive action on behalf of conservation.

Notably, Roosevelt’s successful conservation policies were not implemented by him alone. Gifford Pinchot, who had served as the nation’s top forester in the McKinley administration, aided Roosevelt in enacting conservationist policies. Pinchot led the conservationist movement during its political acceptance in the 1890s, and he used his knowledge of forest science and his family connections to influence policy.⁵⁷ Pinchot’s view of conservation centered on the “efficient and rational management of natural resources,” and he lobbied for the transfer of the forest reserves from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture in order to maximize their efficient management.⁵⁸ Pinchot got his wish in 1905 when Congress approved the creation of the United States Forest Service under the purview of the Agriculture Department, where forestry management under Pinchot “met current needs without destroying future options.”⁵⁹ However, Pinchot’s actions do not diminish Roosevelt’s own investment in the adoption of conservationist policies. Both men led the movement that made conservation a leading national objective at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁶⁰

However, Roosevelt, more so than Pinchot, was an agglomeration of all the various movements that made conservation a cultural and legal reality in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century America. He was an ardent naturalist and hunter with a deep understanding of—and

⁴⁹ Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 9.

⁵⁰ McCarthy, “The Forest Reserve Controversy,” 82.

⁵¹ Cramton, *The Early History of Yellowstone*, 25.

⁵² McCarthy, “The Forest Reserve Controversy,” 88.

⁵³ Brinkley, *The Wilderness Warrior*, 14.

⁵⁴ Steven Mintz, “‘Taking Stock of Our National Resources’: A Request from Theodore Roosevelt, 1908,” *OAH Magazine of History* 21, (2007): 45.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁶ Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (New York: Random House, 2001), 519.

⁵⁷ Huffman, “A History of Forest Policy in the United States,” 258.

⁵⁸ Mintz, “‘Taking Stock of Our National Resources,’” 46.

⁵⁹ Huffman, “A History of Forest Policy in the United States,” 268.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 265.

fascination with—the natural sciences.⁶¹ He also consumed much of the romanticization about the West during his youth, and he identified strongly with the real and mythological qualities of the West throughout his life.⁶² In addition to his love of the wilderness and dedication to the cause of conservation, Roosevelt subscribed to a “philosophy of active, interventionist government.”⁶³ This philosophy manifested itself through Roosevelt’s aggressive use of executive power: he issued twice as many executive orders as Cleveland did, illustrating the prominent role that unilateral executive action had taken in American governance.⁶⁴

Roosevelt’s presidency proved the beginning of American conservation and the activist presidency. For example, historian Steven Mintz noted that Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot were the first individuals to use the word “conservation” by itself in reference to environmental policy.⁶⁵ However, it is more accurate to state that the ideas that lead to the peak of conservationism under Roosevelt were developing well before he took office. From the aristocratic approach to hunting reserves in the early American republic to the development of scientific and economic wilderness management after the Civil War, the cultural and intellectual movements that would give birth to conservationism had deep roots. The rise of those ideas and movements provided a striking lesson of the impact that culture had on the formation of law in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century.

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⁶¹ Curt Meine, “Roosevelt, Conservation, and the Revival of Democracy,” *Conservation Biology* 15, (2001): 829.

⁶² David McCullough, *Mornings on Horseback* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 316.

⁶³ Mintz, “‘Taking Stock of Our National Resources,’” 45.

⁶⁴ Bailey and Rottinghaus, “The Development of Unilateral Power,” 190.

⁶⁵ Mintz, “‘Taking Stock of Our National Resources,’” 45.