

From Competition to Cooperation: A History of Canada-US National Park Relations

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On 1-2 September 1965, two US National Park Service (NPS) representatives, Assistant Director Theodor Swem and Division of International Affairs Chief Gordon Fredine, met in Ottawa with Director J.R.B. Coleman, Assistant Director A. J. Reeve and other administrators from Canada's Nature and Historic Resources Branch.¹ A broad range of subjects was discussed, candid views exchanged, and a program arranged for the temporary detailing of specialists and professionals from one park agency to the other. At meeting's end, both sides agreed that the NPS would send observers to the Canadian national park superintendents' conference in November 1965 and they issued a joint statement praising their discussion and announcing plans to keep the conversation going.

One could be forgiven for assuming this meeting was just one more in a long, rich and active cross-border relationship between top-level administrators in two North American park agencies, but that assumption would be incorrect. Before the meeting, Parks Branch Director Coleman referred to it as likely to be 'very fruitful' and 'long overdue.' Shortly after the two services met, Director Hartzog reported that Swem and Fredine had returned to Washington with 'enthusiastic reports' that the meeting had been 'a most auspicious beginning.' The September 1965 meeting was exceptional by its very occurrence. Canada and the United States share - to varying

¹ The Canadian bureau responsible for the management of national parks shifted its institutional position and title several times over the decades. For clarity, we refer to it after this point as the Parks Branch.

degrees - topographies, climates, languages, cultures and histories, as well as a nearly 9,000 kilometer border, and their similar national park systems reflect this comparable natural and cultural heritage. But their two national parks services have had a more complicated relationship. They engaged in a respectful rivalry during their period of formal creation in the 1910s, moved to a more passive and intermittent one-way flow of information for the next half-century, and only in the 1960s developed the active binational partnership of mutual support and cooperation that continues to today.²

The establishment of Yellowstone by the US Congress in 1872 is widely acknowledged as the world's first national park law. From this came a common narrative that the US inspired the rest of the world, including Canada, to create and operate equivalent preserves. In recent decades, however, both the role of the US in the worldwide preservation movement and the managerial 'Yellowstone model' have been challenged by scholars and park managers in many countries. Most who study the world's protected areas accept the importance of Yellowstone in generating the national park concept as the 'ideal type of the national park brand and a standard for imitation worldwide, with diverse cultures reformulating its basic tenets of resource conservation to fit specific localities.'³ And, they also agree 'that the rhetoric around the 'good' of national parks' emanated from the United States and

² J.R.B. Coleman to George B. Hartzog, 24 June 1965, RG 79, Appendix 3, Administrative Files, 1949-71 (entry 11), Box 2175, L66 Foreign Parks and Historic Sites, Canada, 1954-67, US National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, USA [henceforth, NARA]; Hartzog to Coleman, 13 September 1965, RG 79, Appendix 3, Administrative Files, 1949-71 (entry 11), Box 2175, L66 Foreign Parks and Historic Sites, Canada, 1954-67, NARA.

³ Karen Jones, 'Unpacking Yellowstone: The American National Park in Global Perspective,' in Gissibl et al, *Civilizing Nature*, 33.

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helped convince other countries to establish their own units.⁴ But once a country's park system was established, how were basic tenets and practical approaches formulated and reformulated? From what internal and external sources arose the forces of change? And, having helped convince other countries to establish their own national parks, did the American system remain unaffected by the ferment it had inspired?⁵

This study of the relationship between the Canadian and American national park systems aims to foreground what has largely remained an overlooked history. While numerous scholars have noted how Yellowstone National Park acted as a model for Canada's first national park, Banff, and others have rightly linked the creation of America's national park service in 1916 to the creation of Canada's service in 1911, few have had much to say about ongoing system relations subsequent to 1916. In some instances, where Canadians and Americans interacted to enhance one or both sides' approach to an issue, scholars largely overlooked their dealings.⁶ And on those occasions when the two systems are

⁴ Jane Carruthers, "'Why Celebrate a Controversy?' South Africa, the United States, and National Parks,' in Adrian Howkins, Jared Orsi, and Mark Fiege (eds.), *National Parks beyond the Nation: Global Perspectives on 'America's Best Idea'* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 136.

⁵ See especially, Bernhard Gissibl, Sabine Hohler, and Patrick Kupper (eds.), *Civilizing Nature: National Parks in Global Historical Perspective* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Howkins et al, *National Parks*; and Patrick Kupper, 'Science and the National Parks: A Transatlantic Perspective on the Interwar Years,' *Environmental History* 14 (1) 2009, 58-81.

⁶ Ronald A. Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers* (Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, Inc., 1984); Leslie Bella, *Parks for Profit* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1987); C.J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); and, Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997)

compared and contrasted in terms of timing and approaches, they tend to be presented not as mutual influencers but as on parallel tracks.⁷ A smaller group of scholars have noted temporal coincidences that suggested the possibilities of diffusion, but without identifying any mechanisms for it.⁸ Another small group illustrated how one system modeled its approach on knowledge gained from analyzing the other systems' publications.⁹ Furthermore, in most of the above instances, the overwhelming assumption was that when diffusion occurred, it tended to go from south to north. More recently, however, scholars have begun to identify a wide range of diffusional mechanisms (e.g., correspondence, personal visits and organized technical courses as well as publications) and to illustrate how ideas, techniques, policies and more flowed in both directions.¹⁰ At the same time, none of

⁷ John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961); William C. Everhart, *The National Park Service* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972); R.D. Turner and W.E. Rees, 'A Comparative Study of Parks Policy in Canada and the United States,' *Nature Canada* 2 no.1 (1973), 31-6; Joe Hermer, *Regulating Eden: The Nature of Order in North American Parks* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Claire Elizabeth Campbell, ed., *A Century of Parks Canada* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011); and Jones, 'Unpacking' in Gissibl et al, *Civilizing Nature*.

⁸ R.G. Ironside, 'Private Development in National Parks: Residential and Commercial Facilities in the National Parks of North America,' *The Town Planning Review* 41 (4, 1970), 305-316; and, Susan Buggey, 'Historic Landscape Conservation in North America: Roaming the Field Over the Past Thirty Years,' *APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology* 29 (3/4, 1998), 37-42.

⁹ Marilyn Dubasek, *Wilderness Preservation: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Canada and the United States* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990); John Shultis, 'Improving the Wilderness: Common Factors in Creating National Parks and Equivalent Reserves during the Nineteenth Century,' *Forest & Conservation History* 39 (3, 1995), 121-129; and, Paul Kopas, *Taking the Air: Ideas and Change in Canada's National Parks* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Hugh C. Miller, 'Preservation Technology Comes of Age in North America: Part 2,' *APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology* 37 (2/3, 2006), 61-65; E.J. (Ted) Hart, *J.B.*

these scholars emphasized how the international relationship between the Parks Branch and NPS underwent the transformation it did.

The Canadian and American national parks services were the first two in the world, they existed next door to each other, and they oversaw systems large and well-funded enough that throughout the twentieth century they each developed parks policies that would be replicated worldwide. Perhaps that is why their relationship has rarely been examined: it has been assumed that they worked closely and well with each other. In this essay we explore why that was not the case from the 1910s through the 1950s, and how it was only in the 1960s that internal dynamics and external politics helped the NPS and Parks Branch develop the relationship that, today, we might suppose they always had.

Mutual Beginnings

From the very first words that created Banff National Park in 1885, mimicking the wording of the 1872 Yellowstone act, Canada's park system relied on the example of the American one. Its first parks were sublime wilderness places located in the Rocky Mountains, and they were established by a variety of mechanisms, under a variety of regulations, and with no central control. But in 1911, Canada achieved something the United States had not: it established the first agency in the world devoted to national parks. The Parks Branch was miniscule, with just seven staff members at the outset, none with experience, working in parks that were three thousand miles away from the Ottawa office.

Harkin: Father of Canada's National Parks (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2010); and, Alan MacEachern, 'Canada's Best Idea? The Canadian and American National Park Services in the 1910s,' in Howkins et al, *National Parks*, 51-67.

Nevertheless, the Canadian agency's existence created a dynamic that was important to both park systems throughout the 1910s. From the Canadians' point of view, the Americans became the chief source of information for all things park-related. Parks Branch Commissioner J. B. Harkin wrote the US Department of Interior and individual American parks incessantly in those early years on subjects ranging from budgets to bears, and the Americans typically responded as best they could. At the same time, the Parks Branch trumpeted its trailblazing status by pointing out American interest in it. In just the second paragraph of Harkin's first annual report, for example, he stated, 'It is interesting to note that the United States is following Canada's example in the matter of specializing in regard to National Parks administration,' and cited US president William Howard Taft on the need for a national park service. From the Americans' point of view, the fact that Canada had created a park service first, and that its park system almost immediately flourished in terms of attendance, funding, profile, and new park creation, did more than raise awareness about the lack of a coordinated system in the United States. It allowed the Americans to position the Canadian park system as an economic threat to its own, siphoning off tourist dollars that should rightfully be spent in the American parks. The April 1916 hearings before the US House of Representatives Committee on Public Lands on the bill that would establish the US National Park Service later that year were packed with speakers admiring of the Canadian bureau's example and, on occasion, shaming the US for not having already created a bureau of its own. The two North American national park systems in essence played off each other in this period: the American one using the other's example to bring its park

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service into existence, and the Canadian one using the other's admiration to justify the one it already had.¹¹

The culmination of this early relationship was the statement in the 1918 Lane Letter, the US National Park Service's landmark doctrine on policy, that the service should work with like-minded national and international groups, 'in particular' the Canadian Parks Branch. It was a recognition of the two systems' – the two nations' – fundamental commonalities. They shared topographies, climates, and biologies. They had similar beliefs about nature and aesthetics, and similar tourism markets. And they had almost equally new park agencies overseeing almost equally healthy park systems. Or so it appeared at that moment. But this was a trick of perspective, like a closer, smaller object appearing the same size as a distant, larger one. Although the Canadian park system had been quite vibrant at the beginning of the decade, the country's entry into the First World War in 1914 had rapidly reduced the parks' appropriations and its activity generally. The American system was considerably larger in terms of park units, area, budget, and staff, and it saw five to ten times the number of visitors. The National Park Service might technically be younger than the Parks Branch, but it was indisputably the big sibling in the relationship.¹²

¹¹ Harkin, 4 July 1912, 'Report of the Commissioner of Dominion Parks,' in Canada, *Sessional Papers* vol.25, 1913, 3, http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/commissioner_report-1912.pdf. *National Park Service Hearing before the U.S. Congress House Committee on the Public Lands, House of Representatives, 64th Congress First Session, on H.R. 434 and H.R. 8668 Bills to Establish a National Park Service and for Other Purposes, 5-6 April 1916* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), <https://archive.org/details/nationalparkser00unkngoog>. For more on this dynamic, see MacEachern, 'Canada's' in Howkins et al, *National Parks*.

¹² Lary M. Dilsaver (ed), *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 35-9. For Canadian attendance figures, see Parks

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For a time, the two park services built their relationship on the presumption, or at least pretence, of equality, which had served both so well at their beginnings. The first American parks director, Stephen Mather, wrote admiringly in his second annual report that 'Canada long ago measured the economic importance of her superb mountains and promoted her own national parks with such energy and enthusiasm that already the people of the United States know them as well and possibly better than they do their own national parks and monuments' – although he could not help himself but end 'which are, by the gift of nature, vastly larger and more distinctive.' In the Park Service's early years Mather and his assistants, including future directors Horace Albright and Arno Cammerer, sought information on Canadian roads, buildings, fire management, visitor services, and park employees. Canadian Commissioner J.B. Harkin and his assistants, most notably future director Frank Williamson, likewise turned to the Americans for information on labour issues, infrastructure, interpretation, wildlife policy, and external threats. As Harkin argued,

There is I believe no room for jealousy between the two park systems. The aims of both are identical and they cannot help rendering an international service to each other. Everything that is done by the United States service to make its parks more attractive will help to swell the tide of travel which will eventually touch the Canadian parks and vice versa every improvement in the Canadian parks will have a similar effect where the United States parks are concerned.

Branch, *Annual Reports*, 1911-16, http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/NPBr_annual_reports_1912-21.pdf and 1922, http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/NPBr_annual_reports_1922-24.pdf. American figures are in Jenks Cameron, *The National Park Service: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (New York: D. Appleton, 1922), 137-8, <https://archive.org/details/nationalparkser00statgoog>.

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The two park systems even shared nature, on occasion. Staff at Waterton Lakes National Park assisted their counterparts across the international border at Glacier in stocking lakes with fry, knowing that some of the fish would make their way back to them. Elk from overcrowded Yellowstone were introduced to Banff and Jasper, where they still thrive today.¹³

Surprisingly, senior staff in Washington and Ottawa rarely visited each other to compare how their park systems operated; perhaps this was because they were so distant from most of their own park system that when they did get the chance to travel, it was almost always within their own country. J.B. Harkin did speak at the Americans' National Parks Conference in Washington, DC in 1917, but appears never to have visited the American parks, and Stephen Mather toured the principal parks in the Canadian Rockies in 1925, but his trip apparently did not merit so much as a report.¹⁴

¹³ Mather, *Report of the Director of the National Park Service* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), 17, http://www.nps.history.com/publications/annual_reports/director/1918.pdf. Harkin, *Annual Report*, 1921, 5, http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/NPBr_annual_reports_1912-21.pdf. And yet Harkin also cited the US competition as a reason the Canadian parks needed more funds. Having described the American parks, he wrote, 'It shows not only what could be accomplished in Canada, but the competition Canada must meet, if she is to develop her own industry to achieve similar satisfactory results.' Harkin, *Annual Report*, 1922, 3, http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/NPBr_annual_reports_1912-21.pdf. Mather, *Report of the National Park Service* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), 119, http://www.nps.history.com/publications/annual_reports/director/1920.pdf. Elk from Yellowstone file, RG84 E1985-86/147, box 39, file G3-20, Library and Archives Canada [henceforth, LAC] (Edmonton).

¹⁴ Hon. J. B. Harker [sic], 'Canadian National Parks,' National Parks Conference (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/83097>. Harkin, 'Canadian National Parks: Report of

A Growing Distance and Dependence

However, a week-long inspection of Canada's Rocky Mountain parks in 1926 by Horace Albright, superintendent of Yellowstone National Park and assistant director of the National Park Service, ended in a report arguing that, all politeness aside, the Canadian park system was quite inferior. Albright had spent the previous three weeks fighting forest fires in Glacier National Park, and was in no mood for mincing words when describing the Canadian parks. He was critical that the Canadian system had allowed for the development of towns within park boundaries. It resulted in a mix of ramshackle and elegant structures, ranging from sheds erected behind residences to the oversized Chateau Lake Louise with its excessively formal landscaping. It also meant that any citizen of the town could put up a shingle advertising accommodations and services to park visitors; Albright believed the concession-monopoly policy Mather had initiated was far superior. (And the Parks Branch largely agreed. J.B. Harkin had written Arno Cammerer in 1921, 'I think I have often told you that I envied you in your form of administration because it eliminated many troubles and problems which arise in our parks through the fact that our system allows and provides for the development of permanent communities....') Albright also disapproved of the influence of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the parks, and was unimpressed with the new scenic Banff-Windermere Highway, thinking it too narrow, with sharp, ungainly turns, and having higher maintenance costs than the US government would ever sanction.¹⁵

the Commissioner,' in Department of the Interior, *Annual Report*, 1924-5, 92, http://parkscanadahistory.com/publications/NPBr_annual_reports_1922-24.pdf.

¹⁵ See Albright, report as superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, in *Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 1926 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926),

But beyond criticizing issues born into the Canadian park system, such as townsites, and recent decisions, such as the highway's design, Albright saw fundamental problems with the Parks Branch's staff. Although he praised their hospitality generally, he believed that with some exceptions senior officials were less knowledgeable and able to communicate than equivalent staff in the American system. This was exacerbated, to his mind, by the fact that whereas in the US parks rangers were responsible to visitors for law enforcement and the interpretation of park resources, in Canada these duties were split between Mounties, who were not even park employees, and park wardens. The former did not possess sufficient knowledge and the latter did not possess sufficient authority to inform visitors about the parks. By the end of his thirteen-page report to Director Mather, Albright was ready to conclude that the American parks were better managed all around. Seeing that Albright replaced Mather as director of the National Park Service barely two years later, his low opinion of the Canadians has to be considered particularly important in the relationship going forward.

Albright's assessment reflected decisions the Parks Branch had made since its 1911 founding. Although it had cultivated among its staff a loyalty and appreciation for the emerging philosophy of national parks every bit as strong as the one that developed in the American park system, on many matters it was forced by the exigency of tight budgets and small staffs to rely on others' expertise rather than develop expertise of its own. Consider, for example, wildlife policy. At the founding of the Parks Branch's Animal Division, it had a staff of just three. They were too busy

96, <https://archive.org/details/annualreportofdi2426nati>. Harkin to Arno Cammerer, 19 December 1922, RG79 entry 10, box 630, 'Canada (Parts 1 & 2) 1909-32,' NARA. Albright to The Director [Stephen Mather], 30 September 1926, RG79, Entry 10, box 630, 'Canada,' NARA.

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making management decisions to do research, so they relied on information from south of the border. The Branch's archival files are bursting with correspondence and publications from the US National Park Service, individual American parks, and US agencies such as the Bureau of Biological Survey. And American advice routinely became Canadian policy. Harkin heard at a New York state parks conference in 1921 that mountain lions killed on average one deer per week, on his return he directed wardens that lions be shot on sight, and within weeks one was dead. The irony was that American wildlife policy was itself often built on the assumption of Canada's persistence as an animal-rich frontier. Even as the US Biological Survey advised the Canadians on how to kill predators, it reassured scientists that if predators were locally exterminated in the American West, they would live on in Canada.¹⁶

It should also be noted that the Branch's archives contain a great deal more publications and 'grey literature' by and about the American park system than it does correspondence with its parks service, so the NPS's influence on Canada was even greater than the Americans were aware. By contrast, what relatively little Canadian

¹⁶ Alan MacEachern, 'M.B. Williams and the Early Years of Parks Canada.' In Claire E. Campbell (ed), *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 21-52, http://dspace.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/1880/48466/7/UofCPress_ParksCanada_2011_Chapter_02.pdf. By the early 1940s, American publications related to every imaginable park management issue had overrun the Canadian park bureau's filing system, and it was decided they should all be filed under 'U124 - US Parks.' RG84 vol.109, file U124 vol.5, LAC. Harkin to Superintendents, 1 March 1921, RG84 vol.157, file U261, LAC. Janet Foster, *Working for Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); and Hart, *J.B. Harkin*, 69-72. Thomas R. Dunlap, *Saving America's Wildlife* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 50; and Alan MacEachern, 'Rationality and Rationalization in Canadian National Parks Predator Policy,' *Canadian Papers in Rural History* 10 (1995), 149-64.

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material exists in the National Park Service archives for this era is overwhelmingly correspondence with the Canadians, rather than publications about their parks. The result was that national parks in the US and Canada became even more alike than one would expect of parallel park systems in two bordering nations with cultural and environmental similarities – and yet their park agencies grew more distinct. The Canadian branch matured slowly, because it essentially sub-contracted expertise to the US, and the American park service consequently found less value in seeking input as to its neighbour's experience. The relationship became more one-sided, and so weaker.

It did not help that some of what the US National Park Service knew about the neighbouring park system came by way of the Canadian National Parks Association. The CNPA began as a parks watchdog group in 1923, but it soon became the lifework of a single person, Major W.S.J. Walker of Calgary, Alberta. Walker ran it as virtually a one-man operation until the early 1950s without a single measureable accomplishment; if anything, its existence prevented a real national park organization in Canada from arising earlier. Walker's writing on parks consisted principally of complaining about the Parks Branch, which in return treated him and his association as pariahs. The US National Park Service, however, did not know this dynamic when they corresponded with him. So when, for example, Walker wrote Director Albright on CNPA letterhead that 'We have in Canada a condition very detrimental to our parks in the lack of stability in the Parks Service and the promotion of men to high positions in it from private life, who are without experience or appreciation of the national parks and only interested in their pay checks,' the opinion carried sufficient weight to be filed in the US service's permanent records.

Tellingly, whereas the American park service mentioned the Canadian National Parks Association in one of its annual reports, the Canadian bureau never did.¹⁷

There were, however, subjects on which the Americans sought their Canadian equivalents' expertise. One was historic sites. In the late 1910s, the Parks Branch had begun establishing national historic parks in the longer-settled Eastern provinces, in part to placate a region of the country not thought to have national park-worthy scenery. US National Park Service authorities were interested in this initiative and requested literature on the management of the Fort Anne National Historic Site which had been established in Nova Scotia in 1917. Horace Albright's interest in historical units for the NPS may have spurred the request but there is no evidence that the dutifully forwarded guide to Fort Anne influenced the agency's establishment of its first two historic sites in Virginia in 1930. Most American officials also acknowledged the Canadians as experts in forest fire management: the immense forests and small workforce in their parks meant that the Parks Branch developed skill in suppressing fire (and, later in the century, in setting controlled burns). More than any other, perhaps, this was an issue on which the two nations' park services treated each other as equals. But in most areas, the US National Park Service believed the Canadians were not in their league.¹⁸

¹⁷ The Parks Branch's opinion of the CNPA is discussed in James Smart to Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan, 20 October 1950, RG84 vol.2161, file U.346 vol. 1, LAC. On the CNPA, see also Pearlann Reichwein, *Climber's Paradise: Making Canada's Mountain Parks, 1906-1974* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2014), 140-60; and, for a more flattering portrait see Susan E. Markham-Starr, 'W.J.S. Walker and the CNPA: Protectors of Canadian Leisure Interests,' *Leisure/Loisir* 32 no2 (2008), 649-80. Albright, *Annual Report of the Director of the National Park Service*, 9 October 1930, 42, <https://archive.org/details/annualreportofdi2932nati>.

¹⁸ C.J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 29-32. Canada Department of the

A Canadian Awakening

By the late 1930s, the Canadians were admitting the same thing. The precipitating event was the 1936 retirement of J.B. Harkin, who had steered the Parks Branch through its first quarter-century. Although Frank Williamson had been Harkin's right-hand-man for all that time, when he took over as controller he made clear he believed that the Canadian park system was lagging behind, chiefly on matters related to ecological science. Williamson insisted, for example, that predator policy henceforth be determined, expressed, and defended in the language of ecology: 'We must present arguments of scientific men....' In 1939, ornithologist Percy Taverner reported to Williamson on his recent visit to US national parks, and how impressed he was with their naturalist program, whereby rangers with biological training or a personal interest would assist visitors in nature study and at other times supported the Service's wildlife biologists in the field. The Canadian parks had nothing of the kind and would not for another two decades. Williamson replied,

I have been wanting, for a very long time, to visit the American Parks and see them as you saw them because I believe in many respects they have advanced further than we have, especially in their scientific treatment of the

Interior, 1922, 'Guide to Fort Anne, Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia,' RG79, Entry 10, box 2915, 'Canada Part 3,' NARA. See, for example, J. Horace McFarland to Arno Cammerer, 9 March 1938, RG 79 entry 10, box 2915 part 3, NARA; and Stephen J. Pyne, *Awful Splendour: A Fire History of Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), esp. 361-71. However, when Glacier National Park superintendent, and future associate director, Eivind Scoyen inspected Canada's premier Rocky Mountain parks in 1936, he argued that the Dominion Parks Branch's reputation on fire management was overrated. He felt it was based too much on young forests in Banff National Park's first decades having a low fuel load, and therefore fire had not been much of a threat. Scoyen to Arno Cammerer, 15 November 1938, RG 79 entry 10, box 2915, 'Canada Part 3,' NARA.

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biology of these natural areas. I have felt for a long time that a danger we should guard against is that of losing the ecological goose that lays the golden tourist eggs by not properly caring for her welfare and protecting her against the attacks of enemies posing as her friends.

Also in 1939, an internal Parks Branch memo on the Canadian and American parks and historic sites systems noted that comparisons were difficult 'due to the fact that there is so little in common,' but one indisputable finding was that the National Park Service rangers, and especially ranger naturalists, were 'better trained and more mature men.' The irony in all this is that even as the Canadians admired the American park system's commitment to biological science, the latter's commitment was disappearing: staff numbers were already shrinking, the Park Service's Wildlife Division was soon transferred outright to the US Biological Survey, and it would take two decades for the parks' commitment to scientific resource management to be restored. But the Parks Branch could not foresee any of this, and likely found it easier to identify the Park Service's differences than vulnerabilities. Williamson concluded in a letter to his boss that 'The United States has led the way in the creation of the National Park idea in the world and it seems to me we should very closely follow this lead if we want to continue capitalizing on the very large American clientele we have for the Canadian parks, and at the same time obtain the maximum results from our Parks for Canadians.'¹⁹

¹⁹ Williamson to Hoyes Lloyd, 25 November 1937, RG84 vol. 37, file U300 vol.10, LAC. Taverner to Williamson, 7 September 1939, RG84 vol.109, file U124 vol.4, LAC. The Parks Branch did not establish a park naturalist program until 1959. See W.F. Lothian, *A History of Canada's National Parks*, vol.4 (Ottawa: Environment and Supply and Services Canada, 1981), 133-52. On the National Park Service naturalist program, see Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, esp. 54, 98-99, and 153-4. Williamson to Taverner, 19 September 1939, RG84 vol.109, file U124 vol.4, LAC. Unsigned memo 'Canadian and U.S. National Parks and

Frank Williamson did not oversee the change he thought needed because the Second World War got in the way and he retired in 1941. But the new decade saw a generational change in the Parks Branch generally, and there was growing interest not just in learning from the American experience, but in building Canadian competence. C.H.D. Clarke, the first mammologist hired for the Branch's Wildlife Division – and, indeed, the first staffer not trained in birds – recommended to his superior a new book on the American parks, noting that National Park Service 'principles and policies are receiving wide publicity in the U.S. and differences in principle between our parks and those of the U.S. will be noticed by visitors from that country. They are also familiar to conservation leaders throughout the world, and are universally approved by them.' Clarke was preaching to the choir: senior Branch personnel were already directing staff to consult the U.S literature and authorities. The 1947 creation of the Dominion Wildlife Service, a stand-alone, science-based agency to oversee the managing of Canada's wildlife, was a turning point in the history of the two nations' park systems – even if it was separate from the Parks Branch and not modelled strictly, or solely, on the National Park Service. Its establishment signaled greater respect for American-based ecological science specifically, and American knowledge generally. Yet at the same time, it signaled a

Historic Sites,' March 1939, RG84 vol.2101, file U172 vol.6, LAC. Sellars, *Preserving Nature*, esp. 145-7. Williamson to R.A. Gibson, 21 March 1939, RG84 vol.2101, file U172 vol.6, LAC. The 1936 restructuring of natural resource-related government departments meant that although Williamson replaced Harkin, he had to deal with a new level of administration – a Lands, Parks, and Forests Branch – above him. W.F. Lothian, *A History of Canada's National Parks*, vol.2 (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs, 1977), 18.

newfound commitment to nurturing and relying on homegrown Canadian expertise in matters related to national parks and wildlife.²⁰

Status Quo Ante

After the burst of professionalization and in-house development that had led to the Dominion Wildlife Service, the Parks Branch experienced an uneven stretch. Thanks largely to the Korean and Cold Wars, annual funding to parks decreased in the first half of the 1950s, even as attendance almost doubled, which pinched the bureau's ability to become more self-sufficient in terms of expertise. As a consequence, the agency continued to pepper the US National Park Service with queries about policies, practices and techniques, and to send the occasional administrator to visit a US park.²¹

Many of the inquiries that the Parks Branch directed south were similar to those sent before the war, but in March 1952, Director James Smart wrote a

²⁰ Clarke to Hoyes Lloyd, Supervisor of Wildlife Protection, 6 December 1940, RG84 vol.38, file U300 vol.13, LAC. The book was almost certainly James F. Kieley, *A Brief History of the National Park Service* (Washington: Department of the Interior, 1940), <http://www.npshistory.com/publications/kieley.pdf>. See R.A. Gibson to James Smart, 5 January 1942, RG84 vol.109 file U124 vol.5, LAC; and Hoyes Lloyd memorandum, 27 January 1943, RG84 vol.38, file U300 vol.14, LAC. The agency was renamed the Canadian Wildlife Service three years later. J. Alexander Burnett, *A Passion for Wildlife: The History of the Canadian Wildlife Service* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003). The Parks Branch maintained responsibility for the wildlife in national parks, but they now relied on Canadian scientists within the CWS to provide policy advice. See Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 196-8.

²¹ Budget information is from Kopas, *Taking the Air*, 199, note 73. Budget cuts are relative, of course. The Parks Branch's budget shrank from \$10 million to \$6.5 million in the early 1950s, but had only been \$2.5 million as recently as 1947.

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complex, lengthy letter to his NPS counterpart, Conrad Wirth, to ask about the US agency's experience managing requests for 'commercial scale' timbering, water resources development, and mining inside parks. The Canadians so far had been able to resist such requests, but the pressure continued and advice was welcome. 'Any information that you can provide' will be especially helpful, Smart noted, because the two agencies worked in corresponding contexts. Even if the American agency did not view the Canadian bureau as its equal, the two countries' national park policies had long 'remained on parallel and similar lines,' which meant each agency's actions supported the other's. If NPS policy was, for example, to oppose the development of reservoirs inside parks, then the Parks Branch likely did also. Such policy convergences made it possible for each agency to point to the other in support of a position. However, Smart cautioned, the opposite was also true. When the agencies took differing stances on an issue, an outside interest was likely to use the disagreement in its favor. 'If an important change in National Park policy were made in Canada, such a change would be quoted in support of a requested change in the United States.' Consequently, they needed to continue consulting and reinforcing each other.²²

Wirth clearly agreed with Smart's observation about the agencies' mutual strength. In an April dispatch, Wirth reassured Smart that he recognized the need to keep each agency's policies aligned with its counterpart. Any 'weakening' of park policies on either side of the border, Wirth agreed, 'might well have adverse effects in both countries.' In a spirit of mutual support and perhaps some dawning recognition of the Parks Branch's growing competence, Wirth made a rare move. He

²² Smart to Wirth, 26 March 1952, RG 79, Appendix 2, box 2174, 'Foreign Parks and Historic Sites, Canada 1950-53,' NARA (henceforth Box 2174), 2.

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invited the Parks Branch Director and his staff to participate in a September meeting of NPS superintendents and other high-level personnel at Glacier National Park.

Smart reacted to this novel invitation by cheerfully accepting almost the very same day, on behalf of himself and three others.²³ Wirth's second reply to Smart's March 1952 letter was more in keeping with the prevailing interaction between the agencies. He sent a nine-page, single-spaced letter that provided extensive observations and specifics about US legislation and NPS policy plus more than 20 official pamphlets, reprints and mimeographs that discussed the issues in detail.²⁴

The Canadians apparently enjoyed their time at the September NPS meeting, but on the one hand, they contributed little and likely had but a small impact on the Americans, since they were present only on the gathering's last day. On the other hand, the experience inspired Director Smart to tell the NPS Director that he would like to hold a joint agency meeting where they could 'get down seriously to matters which are... common to both services.' Such a meeting would be of 'great benefit' to Canada's parks because 'after all, I believe our administration is modelled to a great extent on the administration of the United States National Park Service.'

Nonetheless, no such meeting occurred while either Smart or his successor, James A. Hutchison, were director. Instead, only a handful of Canadians made US visits during the remainder of the decade with the most notable being a fall 1952 tour by Smart and C.G. Childe, superintendent of Canada's historic sites, to Virginia's national park and historic sites. However, it is difficult to determine to what degree

²³ Wirth to Smart, 21 April 1952, Box 2174. Smart to Wirth, 25 April 1952, RG 79, Appendix 3, box 2170, 'L66 Foreign Parks and Historic Sites, Cooperation with Foreign Agencies, 1958-63', NARA. Two of the Parks Branch personnel who were to join Smart later became the agency's Director: J.A. Hutchison (1953 to 1957) and J.R.B. Coleman (1957 to 1968).

²⁴ Wirth to Smart, 16 May 1952, Box 2174

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any visit by Parks Branch personnel during this period produced demonstrable changes in Canadian policy or practice. Sometimes Canadian visits to US parks, just like the visits by Americans Horace Albright and Eivind Scoyen to Canadian parks, only served to reinforce the agency's commitment to its own approaches even when the visitors consciously went in search of improvements. For example, J.E. Spero, a member of the Canadian agency since 1914, informed Smart after a 1947 visit to Glacier National Park that despite a desire to find enhanced methods, his conclusion was that 'our system was better.' Consequently, it is unsurprising that no internal documents indicate that Smart and Childe pursued any specific changes as a consequence of their 1952 visit.²⁵

For much of the remainder of the 1950s, interactions largely stayed in the mode of the Smart-Wirth exchange. An occasional Canadian issue or a well-publicized event concerning the US national parks would prompt the Canadians to send an inquiry to their southern counterparts, who typically were quick to assist them. Also, the occasional Parks Branch official would visit National Park Service facilities. Query topics ranged from the obscure to the transformative, including allowances for personnel quarters, subsistence, and services; the salvaging of historical and archeological materials in basins subject to permanent inundation;

²⁵ Smart to Wirth, 15 October 1952, Box 2174. Childe reported to the head of the National Parks and Historic Sites division of the National Parks Branch, which Smart headed. See Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 139. Their tour was reported in local newspapers. See Joe Marsh, 'Va. History Impresses 2 Canadians,' *Richmond News Leader*, October 28, 1952. Spero to Smart, 5 Sept 1947, Re: Audit Inspection Report, WLNP, USNPs (1942-1948) file, RG84 vol.109, file U124 vol.5, LAC. Victor E.F. Solman, Chief Biologist of the Wildlife Division, also informed the Director that 'we are ten years ahead of the USPS in regard to creel census operations.' Solman to Smart, 14 Mar 1950, US National Parks (1949-1950) file, RG84 vol.162, file U124, LAC.

concessionaire administration; park entrance and campground fees; and, not surprisingly, multiple requests for Mission 66 publications as the Canadians became aware of them. One issue, however, began to stand out at the end of the decade.²⁶

Growing Closer

The late-1950s brought an expansion of Canada's government that benefitted the Parks Branch. The agency's budget increased a dramatic 64% between 1955 and 1957, and then grew another 63% by 1960. The enhanced funding allowed the Branch to become stronger and to embark on staff augmentation. In particular, the Branch intended to professionalize park interpreters across the system. The agency had wanted to make this enhancement for years, but post-war visitor pressure and the early 1950s budget cuts had forced the agency to invest mostly in roads, buildings and other infrastructure. Consequently, it had to be content with minimally trained, seasonal personnel as its interpreters, but no more.²⁷

On October 21, 1958, Director Coleman wrote to NPS Director Wirth to ask for the American agency's help with the establishment of 'a more permanent and adequately trained organization' within the Parks Branch. 'Any published reports or other reference materials, possibly including films, that you could conveniently loan,' wrote Coleman, 'would be greatly appreciated.' If everything fell into place, Coleman expected to initiate the new, professional interpretive program in early 1959.

Furthermore, Coleman intensified interagency cooperation and the likelihood that American approaches would contribute to the shaping of Canadian practices when

²⁶ See the series of US-Canada exchanges in RG79, Appendix 3, box 2175, 'L66 Foreign Parks and Historic Sites, Canada, 1954-67,' NARA [henceforth, Box 2175].

²⁷ Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 138; Budget information is from Kopas, *Taking the Air*, 199, note 73; J.R.B. Coleman to Conrad Wirth, 21 October 1958, Box 2175

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he directed his Educational Advisor, H.S. Robinson, to contact the NPS employee who Wirth considered 'most suitable to provide additional details of your Interpretive Service' – Ronald F. Lee in the Division of Interpretation. In less than a week, Robinson was in touch with Lee and had arranged to visit him and his colleagues in Washington, DC during the week of 17 November. Lee hosted an intense visit with multiple meetings and introductions to several high-level NPS professionals. Over the next several months Robinson wrote follow-up letters to several of the latter asking advice and, in one instance, arranging for the delivery of an 'audio-visual training aid' to the Parks Branch's headquarters in Ottawa. This device was enthusiastically praised by the initial group of Canadian reviewers. Up to this point, the traditional impact of the Americans on the Parks Branch continued, but Americans were beginning to become excited by the Parks Branch's focus on professionalization. The agencies' interactions would become bidirectional before the next decade ended.²⁸

As the 1960s unfurled, the Parks Branch's interest in National Park Service policies and practices expanded as leadership worked to strengthen the agency itself and its relationship to provincial and other Canadian parks. Lloyd Brooks, Chief of the Planning Section, penned a lengthy memorandum in February 1960 in order to stimulate a greater interest in coordinated recreation work among his colleagues. Reiterating the 1959 view of a colleague, Brooks pointed to the United States as a model to emulate: 'Canada at present time is perhaps 25 years behind the U.S. in the matter of coordination of park activity on a national scale or even in general recognition of recreation as a legitimate land use.' In the US, the National Park

²⁸ Coleman to Wirth, 21 October 1958; H.S. Robinson to R.F. Lee, 10 November 1958, Box 2175; E.T. Scoyen to J.R.B. Coleman, 4 November 1958, Box 2175; H.S. Robinson to Richard C. Burns, 5 February 1959, Box 2175

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Service actively coordinated with state parks, which had resulted in a high state of development in the latter's systems. In Canada, 'the provinces have had to "go it alone,"' which had resulted 'in the generally retarded state of development of most of the Provincial parks systems of Canada.' According to Brooks, the Parks Branch needed to maintain liaison with the NPS for two reasons. 'Firstly to keep abreast of new developments and trends in recreation, and secondly because the outdoor recreation problems of both countries are intimately related. ...[W]e should take every advantage of our situation by watching closely [the US] approach to recreation land use problems.' In line with Brooks's thinking, Director Coleman sent John I. Nicol to Washington, DC to 'meet with appropriate personnel ...to discuss [agency] organization and planning.' The Parks Branch had begun an 'over-all review' of its procedures and Coleman clearly thought his organization could learn from the NPS.²⁹

Nor were discussions about any differences between the US and Canadian park systems confined to within the Canadian agency. Director Coleman shared his thoughts with his superior in the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. In April 1961, he sent a seven-page evaluation of a wilderness protection bill that had just passed in the US Senate to Ernest A Côté, the Assistant Deputy Minister. The legislation aimed to establish a system of congressionally designated wilderness areas within the national parks, but also in the national forests, wildlife preserves, and other extensive lands controlled by the federal government. Although

²⁹ Lloyd Brooks memo, 7 April 1961, RG84 vol.1821, file PS124 vol.1, LAC, 2. Brooks was reiterating the views of J.C. Jackson, memo, 27 December 1959, RG84 vol.1821, file PS124 vol.1, LAC, 'Our problems are very similar and we might avoid mistakes and benefit by the fact that development has proceeded further in the USA, their recreation problems have reached a more critical stage and more study and research has been done.' Brooks memo, 7 April 1961, 6, 10; J.R.B. Coleman to Conrad Wirth, 28 September 1961, Box 2175.

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the American legislation was not directly applicable to Canada because land management rested largely with the provinces rather than the central government, Coleman believed it could help to instruct the Canadian government as to saving wilderness wherever possible, even if only in the national parks. At the same time, the fundamental issue for Coleman was not who had legal control over the land. In closing his assessment, he offered that the solution to this challenge would be cultural and social. 'The big problem in Canada at the present time is the lack of general appreciation of wilderness values by the public, by organized groups and to a large extent by the various governmental bodies across the domain which are responsible for the management of public lands. In contrast,' Coleman continued, 'there are numerous well organized and well financed private groups in the U.S. who actively campaign for wilderness preservation and thereby are able to influence the enactment of appropriate legislation.'³⁰

In addition to the Branch's growing professionalization and policy enhancements, interactions between the two agencies rose as a result of two developments. First, American political concerns about the Cold War and the need for greater international cooperation, and second, an increasing tendency for the Americans to see their Canadian counterparts as equals. When John Kennedy became President in January 1961, his administration actively embraced President Harry Truman's 1949 call for a sharing of US know-how with other nations. The subsequent administration of Lyndon Johnson also supported this form of soft diplomacy. One outcome was the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which funded the newly created US Agency for International Development (USAID). This office was

³⁰ Coleman to Côté, 7 April 1961, RG84 vol.1821, file PS124 vol.1, LAC. This complaint was common within the Parks Branch at the time. See Kopas, *Taking the Air*, 40ff.

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made responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and it became a major funder of numerous international projects by US agencies, including the National Park Service. In the same year, Director Wirth brought the NPS into line with the new administration's agenda when he directed staff to create an office focused on international cooperation with new and less-developed countries as well as ones having advanced park programs. The new Division of International Affairs began its work in October 1961 and one of its initial yields was the NPS's joint sponsorship and organizing of the First World Conference on National Parks in Seattle, Washington in summer 1962. Canadian park officials from provincial, regional and national agencies, including Parks Branch Director J.R.B. Coleman, attended. The new division would take the lead in many subsequent NPS-Parks Branch interactions.³¹

In addition to the Kennedy administration's general interest in reaching out to the world through USAID, it specifically sought smooth relations with Canada. Just a month after the April 1963 Canadian election that brought the Liberal Party to power, both the US and Canada moved to confirm their political and economic relations by holding a meeting between Prime Minister Lester Pearson and President Kennedy in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts. During two days of discussions, the two men and their staffs collaborated smoothly and although the meeting had begun with no agenda, two critical settlements were reached. First, the two countries agreed that they had a 'mutual desire to "cooperate in a rational use of the continent's resources."' And, second, in order to improve bilateral cooperation, 'each Government promised...

³¹ Terence Young and Lary Dilsaver, 'Collecting and Diffusing "the World's Best Thought": International Cooperation by the National Park Service' *George Wright Forum* 28 (3, 2011): 273-274; Alexander Adams (ed.), *First World Conference on National Parks* (Washington: National Park Service, United States Department of Interior, 1963), 434-435.

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“more frequent consultation at all levels.” These and subsequent international agreements would soon contribute to a final reshaping of the two park agencies’ relations, but inter-agency changes were also occurring.³²

A New Relationship

In March 1963, W. Winston Mair, Chief of the Canadian Wildlife Service, composed a proposal for a novel program – an international parks and wildlife centre for the training of personnel, especially from less developed countries. This brief proposition would lead ultimately to the first effort to systematically shape park management across the world. Initially, Mair discussed his idea in person with NPS Director Wirth who responded positively but took no immediate action. The Director likely hesitated because the Service was already conducting a multinational summer training course about the value of protected areas for 10 to 12 African nationals each year. Begun in 1961, the program was jointly funded by the US State Department and the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation, and run in cooperation with the Africa-America Institute. Perhaps Wirth viewed Mair’s proposal as unnecessary and redundant.³³

Not long after speaking with Director Wirth, Chief Mair shared his proposal with A. Starker Leopold, the respected American conservationist and Chairman of the US Interior Department’s Special Advisory Board on Wildlife Management. Supportive of Mair’s program, Leopold encouraged Wirth to cooperate, which

³² Tom Wicker, ‘Canada Confirms She Will Accept Atom Arms Soon’ *New York Times*, May 13, 1963.

³³ Mair to Hartzog, 8 January 1964, Box 2175; Department of the Interior Information Service, ‘Interior Department to Teach Conservation to African Students,’ June 20, 1961, Jim Charlton papers, Library, Office of International Affairs, US National Park Service, Washington, DC (henceforth, OIA). This program continued to run until at least 1969.

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prompted the Director to have his staff develop a similar proposal 'for some sort of joint enterprise' between Canada and the US. In August 1963, Wirth sent this proposal to Mair, who replied that he was 'certain [that] we can come up with something very worthwhile – and shared by at least our two countries as well.' In addition, Mair forwarded both the NPS proposal and his original one to J.R.B. Coleman of the Parks Branch. Coleman and Wirth subsequently discussed them and In January 1964, Mair sent a revised proposal to the newly appointed NPS Director, George Hartzog.³⁴

In this version, Mair called for 'A World Centre for Outdoor Recreation and Conservation' that would be based at or near a university, draw students from across the globe, act as a vehicle for technical training, serve as a centre for overseas conservation schools, and be a base for students training across North America. Areas of study would include national parks philosophy and concepts, wildlife management, conservation laws, and more, but of special concern to Mair was the relationship between technology and philosophy. 'Many of our visitors under technical aid,' he observed, 'are impressed with our gadgetry and our money, but shocked by our lack of philosophy, and lack of time to consider what we really want and where we are going. We should attempt to make this a centre of thought on the philosophies, principles and practicalities of the whole broad field.' In a cover letter, Mair suggested to Hartzog that the centre could be modeled on 'the Defence Colleges in instruction because such is very palatable to fairly senior students, and it also permits drawing upon a very wide range of specialists or authorities. In closing, he conveyed his hope that the two agencies would engage in further discussions and

³⁴ Wirth to Mair, 20 August 1963, Box 2175; Mair to Wirth, 29 August 1963, Box 2175.

that a Canadian sponsor might be found in time for the country's Centennial Year of 1967, but if not, any time before the projected start date of 1971 would be a plus.³⁵

Hartzog's response was supportive, enthusiastic and action oriented. On 14 February he thanked Mair for his 'good letter' and suggested that Mair and his staff should soon 'sit down with the people in our Division of International Affairs to begin discussions on how to firm up some of these ideas and prepare a joint proposal, after which we both could share in the implementation of it. ...We are currently preparing a long-range program in international cooperation, of which the conservation institute idea is one segment. We shall shortly have a detailed picture of what we would like to do... [so] the next few months would be especially propitious for collaboration on various matters of mutual interest.' In comparison to the past, the Park Service had changed its attitude, coming to see the Parks Branch as an important partner at the moment and into the future. Unfortunately, the timing did not work for the Canadians. The agency's actions had to be 'limited,' explained Mair, because everything he had suggested 'so far' had been 'entirely personal.' The proposal was not an official one. Consequently, Mair concluded, 'I should like to pursue this matter for the present on a personal basis.'³⁶

The Americans, however, were unwilling to wait, acting speedily with an approach that often mirrored the Canadian proposal. Before the end of 1964, the National Park Service had arranged with the US Forest Service (USFS) to hold a 'Short Course for Foreign Administrators in Park and Forest Reserve Programs'

³⁵ W. Winston Mair, 'Some Thoughts on a World Center for Outdoor Recreation and Conservation', unpublished manuscript, Box 2175, 7. Emphasis in original. Mair to Hartzog, 8 January 1964, Box 2175.

³⁶ Hartzog to Mair, 14 February 1964, Box 2175; Mair to Hartzog, 5 March 1964, Box 2175. Emphasis in original.

during May 1965 at the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources. In addition, three assisting partners – the US Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR), the US Department of Agriculture, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) – would help with content. According to a US Department of Interior news release, and in line with Mair's proposal, 'The purpose of the course [was] to review legislation, policy, planning, and new developments in national parks, with emphasis on the preservation and wide use of these resources.' However, the content of the course included little of the philosophy accentuated by Mair and instead stressed park practice and management methods in the classroom and operations in the field.³⁷

The first Short Course was judged a success, attracting '24 park leaders from 16 countries,' which prompted a continuation of the program. At the same time, Canada's Parks Branch remained engaged but uninvolved in the delivery of the course. In 1965, the agency contributed 50 copies of a departmental publication, *National Parks Policy* of 1964, for distribution to class members, but provided no direct funding or instructional staff. John I. Nicol, Assistant Director of the Parks Branch, also attended the course in 1965 and several Canadian provincial park departments planned to send representatives. By the time the first Short Course was completed in May, the relationship between the Parks Branch and the Park Service

³⁷ Chief, Division of International Affairs, 'Cross Reference,' 14 October 1964, RG79, Appendix 3, Box 2170, 'L66 Foreign Parks and Historic Sites, Washington Office, 1964-69', NARA [henceforth, Box 2170]; National Park Service, 'Short Course Planned on the Administration of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves, U.S. Department of the Interior News Release, December 7, 1964, Box 2170.

had emerged as one of respect, yet higher level, binational interactions were about to bring them closer still.³⁸

In January 1964, when Chief Mair sent his revised training-centre proposal to Director Hartzog, Prime Minister Pearson flew to Washington, DC to engage in formal and substantial talks with President Johnson. As a part of these discussions, the countries agreed to develop a statement of bilateral principles of partnership in order to ‘avoid divergencies... in policies of interest to each other.’ The working group tasked to develop the statement, former US Ambassador to Canada Livingston T. Merchant and former Canadian Ambassador to the United States A.D.P. Heeney published their report in June 1965. In it they affirmed the importance of mutual consultation at multiple government levels and identified ways to forge a more effective partnership. Notably, they commended how the countries had ‘cooperated naturally and easily’ on wild life conservation and ‘worked together in the preservation of adjacent wilderness areas and contiguous public parks.’ To enhance interactions between the two countries’ various departments, bureaus and offices, including their national park agencies, the report suggested that joint bodies be established where bilateral interests overlapped because such arrangements ‘constitute the most elaborate and valuable apparatus of consultation existing between any two nations.’³⁹

³⁸ N.A. to Alfred B. LeCross, 4 May 1966, RG79, Appendix 3, box 54, ‘A2415 Committees, International, General, 1949-69’, NARA; C. Gordon Fredine to J.R.B. Coleman, 17 February 1965, Box 2175.

³⁹ Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002), 40-45; ‘Mr. Pearson Meets Mr. Johnson,’ *External Affairs* 16 (2, 1964): 37; Livingstone T. Merchant and A.D.P. Heeney, ‘Canada and the United States – Principles for Partnership,’ *Department of State Bulletin* 53 (2 August 1965): 194, 200.

Whether Merchant and Heeney were a stimulus or not, NPS Director Hartzog and Parks Branch Director Coleman had begun to create an interagency arrangement by June 1965, one month after the first Short Course. As noted, Parks Branch personnel had previously travelled to Washington, DC for the occasional meeting, but in early June, the Branch's Assistant Director Nicol traveled to Washington DC for discussions with NPS Assistant Director Theodor Swem and others 'about establishing regular liaison' between the two agencies. Upon Nicol's return, Director Coleman reported to his Deputy Minister that the Americans had dramatically altered their traditional attitude toward the Canadians. While they always had been quick to provide information in the past, the Americans had rarely asked for any. Now, however, they saw the Parks Branch as a source of useful information and were 'keen to establish some form of closer relationship.' On the heels of Nicol's visit, Hartzog moved to solidify the liaison by writing to Coleman proposing 'an exploratory discussion between representatives of our respective agencies in Ottawa this summer.' In reply, Coleman suggested that this new relationship 'could take the form of annual or semi-annual meetings alternating between Ottawa and Washington with appropriate officers of the two organizations changing as the subject matter of the discussions changed.' In order to start the process, Coleman suggested an initial meeting late in summer 1965.⁴⁰

While the Merchant-Heeney report seems to have presented an opening to the Parks Branch, it appears to have been marching orders for the NPS. The Americans embraced Coleman's meeting proposal and on 31 August 1965 two NPS representatives, Theodor Swem and Gordon Fredine of the Division of International

⁴⁰ Coleman to Hartzog, 24 June 1965, Box 2175; Coleman, Director, to Deputy Minister, 7 June 1965, Hartzog to Coleman, 15 June 1965, and Coleman to Hartzog, 24 June 1965, U.S. National Parks (1963-1966) file, RG84 vol.2068, file U124 vol.8, LAC.

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Affairs, flew north to hold what Coleman called the 'first official meeting' with the Canadian parks director and his staff. Over the course of two days, a wide range of subjects were discussed and views exchanged, including professionalism and the training of employees. Both agencies supported a proposal to begin an exchange program that would allow rangers, museum specialists, archeologists and the like to learn new approaches by working on a daily basis, for up to one year, with one's counterpart in the other agency. As a first step, the two services set 1 January 1966 as the deadline for nominating the initial participants. In addition, the Canadians invited the Americans to send observers to their upcoming park superintendents' conference, which the Americans agreed to do. Along the same line, both groups spoke about their in-service training and again the Canadians invited the Americans north to their Mountaineering School and to the Naturalists School in Calgary. The Americans once more agreed to partake. At the meeting's conclusion, a joint statement was released praising their discussion, and before everyone departed, they agreed that the next joint meeting would be held in the United States. The once one-way flow now clearly ran in both directions as each agency was exposed to its counterpart's training emphases and methods.⁴¹

The next several months were a whirlwind of interactions between the two agencies. Much information was exchanged and as agreed, the NPS sent Assistant Director for Operations, Howard W. Baker, to Canada's Conference of National Parks and Historic Sites Superintendents in Ottawa. The first US Park Service

⁴¹ D.B. Harford, 'Minutes of the meeting held between officers of the Natural and Historic Resources Branch and the U.S. National Park Service held in Ottawa, September 1 and 2, 1965,' box 7.F.7.1, L66, International Park Affairs (F. Packard 1978), 'Canada', Harpers Ferry Center for Media Services, Charles Town, WV [henceforth, Box 7.F.7.1], 4. Howard Baker to J.R.B. Coleman, 18 January 1966, Box 2175.

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representative to attend this regular Parks Branch event, Baker produced a detailed, five-page report for his supervisor, Director Hartzog. In contrast to Horace Albright's 1926 dismissal of the Canadian park system as inferior and Eivind Scoyen's harsh conclusion in 1938 that the Parks Branch's fire management reputation was overrated, Baker unreservedly recommended enhanced interactions. 'They are really very fine people,' he declared, 'and... their problems and our problems are very similar... I think we can learn a lot from the interchange.'⁴²

With their sails filled by Baker's enthusiasm, Theodor Swem and his staff at the Division of International Affairs quickly moved to prepare for the next joint meeting, which would be in Washington in late March 1966. They solicited colleagues for topics for joint discussion that would be of interest to the Parks Branch as well as ones that would benefit the NPS, invited NPS specialists with the experience sought by the Canadians, and arranged for the involvement of Assistant Interior Department Secretaries. The NPS intended this meeting to be far more inclusive and comprehensive than any previously held between the two agencies. As hoped, everything unfolded without a hitch. Numerous small-group gatherings were held, topics of joint interest were discussed, exemplary sites were visited, and on the last day the NPS developed and shared a proposal to create 'a joint Advisory Commission or Committee' having the same role as the existing International Migratory Birds Committee, but specifically focused on US-Canada national parks cooperation, and a statement outlining the 'Possibilities for International Cooperation and Coordination with Canada.' This statement touched on the proposed joint advisory board, transboundary possibilities and more, but a featured point was 'cooperative training as it relates to planning' with attention drawn to 'the course now

⁴² Baker to Director, NPS, 3 December 1965, Box 2175

offered at the University of Michigan on Administration of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves.’ This possibility would soon bear fruit.⁴³

Shortly after the March 1966 meeting a second Short Course was held, again without Parks Branch cooperation, but in the months that followed, binational discussions proceeded about the scope and nature of the proposed joint committee. Finally, in March 1967, Canada’s Assistant Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, J.A. MacDonald, declared that the time had come to create the joint Advisory Committee. Writing to Stanley Cain, US Assistant Interior Secretary for Fish, Wild Life and Parks, MacDonald suggested a committee co-chaired by himself and Cain with a membership to include the senior administrative personnel from both park agencies. The ‘basic terms of reference’ for the committee, he suggested, ‘could be “to co-operate and co-ordinate areas of mutual interest”’ to the Park Service and the Parks Branch and that the 1966 statement on ‘Possibilities for International Cooperation and Coordination with Canada’ be used ‘to amplify and explain’ the joint committee’s interests. In support of this proposal, MacDonald enclosed a slightly revised copy of the 1966 statement in his letter, which Park Service personnel reviewed. In the margin, one of them revealingly noted that the Parks Branch was ‘already involved’ with the Short Course. ‘If these views commend themselves to you,’ MacDonald closed, ‘I think we should arrange a preliminary meeting some time this spring.’ The Assistant Interior Secretary concurred and the

⁴³ Swem to Assistant Directors Jensen, Montgomery, Price, Stagner, and Regional Director Jett, 18 March 1966, Box 7.F.7.1; ‘National Park System Plan: Possibilities for International Cooperation and Coordination with Canada’, 24 March 1966, Box 7.F.7.1, 2.

first meeting of the 'Joint Committee on National Parks – Canada and United States' was held in Ottawa at the end of May 1967.⁴⁴

The timing and conditions of the initial Canadian involvement in the Short Course are unclear, but the Parks Branch did not cooperate in the presentation of the third course in August-September 1967. Nevertheless, in early 1968 they promised to supply a 'permanent' staff member for that summer's fourth Short Course and to include a Canadian National Park as a field-study site. By the time the 44 participants began the course on 20 August, Steve Kun, Banff National Park Superintendent, had joined the regular, full-time staff and the course began with a week at the adjacent Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada and Glacier National Park in the United States before heading south through Yellowstone National Park and other protected areas to a finish and 'graduation ceremonies' on September 20 at Grand Canyon National Park.⁴⁵

The involvement of the Parks Branch in the 1968 and subsequent Short Courses did not bring major changes to the curriculum. Principal topics remained similar to past ones. In 1969, for example, subjects included the role of national parks, the administration of public lands, park policies and management, tourists and interpretation, planning and more, but some emphases shifted. The discussion of public lands broadened to include a lengthy lesson on Canadian laws and approaches, which were notably different than those in the US. In addition, one of Chief W. Winston Mair's earlier concerns, philosophy, was stressed more than in the

⁴⁴ On discussions, see Côté to Minister, 6 June 1966, RG84 vol.2114, file U172-44 vol.1 pt.1, LAC; and Coleman to Reeve, 5 October 1966, RG84 vol.2114, file U172-44 vol.1 pt.2, LAC. MacDonald to Cain, 8 March 1967, Box 2175. The margin note is on p. 3 of the 1966 statement.

⁴⁵ 'International Short Course On the Administration of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves,' [15 February 1968], typed sheet, Box 7.F.7.1.

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past when R.K. Plowman, Regional Director, Parks Branch, led a one-day exploration of 'Building a National Conservation Conscience.'⁴⁶

Continuing Cooperation

The relationship between Canada's Parks Branch and the United States' National Park Service never reverted to either of its earlier states after the first meeting of the Joint Committee in May 1967. Neither agency treated the other as a competitor nor dismissed the other as not in its league. In contrast, the areas of cooperation increased. For two decades the US National Park Service and Canada's Parks Branch co-sponsored the organization and administration of Short Courses while the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources remained the academic home. This cooperative effort in turn influenced other parks around the world. Through the Short Courses offered by the two agencies nearly 700 park professionals from more than 100 countries learned how these two North American agencies established and managed their national parks. A large number took that knowledge home to adapt lessons in technology, organization, and policies to their own preservation programs.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ The School of Natural Resources, The University of Michigan, The National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, and the Conservation Foundation, Washington, D.C. with the Cooperation of The National Parks Service of Canada – 1969 Cosponsor. 'Program. Fifth International Short Course. Administration of National Parks & Equivalent Reserves, August 19 to September 19, 1969' (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1969).

⁴⁷ School of Natural Resources, The University of Michigan, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, and Canada. Department of the Environment, Parks. 'Twenty-First International Seminar. National Parks and other Protected Areas, August 18-September 11, 1987' (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1987), inside cover, 2. Theodore Catton, 'A Short History of the New Zealand National Park System,' in Adrian Howkins et al, *National*

The Joint Committee on National Parks continued to hold regular meetings between agency headquarters' staff into the 1990s. During the meetings, dozens of issues were raised, including such exotic to mundane topics as; proposed parks; concessions management; wildlife treaties; native rights claims; air quality monitoring; employee reward systems; staff exchanges; the 50th Anniversary of Glacier-Waterton International Peace Park; tax incentives for historic preservation; and, much more. Beginning in 1998, a new cooperation mechanism – a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two agencies – supplanted the Joint Committee and has continued to guide Parks Canada and NPS “cooperation in management, research, protection, conservation, and presentation of national parks and national historic sites.” Signed by Tom Lee, Assistant Deputy Minister of Parks Canada, and Robert G. Stanton, Director of US National Park Service, on May 20 in Washington DC, the MOU has been regularly renewed every five years and is currently in effect.⁴⁸

In addition to the continuing cooperation that began during the Cold War, experts from both agencies' headquarters assisted and learned from counterparts through agency conferences, site visits, correspondence, and official publications

Parks, 77, notes that two of the three senior officials New Zealand sent to the course during the late 1960s went on to become directors of that country's National Park Authority.

⁴⁸ Many dozens of topics are outlined in 'Canada – United States Joint Committee, Agendas – 1971-84,' Canada Binder One - US-Canada Joint Committee on National Parks 1984 Meeting, 1984, OIA. 'Memorandum of Understanding between the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior of the United States of America and Parks Canada of the Department of Canadian Heritage of the Government of Canada on Cooperation in Management, Research, Protection, Conservation, and Presentation of National Parks and National Historic Sites,' Country Files – 1996/97 Canada Old, 1998, OIA, 1. The regularity of renewal is in Jonathan Putnam to Terence Young, 'Question about Canada-US Park Cooperation,' personal email, 7 June 2019.

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from the late 1960s onward. For example, NPS staff members Theodor Swem and Thomas F. Flynn, Jr. spoke about park planning and concessions management at a Parks Canada conference during fall 1968. The US Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, which included the NPS Director, visited eleven Canadian national parks and historic sites in summer 1972 in order to learn about new approaches to issues challenging the NPS. In spring 1986, a Parks Branch historian exchanged letters with a NPS cultural resources expert in order to obtain the American's assistance with the development of evaluation criteria for historic maritime vessels in Canada. And the director of the Parks Branch's Architectural History Branch published an article on the latest Canadian landscape preservation techniques in a 1991 issue of *CRM*, a NPS publication for professional cultural resource managers. In addition to these non-repeating instances, according to NPS's Office of International Affairs, Parks Canada and the NPS have cooperated in recent years on issues ranging 'from interpretation and education to facilities maintenance and social science.' According to that office's Jonathan Putman, 'Parks Canada remains one of NPS's most important and active international partners.' Moreover, the two agencies have actively interacted in non-agency settings. Specifically, Parks Canada personnel have regularly participated in the biennial meetings of the George Wright Society since 1996. This US-based non-profit is dedicated to parks, protected areas and cultural sites globally, but its members largely hail from the NPS. Nonetheless, the organization has had two decades of Parks Branch board members and a Parks Branch president. According to its Executive Director, David Harmon, Parks Canada people 'led key workshops [and] gave prominent papers' at the society's conferences. They were also invaluable as they 'served on the conference planning committee' and more. In sum, offered

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Harmon, 'their impact was outsized' among the NPS professionals who attended the conferences.⁴⁹

Three conclusions can be drawn from the evolving relationship between the two North American park agencies. First, the United States and Canada played off each other to gain support. The legislation for Canada's Banff National Park was copied from that for Yellowstone while conservationists in the U.S pointed to its northern neighbour to get a National Park Service started. In the course of decades of exchanging information and ideas, each of the two national park services ended up producing more correspondence with the other than they did with the rest of the world combined. The relationship enabled the two services to cite each other as sterling examples of why incompatible development threats would demean one system in comparison to the other. Second, size matters. With ten times as many people, the United States budget for parks completely dwarfed that of Canada, leading the latter to follow for a time a logical program of letting the southern system

⁴⁹ Theodor R. Swem, 'Planning of National Parks in the United States' in *The Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow*, J.G. Nelson and R.C. Scace, Eds. (Calgary: The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada and University of Calgary, 1968), 605-622; and, Thomas F. Flynn, Jr., 'The Management of Concessions and Other Services in National Parks in the United States,' in Nelson and Scale, *Canadian National Parks*, 745-758. This Canadian conference was also attended by B.R. McClelland and G.C. Ruhle of the NPS. H.C. Saults to James W. Whittaker, 'Minutes, Canadian Field Trip' 8 August 1972, RG 79, Entry 38, Records of the National Park Service Advisory Board - Records Related to Field Trips, Box 3, 'Canadian Field Trip-July 22-30, 1972,' NARA. Arnold E. Roos to Jerry Rogers, 19 June 1986, Canada Binder One 'US-Canada Joint Commission on National Parks, 1986 Meeting,' OIA; and Jerry L. Rogers to Arnold E. Roos, 4 August 1986, Canada Binder One 'US-Canada Joint Commission on National Parks, 1986 Meeting,' OIA. Susan Buggey, 'Managing Cultural Landscapes in the Canadian Parks Service' *CRM* 14 (6, 1991), 22-23. Putnam to Young, 'Question,' 7 June 2019. David Harmon to Terence Young, 'Canadian National Parks membership & attendance,' personal email, 10 June 2019.

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do much of the research and testing. Then it could adopt what it found useful. The budgetary disparity fostered a mismatch in personnel training and management tools for several decades, but by the end of the 1950s Canada began to rapidly catch up. And, third, the existence and programs of a park agency are dependent on larger national government agendas, as so many scholars have written over the last several decades. The surge in US-Canada cooperation came in an era of the Canadian government's expanding support for the Parks Branch and growing US concerns about international Cold War relations.

We have illustrated how it took the Canadian National Parks Branch and the US National Park Service their first half-century to develop the closeness and cooperation that has characterized their second half-century. But there is opportunity for more research. For one, while we have presented a history of interactions at the national park service levels, we have not explored interactions at other organizational ranks, especially between individual parks in the two countries. Acadia and Fundy National Parks, for example, only 300 kilometers apart on the American and Canadian east coast respectively, may well have found more commonalities with each other in terms of environmental and management issues than they did with Yellowstone or Banff, and looked accordingly to one another's experience.⁵⁰ For another, there has to date been virtually no work on what effect the binational Short Courses have had on the hundreds of international park personnel who attended them. An amalgam of Canadian and US approaches, policies and philosophies, the concept of short training courses arose from joint ideas about

⁵⁰ An example of such cross-border research is Karen Routledge, "'100 Dangerous Animals Roaming Loose': Grizzly Bear Management in Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, 1932-2000," in Howkins et al, *National Parks*, 191-209.

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advising still other parks.⁵¹ Deep research into the histories of other countries' preservation histories will elucidate not only the multi-faceted role of the American and Canadian park services, but contrast invention in national contexts with diffusion of ideas from foreign hearths.

⁵¹ According to School of Natural Resources, et al., 'Twenty-First International Seminar,'², the course participants through 1986 had come from: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, England, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Laos, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, People's Republic of China, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Korea, South West Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United States, Upper Volta, Uruguay, USSR, Venezuela, West Germany, Western Samoa, Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.