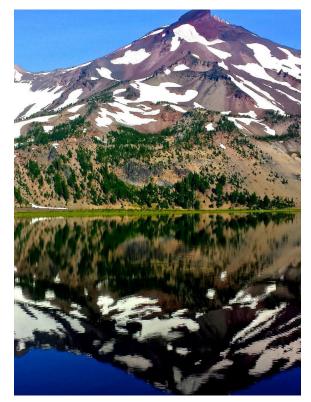


Solitude In Law and Experience

DR. TROY HALL & DR. JESSE ENGEBRETSON MAY 26, 2021







Overview

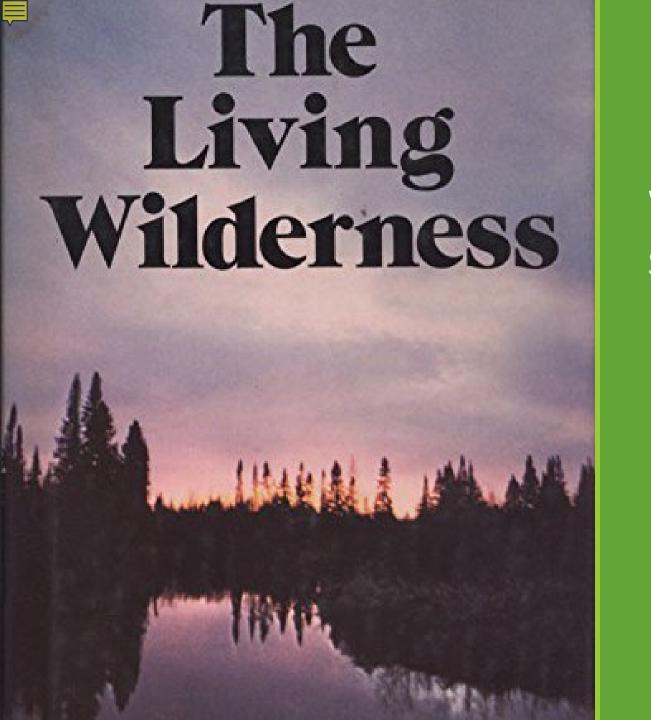
Solitude as (not) defined in the Wilderness Act

Solitude in the legislative record

Research on visitors' experiences of solitude

Implications

Discussion



Why focus on solitude?

Wilderness: *"The environment of solitude"*





"Regulations and policy require the Forest Service to provide outstanding opportunities but provide no further direction. There are no definitions of key terms and no guidance regarding indicators or desired conditions. There is little or no policy that identifies when management action is needed, and no guidance on how to achieve the management objectives." (USFS's Wilderness Advisory Group, 2010)

SOUL OF THE WILDERNESS

The Historical Meaning of "Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation" in the Wilderness Act of 1964

by JESSE M. ENGEBRETSON and TROY E. HALL



Methods

Thematic content analysis of Congressional hearings and related documents

6,000 pages of documents from 18 hearings between 1957 and 1964

WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM 1905-7 **HEARINGS** SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES EIGHTY-SEVENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION S. 174, H.R. 293, H.R. 299, H.R. 496, H.R. 776, H.R. 1762, H.R. 1925, H.R. 2008, and H.R. 8237 BILLS TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESER-VATION SYSTEM FOR THE PERMANENT GOOD OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES OCTOBER 30 AND 31, 1961-McCALL, IDAHO Serial No. 12 Part I Printed for the use of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

(3) The Wilderness Act recognises that "an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, is desired to occupanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, is desired to occupanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, is desired to occupanied by the property of the stable of the control of the control



The emergence of "outstanding opportunities"

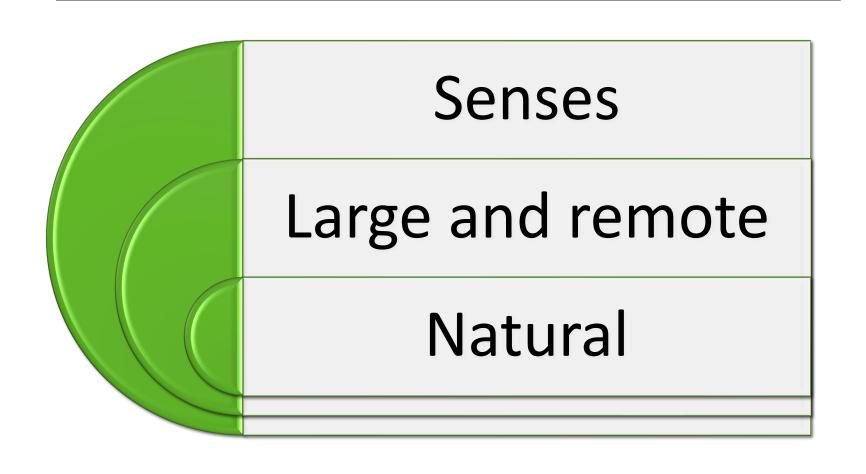
A millerness is further defined to mean in this het, an area of intelled pool hodered land without formalised infromeways or had belitating pretented and manager of the grant of the fact that the land is a land of the land measurement natural conditions an an understood state within a governmenty appears to how been affected primarily by the forecan palure with I recognized as an area where the earth and its community of 2 life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor 3 who does not remain. For the purposes of this Act the 4 term "wilderness" shall include the areas provided for in statistly 5 section 2 of this Act and such other areas as shall be desig-6 nated for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation 7 System in accordance with the provisions of this Act. NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM 9 SEC. 2. The National Wilderness Preservation System slitude or 10 (hereafter referred to in this Act as the Wilderness System) 11 shall comprise (subject to existing private rights, if any) 12 the federally owned areas provided for in this section. NATIONAL FOREST AREAS (a) The Wilderness System shall include as wilderness 15 areas the areas within the national forests se classified on acress we areas within the national forests see classified on
the life effective date of this Act by the Department of AgriculClassified on the Act by the Department of Agricultrue or the Forest Service as wilderness, wild, principal to the Forest Service as wilderness, wild, principal to the Act Mac Mac Classified see principal to canoer which are as shall be subject to review as hereinafter to bresewat Following enactment of this Act, the Secretary of 21 Agriculture shall, within fifteen years, review, in accordance 22 with paragraph C, section 251.20, of the Code of Federal inditions 23 Regulations, title 36, effective January 1, 1959, the suitability of each primitive area in the national forests for prescue to proportions has fundings to the Pesident.

Before the convening of Congress relicitogical or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or

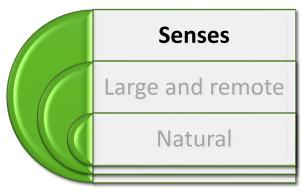
Arose in S. 3809 and H.R. 12951 in July, 1960



















Senses

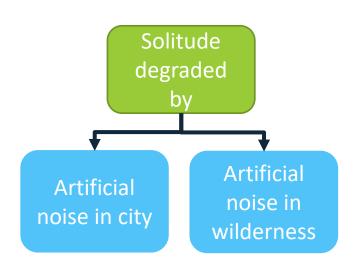
Large and remote

Natural



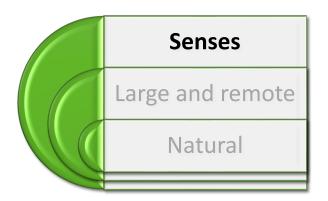


Sensory escape from the city



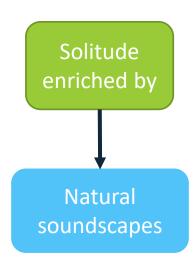
"Americans need areas of peace and solitude away from the noisy, mechanized, and humdrum existence of the industrial conurbations" (NWPA Hearings 1964, p. 339)

"The airplane by its noise destroys for man in the canoe the intangible, almost indescribable quality of wilderness, a quality compounded by silence and solitude" (NWPA Hearings, 1957, pp. 180-181)

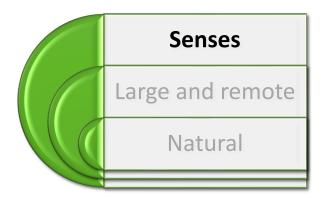




Sensory immersion in wilderness

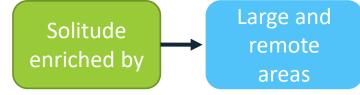


"[Wilderness's] impact is greatest when they [visitors] are absorbing in peaceful solitude, the voices of wind rustling the needles or leaves in a forest or whipping it during a storm, or listening to the symphonies composed by rivers and creeks, birds or frogs, with the added possibility of a note from a bugling elk. These are the sounds of wilderness' aliveness" (NWPA Hearings 1962, p. 1384)



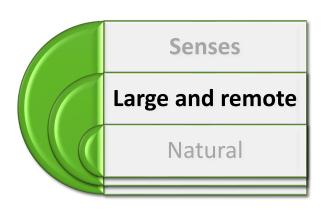


Large remote areas promote solitude



"The wilderness, by its nature, demands solitude. It requires as much remoteness from man and his works as possible. Only in comparatively large areas can a wilderness continue to maintain its wilderness character" (NWPA Hearings, 1957, p. 233)



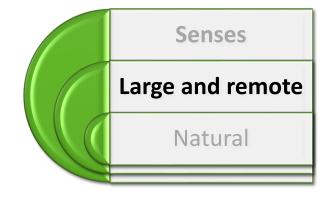




Large remote areas promote solitude



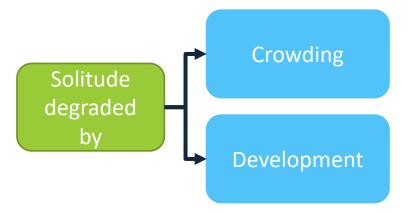
"A crowded wilderness area quickly loses its qualities of peace and solitude" (NWPA Hearings, 1964, p. 942)





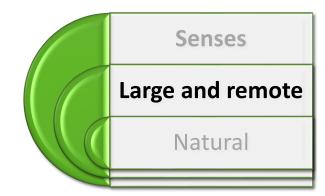
Large remote areas promote solitude



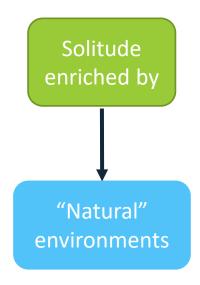


"A crowded wilderness area quickly loses its qualities of peace and solitude" (NWPA Hearings, 1964, p. 942)

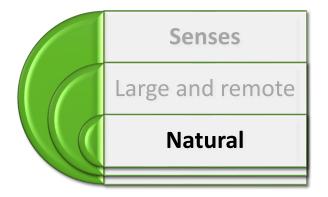
"Scenery and solitude are intrinsically separate things: the motorist is entitled to his full share of scenery, but motorways and solitude together constitute a contradiction" (NWPA Hearings 1957, p. 167)



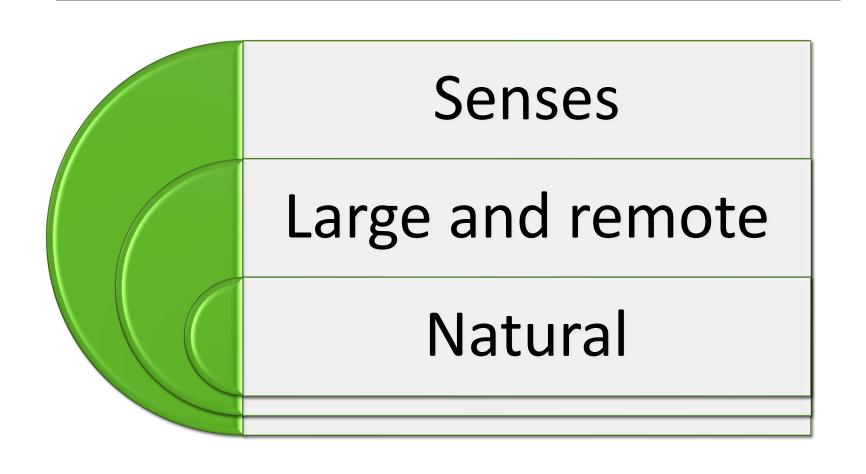
Naturalness promotes solitude



Visitors could find "solitude and peace of mind" in the "precious, dwindling storehouse of unspoiled, untouched nature" (NWPA Hearings, 1962, p. 1306)

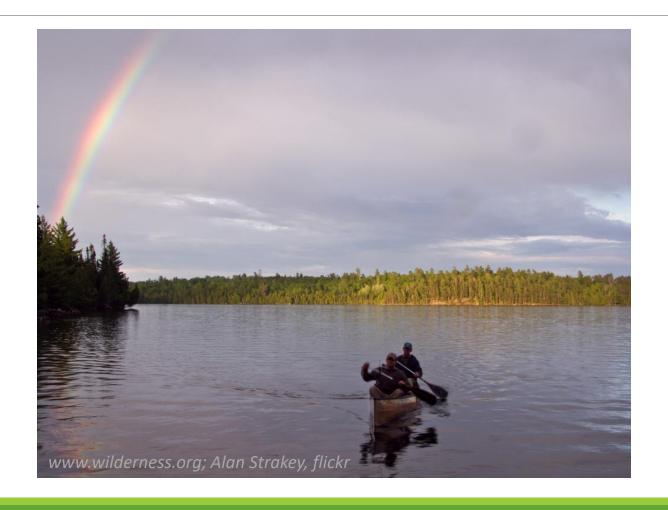








What about visitors' experiences?





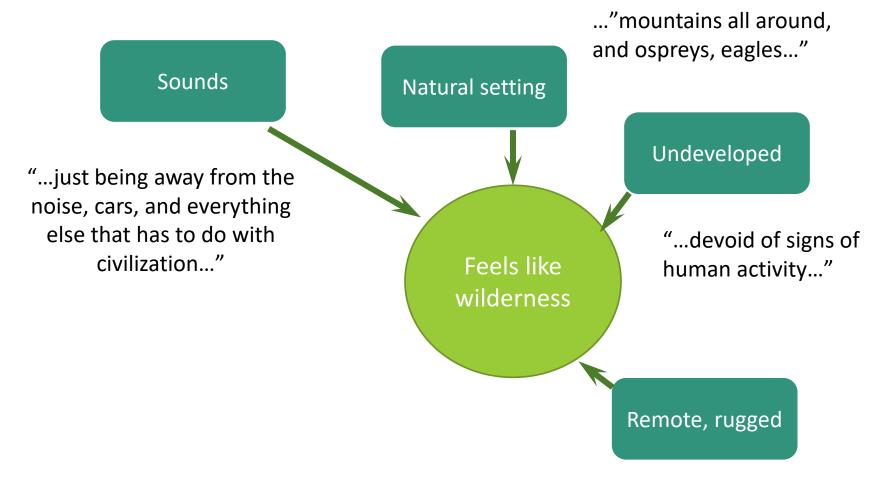






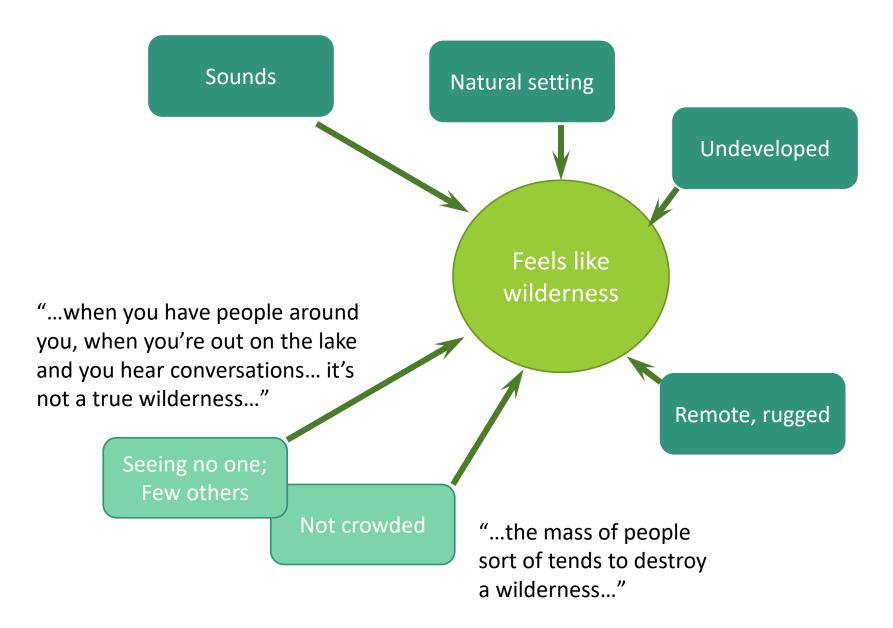




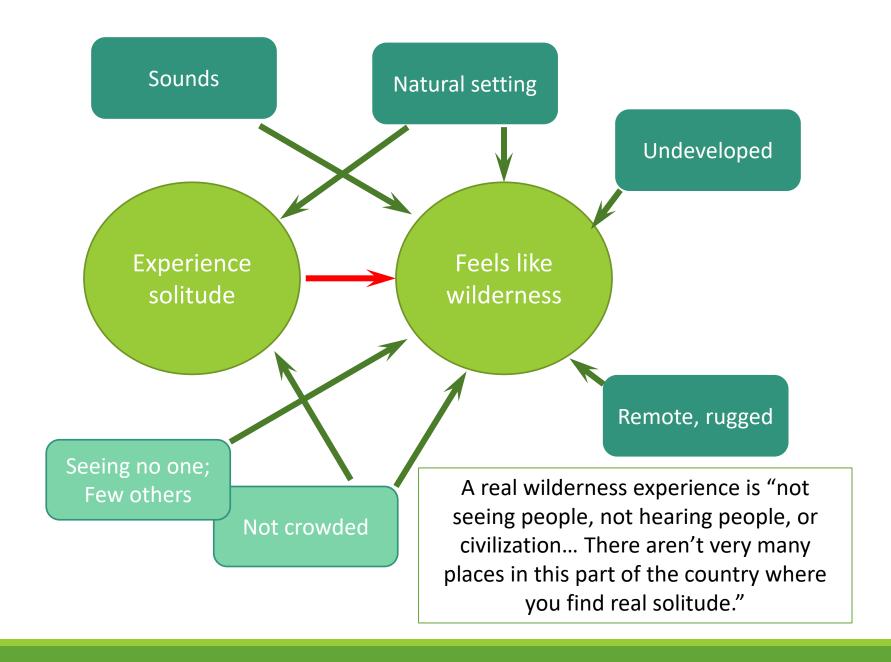


"...after a hard day it always feels so good to take off your pack..."

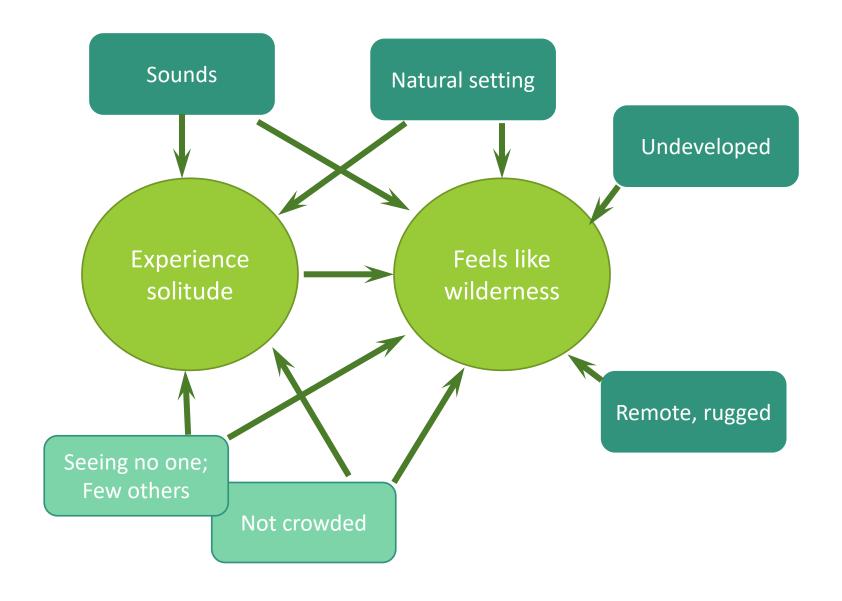






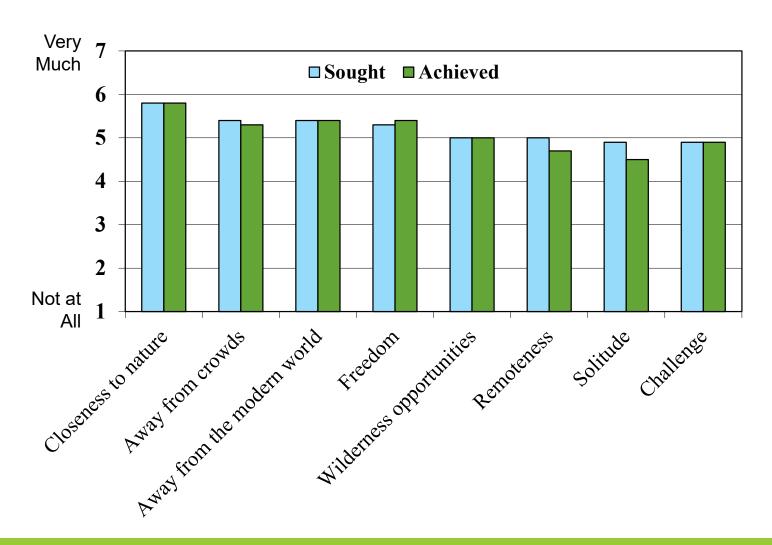






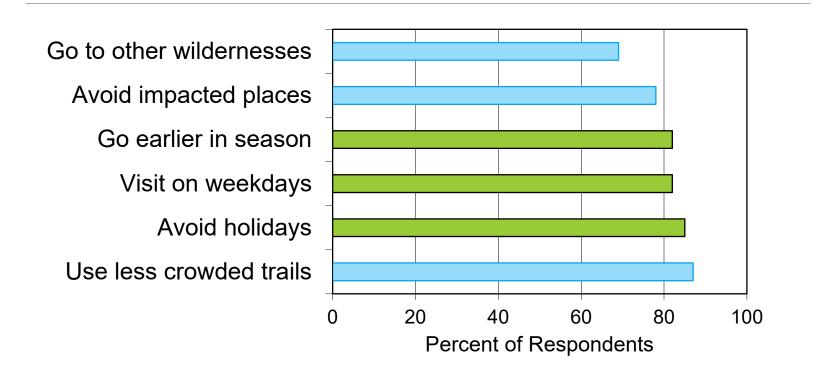


Experiences sought and achieved





"How often have you done each of the following in any Oregon or Washington wilderness?"





Conclusions









Use & Social Impacts

People prefer to have solitude & consider solitude an important quality of wilderness

People are aware of other visitors, & "people" are part of what detracts from feelings of "wilderness" and "solitude"

People often avoid high use times/places when seeking solitude







Use & Social Impacts

Crowding is infrequent and short-lived

Behavior is more important than number of encounters

More people have positive than negative encounters





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Management implications

Management plans typically measure solitude with "social encounters"

This is probably one of the better proxies for solitude (though the issue of "opportunity vs. reality" still exists)

Monitoring and management could be expanded to capture the complex foundations of solitude, such as:

- Night sky
- Soundscapes
- Natural features



Thank you!

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