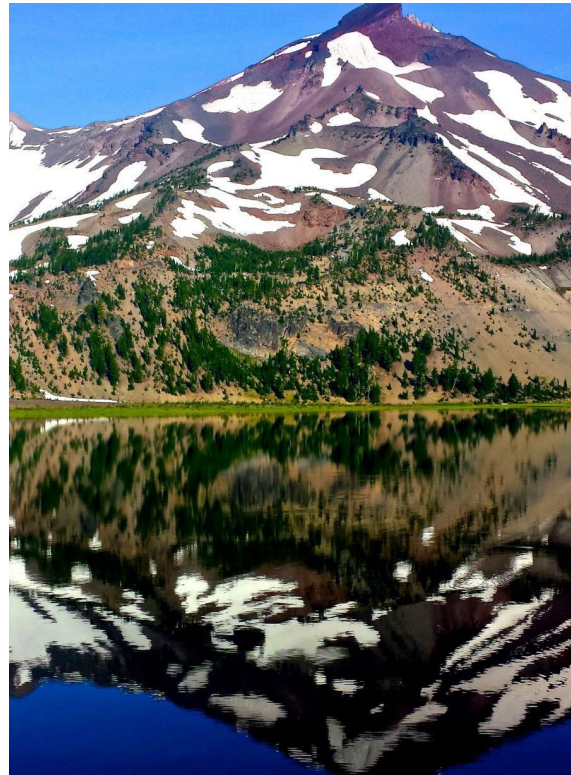




Solitude In Law and Experience

DR. TROY HALL & DR.
JESSE ENGEBRETSON

MAY 26, 2021



Overview

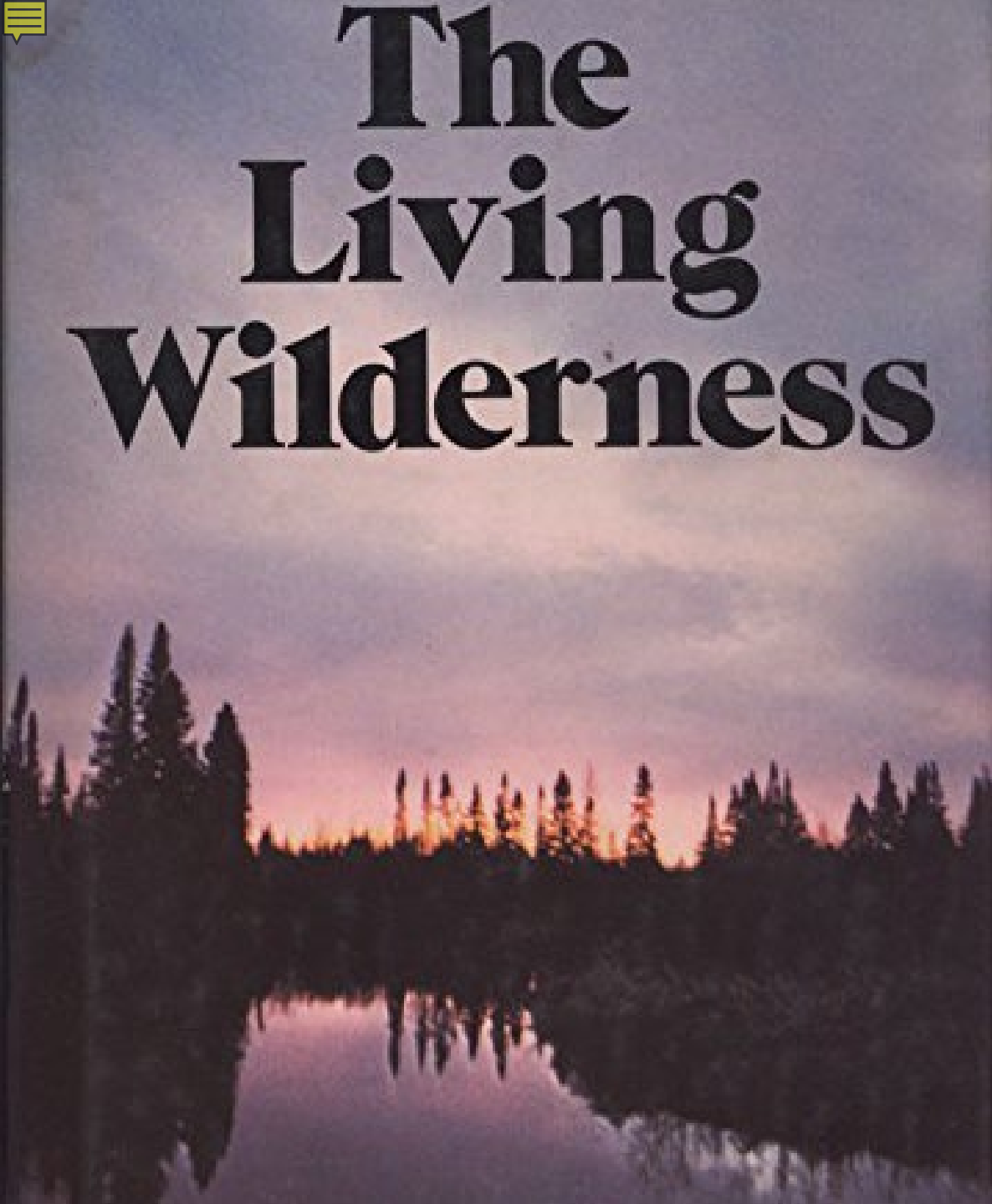
Solitude as (not) defined in the Wilderness Act

Solitude in the legislative record

Research on visitors' experiences of solitude

Implications

Discussion

A photograph of a forest lake at sunset. The sky is a mix of purple, pink, and blue. The silhouettes of evergreen trees line the shore, and their reflections are visible in the calm water. The title 'The Living Wilderness' is written in a large, bold, black serif font across the top half of the image.

The Living Wilderness

Why focus on
solitude?

Wilderness:
*“The
environment
of solitude”*

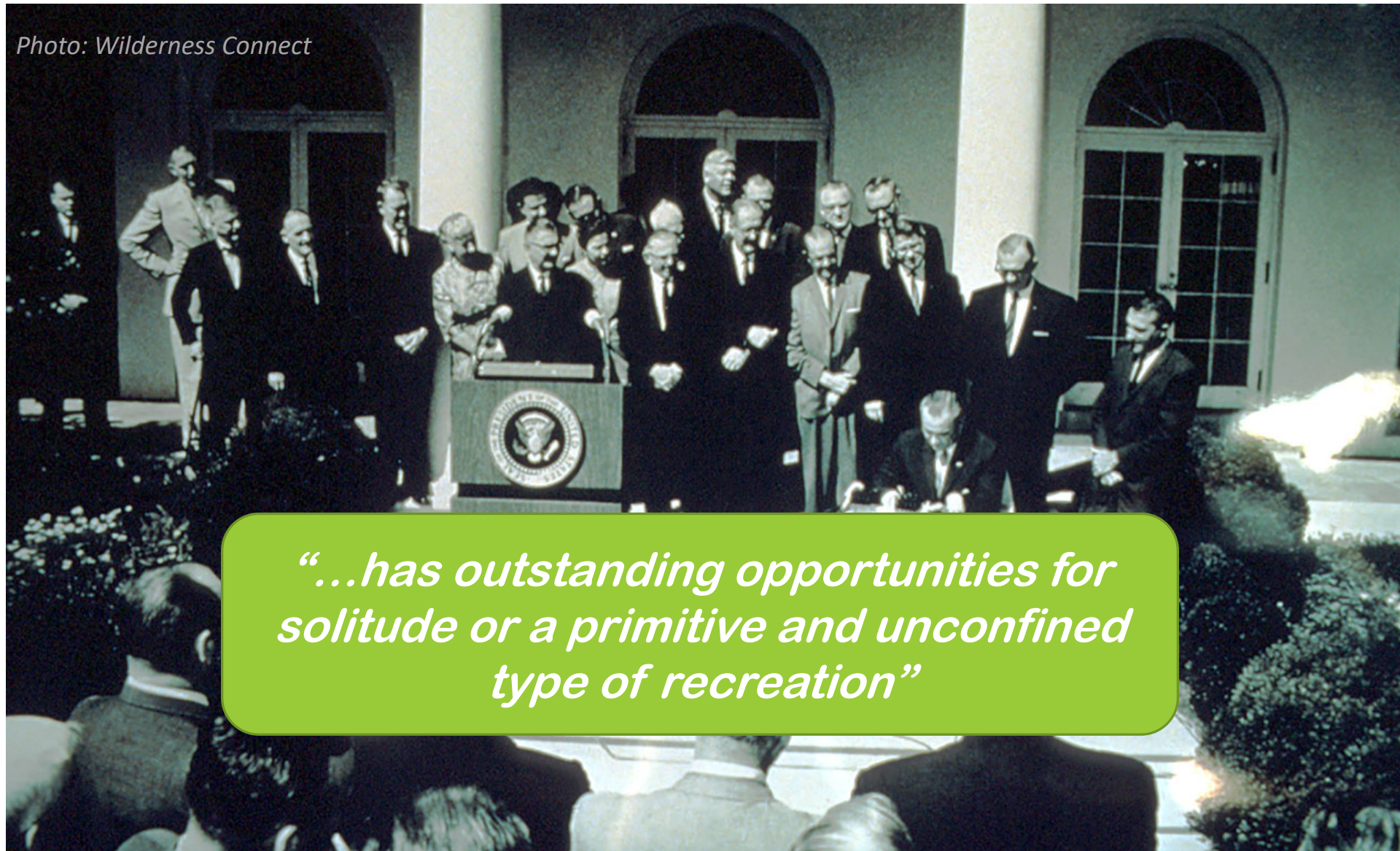


Photo: Wilderness Connect

“...has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation”

“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

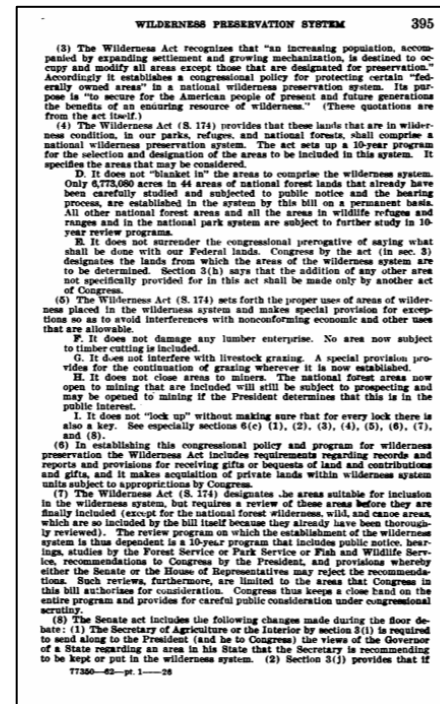
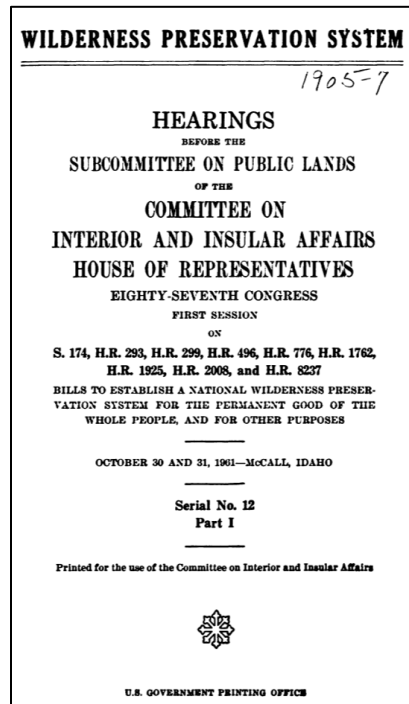
**The Historical Meaning of
“Outstanding Opportunities for
Solitude or a Primitive and
Unconfined Type of Recreation”
in the Wilderness Act of 1964**

**by JESSE M. ENGBRETSON
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



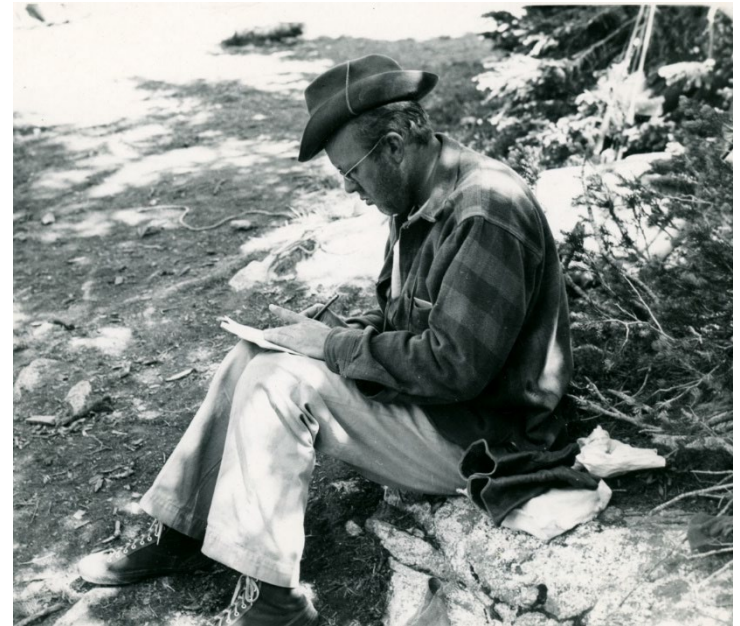
The emergence of “outstanding opportunities”

A wilderness is further defined to mean, in this Act, an area of undeveloped Federal land without permanent improvement or habitation, which is protected and managed as the public interest requires:

- (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable;
- (2) has outstanding opportunities for those who seek solitude or enjoy a rugged, primitive, and unconfined type of outdoor recreation;
- (3) is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and
- (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

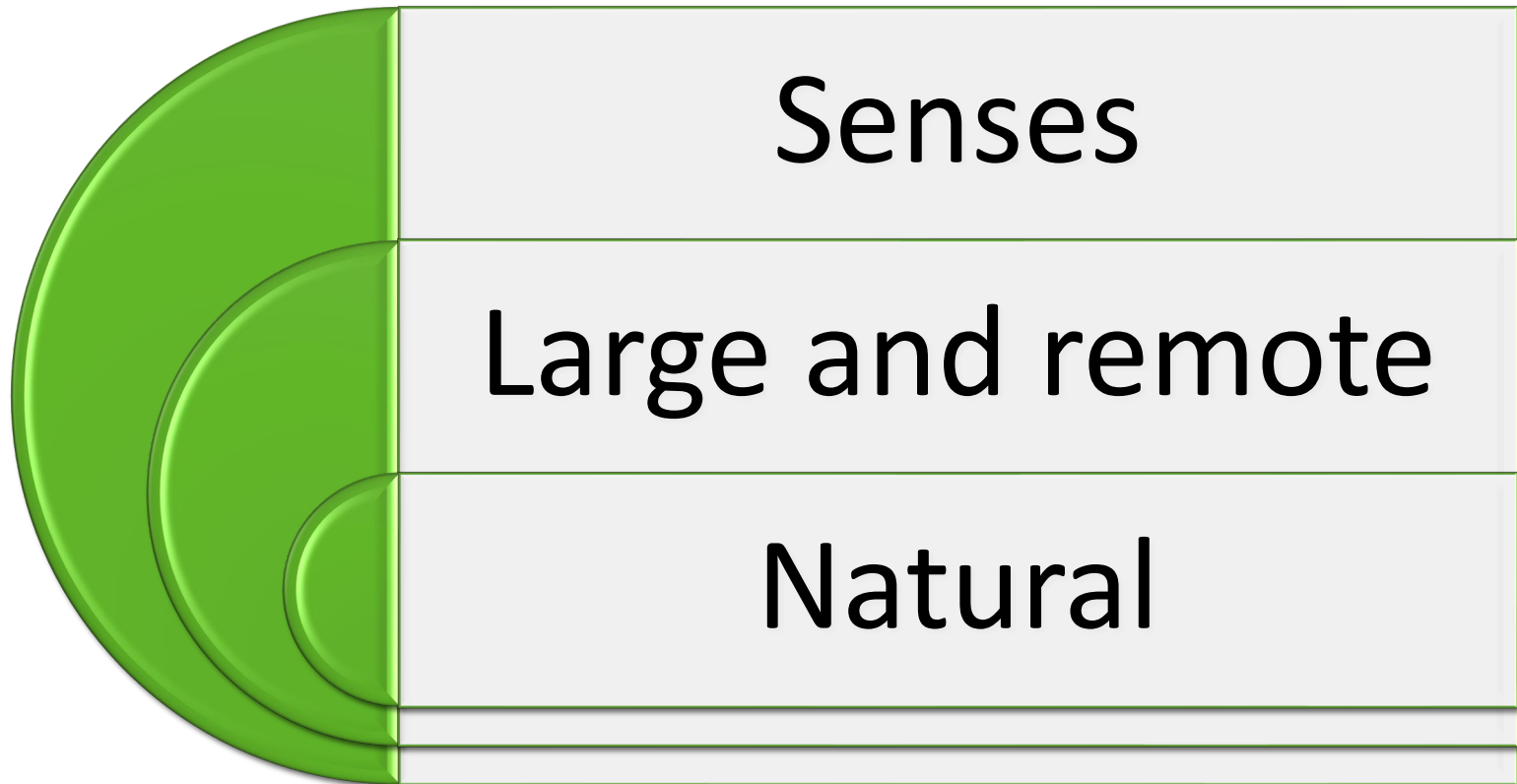
(2) has outstanding opportunities for those who seek solitude or wish to enjoy a rugged, primitive, and unconfined type of outdoor recreation;

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






How was solitude represented?





How was solitude represented?

	Senses
	Large and remote
	Natural

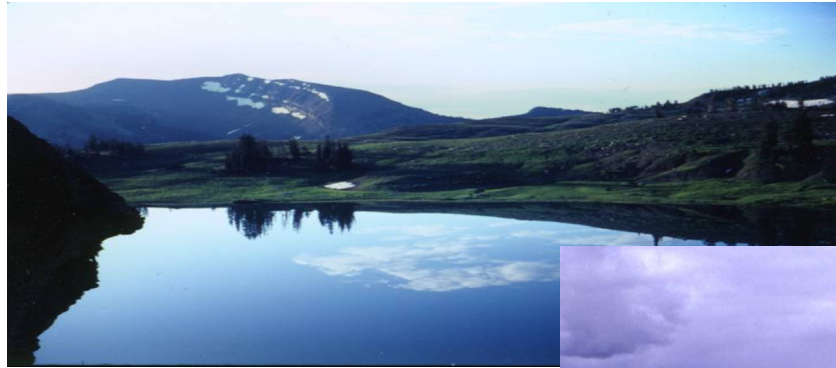


How was solitude represented?

Senses

Large and remote

Natural

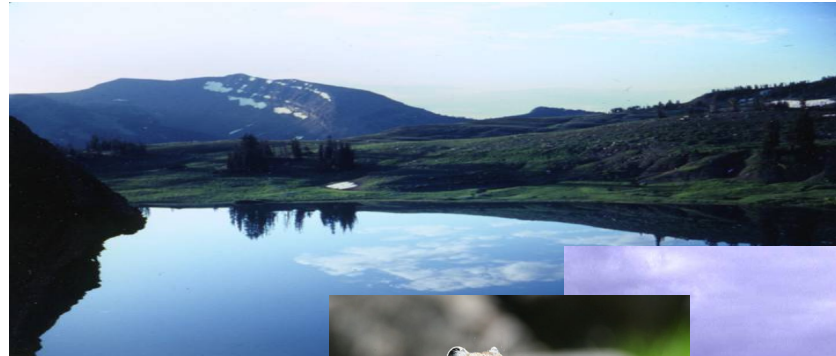


How was solitude represented?

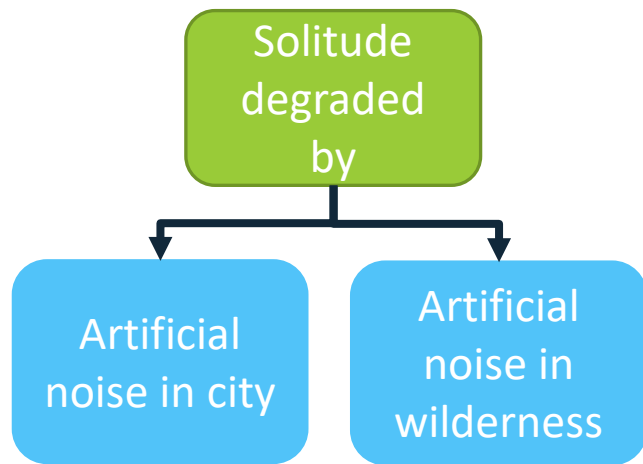
Senses

Large and remote

Natural

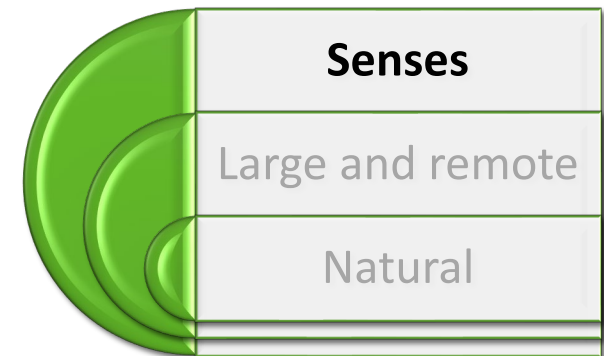


Sensory escape from the city



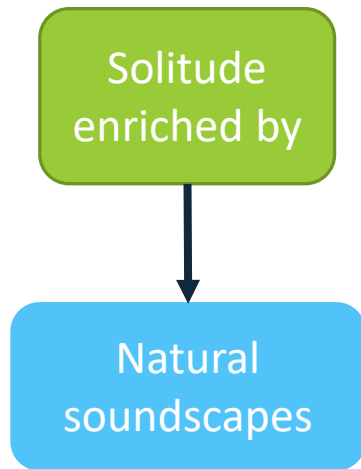
"Americans need areas of peace and solitude away from the noisy, mechanized, and humdrum existence of the industrial conurbations" (NWPA Hearings 1964, p. 339)

"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)

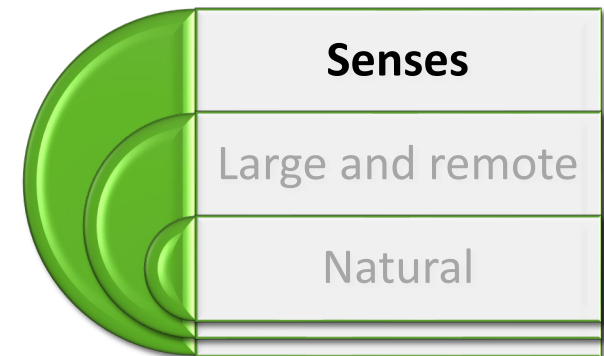




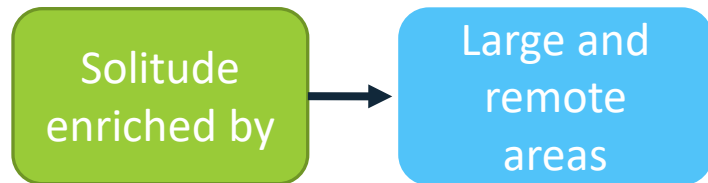
Sensory immersion in wilderness



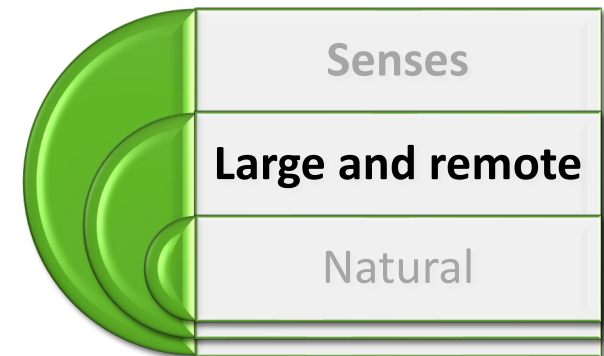
“[Wilderness’s] impact is greatest when they [visitors] are absorbing in peaceful solitude, the voices of wind rustling the needles or leaves in a forest or whipping it during a storm, or listening to the symphonies composed by rivers and creeks, birds or frogs, with the added possibility of a note from 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

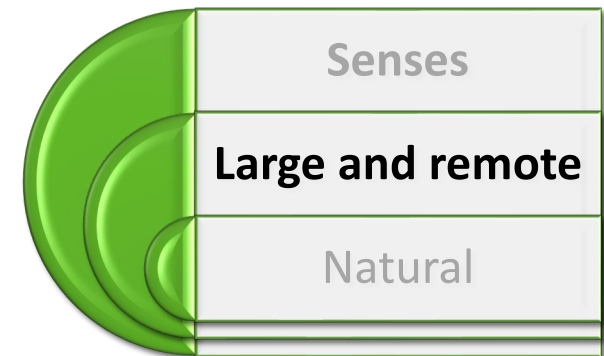


“A crowded wilderness area quickly loses its qualities of peace and solitude”

(NWPAs Hearings, 1964, p. 942)

Solitude
degraded
by

Crowding

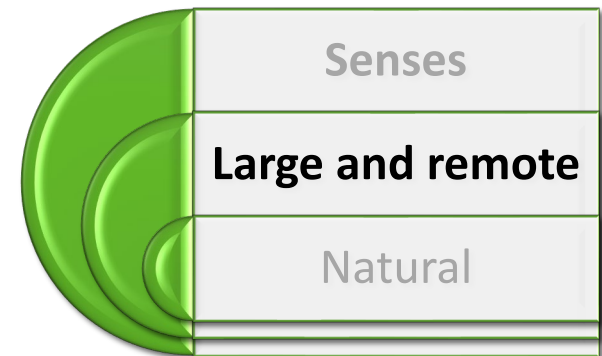
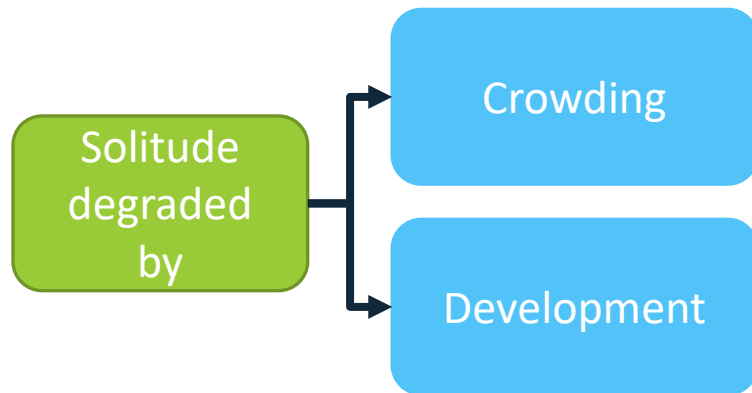


Large remote areas promote solitude

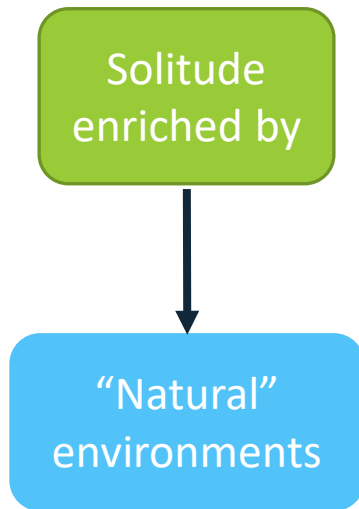


“A crowded wilderness area quickly loses its qualities of peace and solitude” (NWPA Hearings, 1964, p. 942)

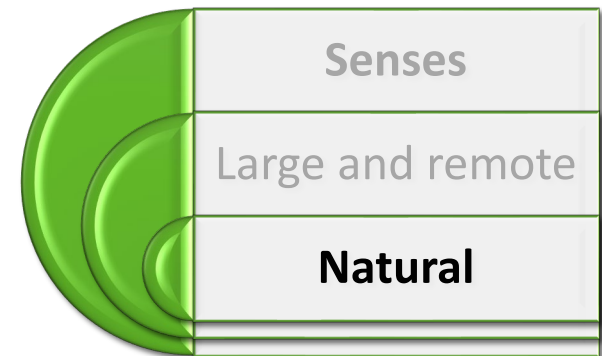
“Scenery and solitude are intrinsically separate things: the motorist is entitled to his full share of scenery, but motorways and solitude together constitute a contradiction” (NWPA Hearings 1957, p. 167)



Naturalness promotes solitude

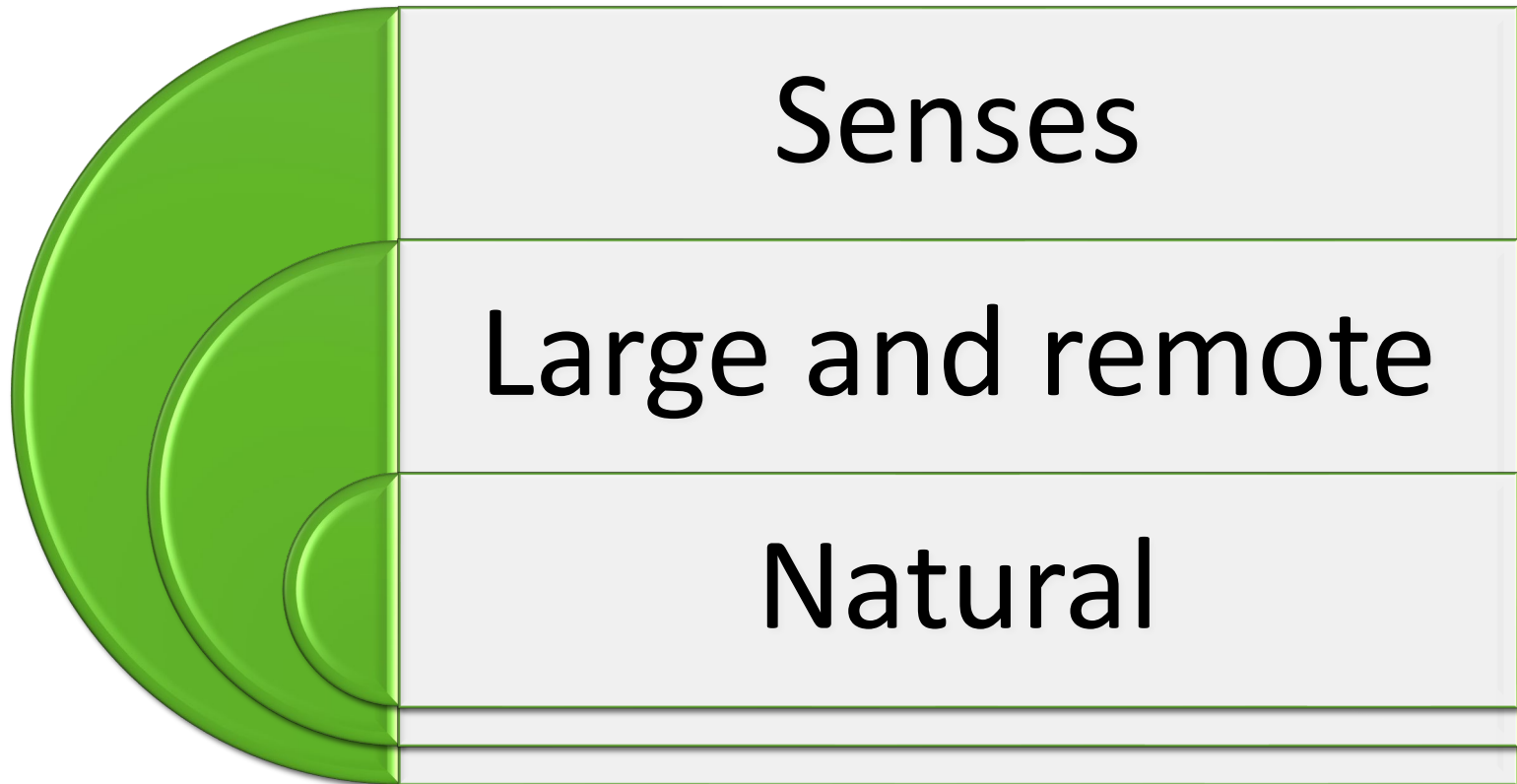


Visitors could find “solitude and peace of mind” in the “precious, dwindling storehouse of unspoiled, untouched nature” (NWPA Hearings, 1962, p. 1306)





How was solitude represented?

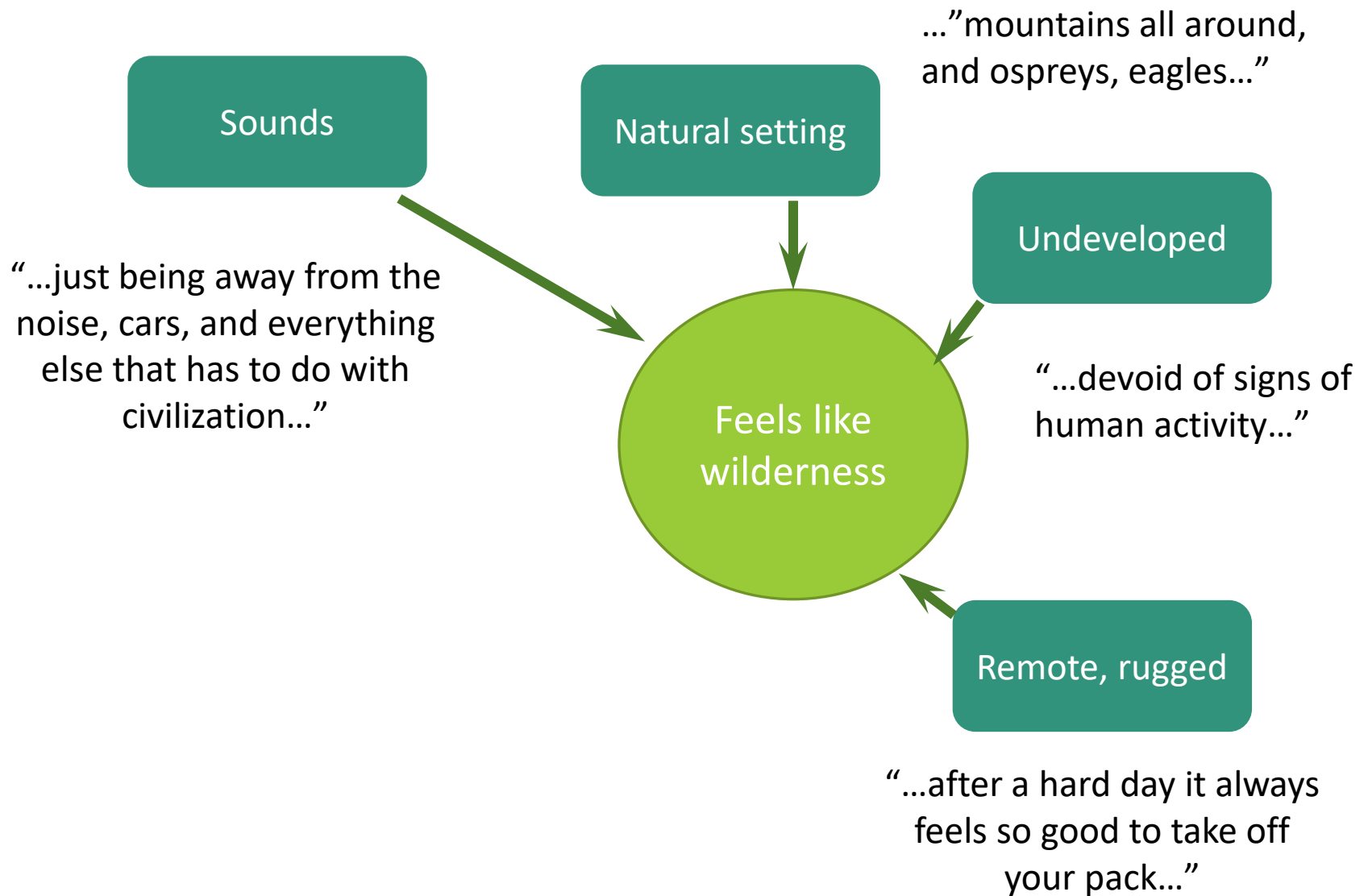


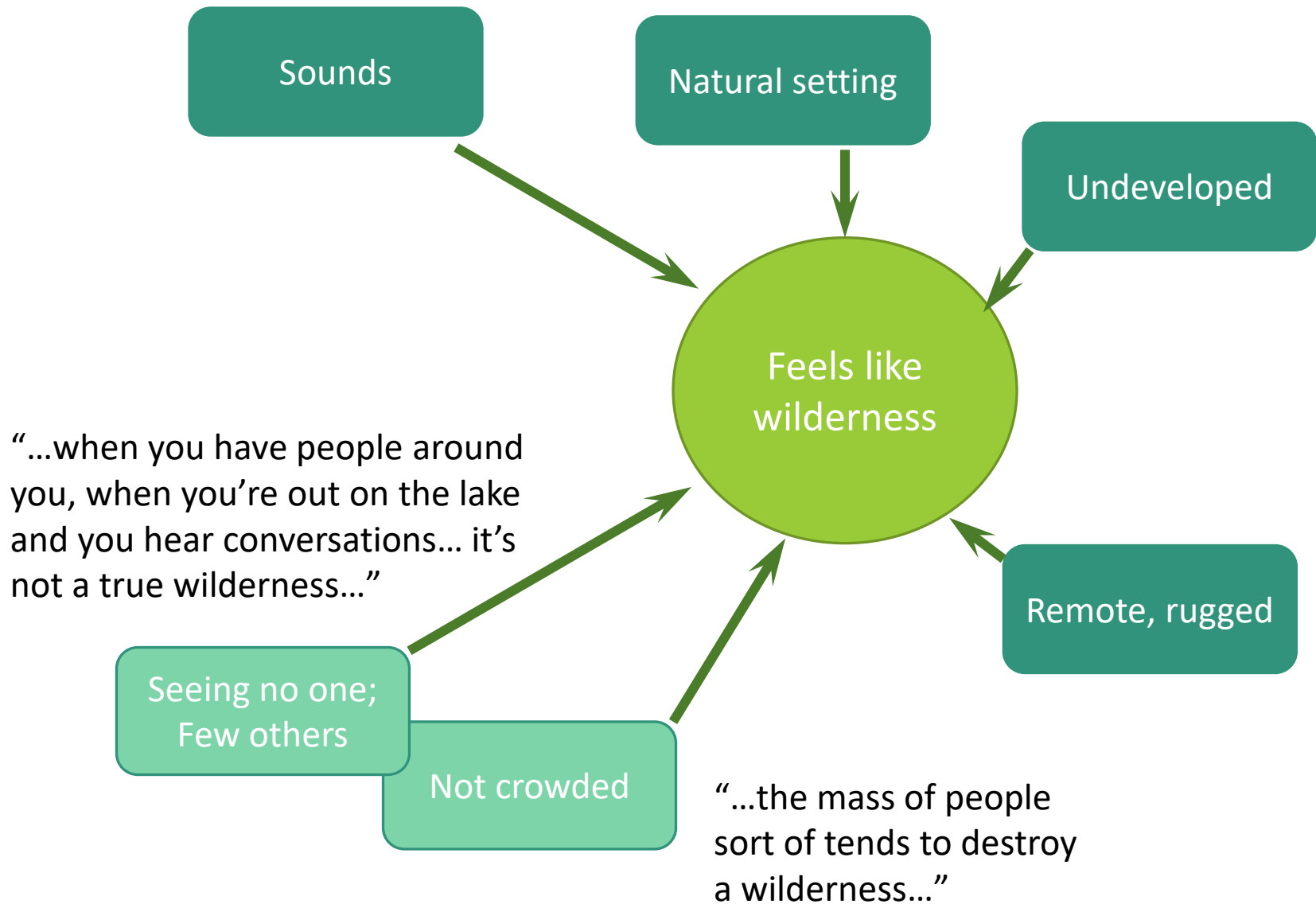


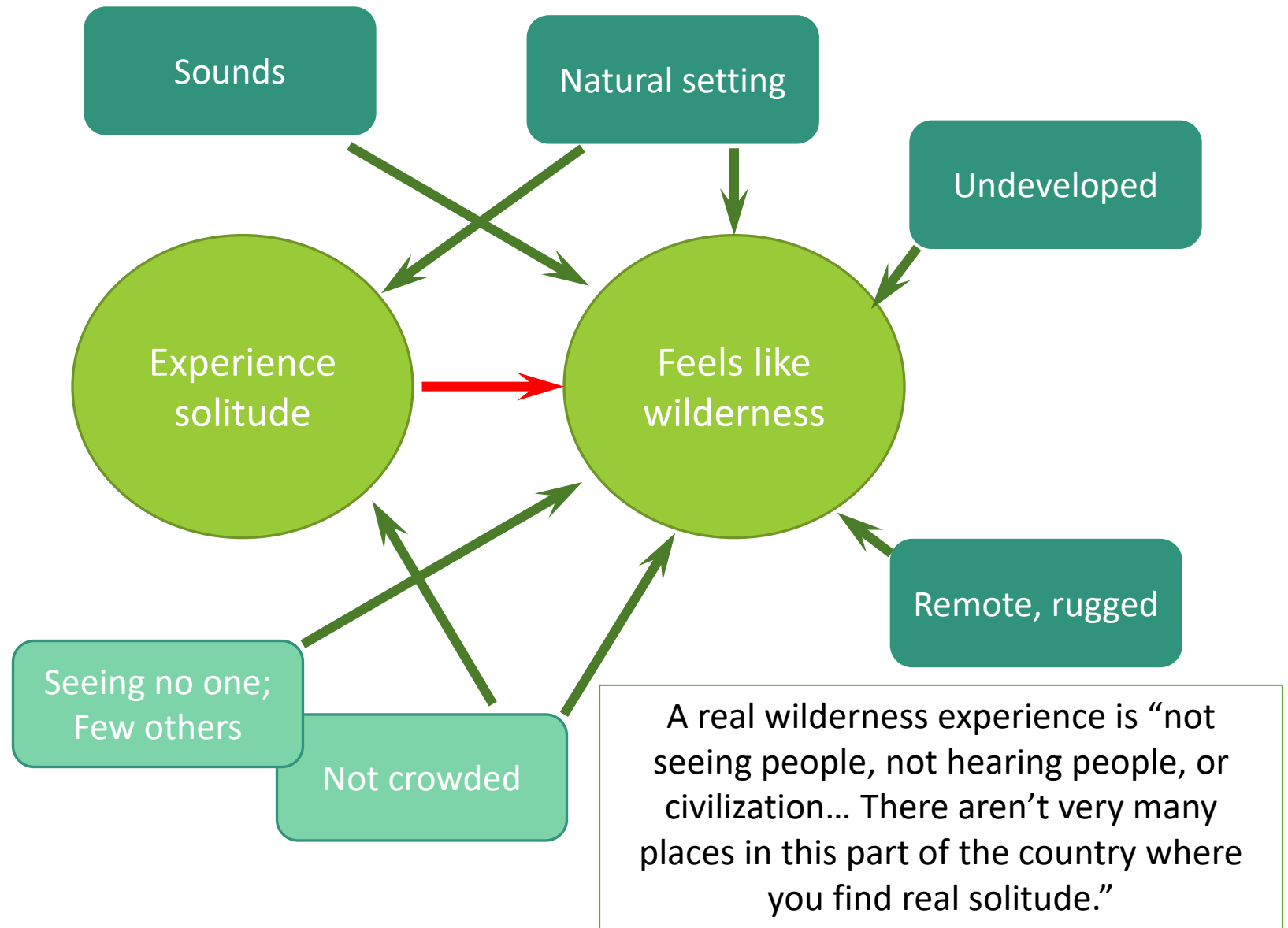
What about visitors' experiences?

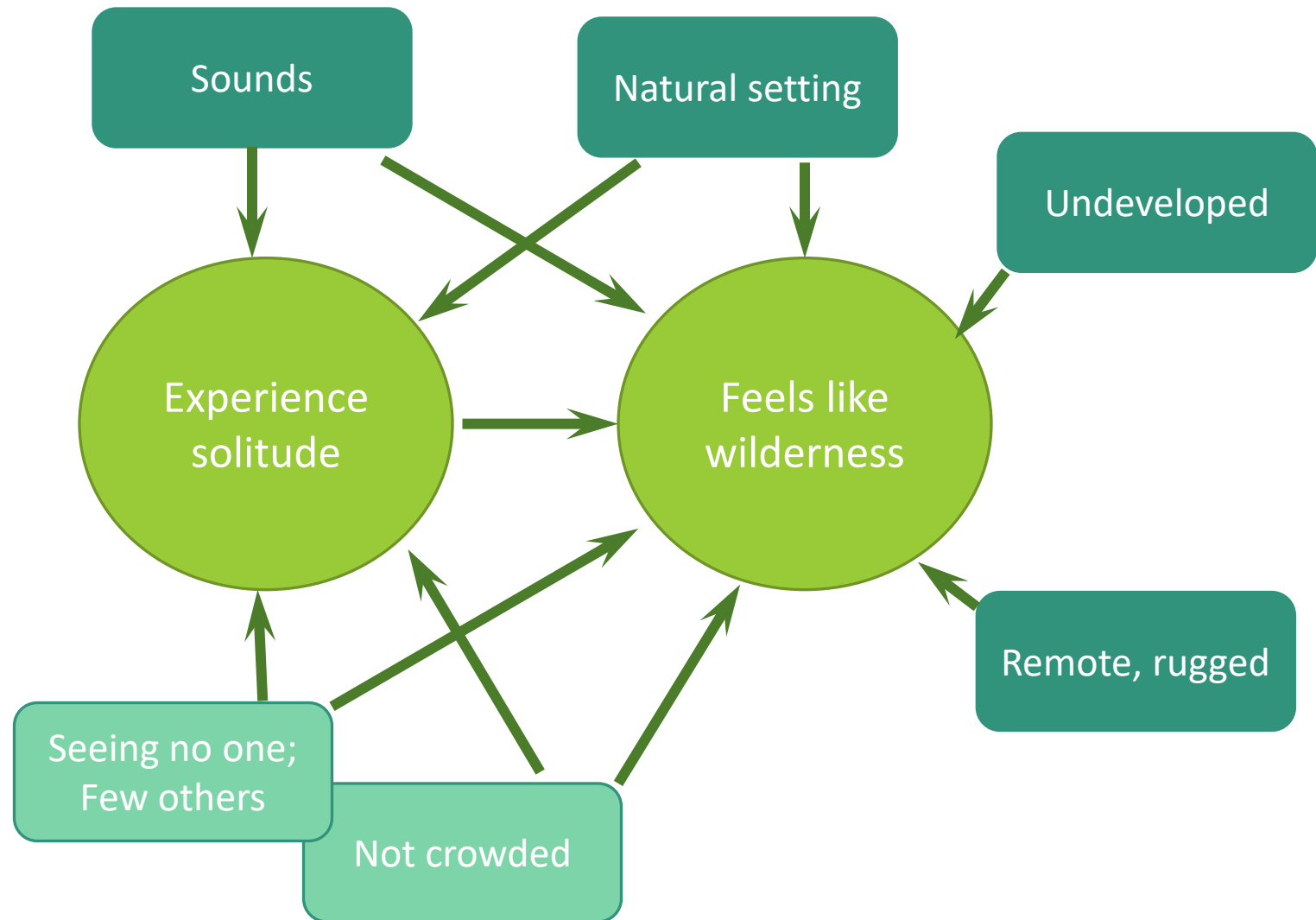












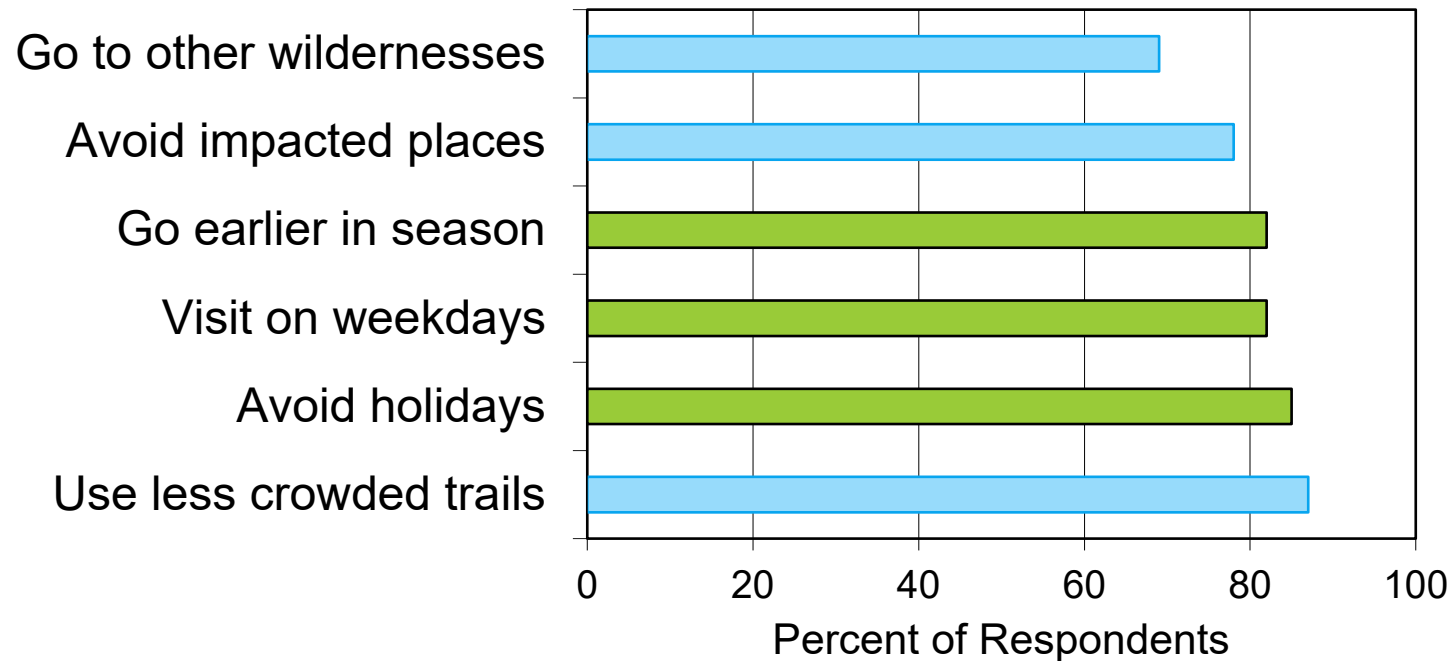


Experiences sought and achieved





“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





Gearjunkie.com



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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