Problems Facing Managers – Summary

• Recreation settings are extremely diverse, ranging from small urban parks and natural areas to extensive wilderness;

• Activities and experiences are wide-ranging, and involve a broadening clientele of Americans and foreign visitors;

• The situation is further complicated by multiple demands upon a land base which is essentially fixed in size;
• Competition and conflict among recreation uses and between recreation and non-recreation use is increasing rapidly.

• Without enhanced management efforts, recreation in these changing environments will fall short of what is expected—resulting in dissatisfied customers, complaints, appeals, lawsuits, vandalism, overuse, low levels of use, and regulations restricting many aspects of forest management.
• Interactions between people and environments result in **wide variations in perceptions, expectations, and patterns of choice and use** which are not well understood (such as in the use of Wilderness areas).

• Very little is known about such choices.
What is the Value Placed on Wild Lands?
As native of Phoenix, I grew up loving the surrounding desert and mountain areas, and I often took people from other parts of the country on tours of the state. I’d heard people say that folks possessed a different mentality if they grew up in a large city, but I never experienced it until I took some visitors from New Jersey out on a spring morning to see the desert outside Phoenix.

As they walked among the cactuses and other blooming foliage, one woman suddenly stopped and spoke in a frightened tone. “You know, we should be careful out here, there might be snakes.” Before I could answer, her husband reproached her, saying in a rather disgusted manner, “Don’t be ridiculous, Mary. If there were snakes out here, there would be signs.”

Jeanne Hawks, Yarnell
Arizona Highways  October 1997
• What does this say about our beliefs and attitudes toward the unknown?

• What does this say about our attitudes toward the Wild Places?

• Why have people been fascinated with Wild Places (Now known as Wilderness) and the history of the West for centuries?

• What is it about Native American Culture that has inspired so many books and dominated so much of our history?

• What are your attitudes and behaviors towards places that are wild and unfamiliar to you?
Shifting Attitudes Toward Wilderness

“Ours has been the first, and will doubtless be the last, party of whites to visit this profitless locality. It seems intended by nature that the Colorado River, along the greater portion of its lonely and majestic way, shall be forever unvisited and undisturbed.”

Joseph Christmas Ives, Explorer, 1857.

• The early conception of wild places in North America was dominated by fear and abhorrence. Authors have portrayed wilderness as desolate, a howling wasteland, a godless tract;

• As settlers expanded west, the image of wild places was very real.
The West was seen not only in its traditional role as a barrier to progress, but a potential contaminant of the human spirit as a place that harbored anti-Christian forces, wild animals, Indians, thieves and other threats.

What eventually began to emerge was that the wild west held value in and of itself, that it was not just to be exploited for the material from which civilization was to be fabricated.

American West and Wild Places
Shifts in Attitudes

• Increased **Scientific** understanding of Wilderness (physical laws and processes of nature);

• American culture slowly began to realize that **wilderness and nature were a distinctive aspect of their culture** absent from the influence of Europe;

• What was once considered an **endless tract of wilderness** was discovered to have **bounds, livable** and that fact that it could be **scarce** found its way into the American psyche as **something valuable**, to be **treasured**.
• From roughly the last decade of the 19th century through the first two decades of the 20th century, a great transition occurred in America’s attitude toward wilderness;

• Over this time, the negative evaluation of wilderness, fear and support for its elimination were replaced by significant intrigue and concern that at least some wild places should be preserved.
American West and Photography

• Early landscape photographers of the West – Carleton Watkins, Timothy O’Sullivan and Ansel Adams (to name a few) – worked for the government or the railroads or other commercial interests.

• They were not paid to create art but to document landscape for survey crews they traveled with, or to create a sense of the West that would resonate positively with the American Public.
American West and Photography

- A landscape image, wild and untamed, with its seemingly limitless horizons, reinforced America’s sense of Manifest Destiny – ‘Go West, Young Man’ was all part of the settlement of the West.

- With so much wilderness there, waiting to be tamed, how could anyone do otherwise?

- This was an investment to get people to understand the West in a particular way.
American West and Photography

- Making the West look rugged, untouched and unpopulated might have been the agenda for many of their employers.

- Ansel Adams was one of them who’s particular view of the West landscape is a very romanticized one and very much attuned to Nature.

- Images of remote mountains, canyons and desert. Human presence in these landscapes such as explorers, railroads and cowboys lead to an effect of an idealized view of mankind in balance with Wilderness.
American West and Photography

• These images connected you to the sacred and transported you from this day-to-day world into this sort of mystical world through the image.

• Photographing the land in all its primal glory, or emphasizing the effects of a human presence, they continue to explore the wonders of the American West.
“Primeval” is constantly used to describe Wild Lands

- The repeated use of the word “primeval” throughout Wild land literature illuminates writers conception of the wilderness area and the experiential and symbolic functions they believed it would serve.

- It can mean – (earliest, early, first, old, original, prehistoric, primal, primary, primitive, primordial, pristine, relic or remote)

- This label was used to evoke images and trigger associations that helped attract the public support for preserving the area.

- This construct was linked to the romantic ideas of the early wilderness literary tradition.
Primeval

- The concept of “primeval” began to convey the emerging understanding that it was the dynamic evolutionary and ecological processes, more than the landscape features that were timeless.

- Primeval relate more to humankind’s evolutionary heritage.

- It echoed the human species origin as creatures of the wild and conveyed the notion that in untouched landscapes, one might experience and respond to the natural world much as one’s more distant ancestors had.
Summary

• Generally there has been an evolving conception that recognized the importance of wilderness or wild places because they could provide for primitive or back to basics type of experiences;

• This evolution has been driven by three main forces; shifts in thinking among both scientists and philosophers, increasing scarcity of wild land, recognition of the value of retaining a diversity of environmental settings as a complement to an increasingly developed landscape.
What motivates humans to seek out Wilderness or Wild Places?

• A ‘motive’ is considered to be a more or less consistent predisposition to act on a certain type or set of needs;

• Individuals can have a motive to experience nature that will direct them toward the selection of recreation activities in natural environments;
• A variety of motives underlie wilderness recreation participation and experience.

• Many of these are linked to opportunities typically associated with those to experience primitive or wild places;
  – desire for escape or solitude;
  – appreciation of aesthetics and naturalness;
  – challenge and risk taking.

• Others are less integrally associated with wilderness
  – meeting and observing others
  – making new friends.
  – these motives contribute to our understanding of the “why” of wilderness participation.
To understand reasons visitors go into wilderness or wild places, managers need to know stuff.

- The motives that initiate behavior;
- The choice process that is made to determine the type of behavior; and
- The attributes of environment that affect the place selected for behavior.
• Reasons for engaging in recreation behavior have been conceived as “recreation experience preferences” in recognition of the fact that the forces that initiate behavior are voluntary and represent preferred conditions;

• If a certain human need initiated behavior is undertaken, it is expected that that behavior will provide certain payoffs in terms of fulfilling that need.
• Needs, motives, experience expectations, recreation experience preferences, and desired psychological outcomes all represent slightly different ways of looking at the purpose that engaging in a given type of recreation is to serve.
What are the Common Reasons for Wilderness Participation?

- What do you think they are?
- Solitude, aesthetic values - enjoyment of scenery and contact with nature; meet new people, to learn about nature, reflect on personal values, express creativity, spirituality etc.
- What are the reasons you go into wilderness settings?
Next Day

• Background to Evolutionary Approaches of Aesthetics to Landscape