William O. Douglas s Wilderness Politics: Public Protest and Committees of Correspondence in the Pacific Northwest

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Employing his regional identity and exploiting wide-ranging networks of conservationists and politicians, U. S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas worked from the 1950s to the 1970s to protect various western landscapes including Olympic Beach and Cougar Lakes. His efforts for wilderness reveal the importance of local connections, broader ties, and changing environmental legislation.

When roads supplant trails, the precious, unique values of God's wilderness disappear.
William O. Douglas, *My Wilderness: The Pacific West* (1960)[1]

Democracy should accommodate a great diversity of tastes.
William O. Douglas, *My Wilderness: East to Katahdin* (1961)[2]

In July 1964, U. S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas (1898–1980) published an article in the *Ladies' Home Journal*.[3] "America s Vanishing Wilderness" came at a significant moment in environmental history. The Wilderness Act would finally pass Congress later that year, providing legislative protection to millions of acres and creating a legal process to preserve more wilderness areas in the years to come. One might not expect a Supreme Court justice to be writing in such a mass circulation magazine, especially about wilderness matters, but it fell within a typical pattern for Justice Douglas and symbolized his approach to wilderness advocacy in both style and substance. First, Douglas brought publicity to his favored cause to a national audience in accessible and persuasive terms. Second, Douglas announced an approach to activism that relied on widespread cooperation

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[1] William O. Douglas [hereafter WOD], *My Wilderness: The Pacific West* (Garden City, NY, 1960), 199.

[2] WOD, *My Wilderness: East to Katahdin* (New York, 1961), 179.

[3] WOD, "America s Vanishing Wilderness," *Ladies' Home Journal* 81 (July 1964): 37–41, 77.

Western Historical Quarterly 37 (Spring 2006): 21–42.

among various local and national conservation groups to ensure legal protection for American wilderness heritage. As the individual some consider "the most prominent conservationist in public life" in the thirty years after World War II, Douglas used his national standing and influential network of friends within the Northwest, as well as in the nation s capital, to promote an environmental agenda for the region.[4] Douglas accomplished this through the force of his personality and long-standing identification with the region, as well as by expertly navigating the changing political and legal culture of the era.

Throughout his Northwest activism, Douglas alternately focused his enmity on the National Park Service (NPS) and the United States Forest Service (USFS). Common threads linked his hostility toward the agencies and reflected broader conservation goals. He chided the federal agencies for rampant road-building and inadequate wilderness protection, particularly for what he perceived to be undemocratic management and administrative decisions made without adequate public involvement. His solutions corresponded with other conservationists: stop building so many roads; create a permanent wilderness system; and open conservation decision-making to the public. While his resolutions to these problems may not have been unique, Douglas s position as a sitting Supreme Court justice, hailing from the West, ensured added interest in and consideration of his perspective.[5]

Douglas spent nearly two decades, from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s, actively organizing local, regional, and national conservationists to protect various Pacific Northwest places from road-building and timber-cutting. Furthermore, the examples presented here demonstrate diverse approaches reflecting changing locales and agencies, as well as the evolution of environmental policy. In the Olympic Peninsula, the justice led a highly visible protest hike against a proposed road, furnishing crucial attention to the cause. In Washington s Cascade Mountains, on the other hand, Douglas cultivated broad networks of interested parties and worked behind the scenes to create a permanent wilderness and to open decision-making to the public. His prominence meant that his networks included powerfully placed politicians and political appointees, making him an unparalleled ally to post-World War II conservationists. Moreover, his appointment on the court placed him in an incomparable position to understand changes in environmental law. Thus, in postwar Western conservation conflicts, he did what perhaps no one else could. Douglas lent a sense of moral authority and political legitimacy to several local political battles focused on wilderness preservation by providing a voice of national stature for the beaches and mountains of the Pacific Northwest.

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[4] Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison, 1981), 239.

[5] I treat Douglas as a westerner in "William O. Douglas: The Environmental Justice," in *The Human Tradition in the American West*, ed. Benson Tong and Regan Lutz (Wilmington, DE, 2002), 155–70.

That Douglas sustained an interest in preserving wilderness in the Pacific Northwest was no accident. He had long identified with that region s wilderness, especially its mountains. The 1950 publication of his first memoir—*Of Men and Mountains*—showed the public how deeply Douglas identified with regional landscapes. "The boy makes a deep imprint on the man," Douglas explained in his foreword. "My young experiences in the high Cascades have placed the heavy mark of the mountains on me." Those mountains became the site of several central events in Douglas s early life, and as he reconstructed them publicly as an adult, he embedded his identity in western wildernesses.[6]

For example, on the traumatic occasion of his father s death, Douglas found solace in Mount Adams. At the funeral, a distraught five-year-old Douglas stopped sobbing as he looked up to see the peak, and it "subtly became a force for me to tie to, a symbol of stability and strength."[7] Besides offering merely a symbol of consolation and support, the mountains represented to Douglas an actual source of physical power. He had been a sickly child, and to recover and build up his strength, he hiked in the Cascade Mountain foothills near his childhood home of Yakima, Washington. "First I tried to go up the hills without stopping," the justice explained. "When I conquered that, I tried to go up without change of pace. When that was achieved, I practiced going up not only without a change of pace but whistling as I went." After several seasons of hiking, Douglas grew strong and recovered by hiking in mountains.[8] Thus, Douglas learned that nature offered spiritual and physical salvation, making him sensitive to the importance of maintaining wild areas so that others could enjoy the opportunities nature furnished for personal growth.

In addition, never far beneath the surface in *Of Men and Mountains* was the theme of independence. If hiking promoted individual recovery and strength for Douglas, it also encouraged his budding individualism. Combining spiritual and individualistic elements much like a Henry David Thoreau or John Muir, Douglas wrote, "When man ventures into the wilderness, climbs the ridges, and sleeps in the forest, he comes in close communion with his Creator. When man pits himself against the mountain, he taps inner springs of his strength. He comes to know himself. He becomes meek and humble before the Lord that made heaven and earth. For he realizes how small a part of the universe he actually is, how great are the forces that oppose him."[9] An individual facing nature alone could best discern one s place in the world.

Furthermore, wilderness allowed one to test one s mettle. Douglas scattered *Of Men and Mountains* with numerous references to mastering adversity in the Cascades. Three chapters especially stand out. One describes a day-long, twenty-five mile hike

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[6] WOD, *Of Men and Mountains* (1950; reprint, San Francisco, 1990), xi.

[7] Ibid., 29.

[8] Ibid., 35.

[9] Ibid., 18.

racing against the on-coming dusk; another narrates a forty-mile trek in a single day hurrying to return home from the mountains; and the last, the book s denouement, depicts a harrowing climb up the 4,500 foot Kloochman Rock that temporarily left Douglas hanging two hundred feet in the air. Although each of these adventures included a companion, the substance of each adventure tale was about Douglas the individual meeting and conquering his own limitations and the mountain challenges. After climbing to the top of Kloochman Rock in 1913, Douglas explained, "Kloochman became that day a symbol of adversity and challenge—of the forces that have drawn from man his greatest spiritual and physical achievements." When individuals like Douglas could triumph over their ordeals, they would be fit to keep America strong. In the book s final pages, Douglas reasoned: "A people who climb the ridges and sleep under the stars in high mountain meadows, who enter the forest and scale the peaks, who explore glaciers and walk ridges buried deep in snow—these people will give their country some of the indomitable spirit of the mountains." And all of this—individual and national freedom—depended on access to wild nature; the stakes could not be higher.[10]

For Douglas, then, the western environment represented home, provided solitude and strength, and connected the justice to forces larger than himself. Such experiences depended on preserving wilderness as a repository of American greatness. While in the mountains, he strengthened himself alone and that lesson in independence always stayed with him. Most of all, he felt at ease there, for he was part of the mountains and the larger environment. All of these factors coalesced, as he described in *Of Men and Mountains*: "Every trail leads beyond the frontier. Every ridge, every valley, every peak offers a solitude deeper even than that of the sea. It offers the peace that comes only from solitude. It is in solitude that man can come to know both his heart and his mind."[11] The Pacific Northwest held Douglas s imagination and desire, while shaping his personality. Recognizing this deep attachment to this northwestern sense of place helps situate Douglas in the region and makes clear his reasons for sustained political action.

Although Douglas left the Pacific Northwest in 1922 for law school at Columbia, he was never gone for long. He returned after law school to briefly practice law in Yakima. Personal ambition, financial need, and professional opportunity combined to send him back to teach in the law schools at Columbia and later at Yale. Having had the fortuity to specialize in corporate bankruptcy and reorganization in the 1920s, Douglas was well positioned to be an important expert as the Great Depression descended. His expertise led to an opportunity in 1934 to work for the newly created Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). By the end of 1935, he served as an SEC commissioner, and he presided over the body beginning in September 1937. In those heady New Deal days,

[10] Ibid., 63–99, 314–29, quotations on 327 and 328.

[11] Ibid., 90.

Douglas remained a loyal acolyte of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and was rewarded in 1939 with Louis Brandeis s seat on the Supreme Court. Despite how well Douglas maneuvered through the East Coast establishment, he never cared much for the region. He recalled frequently feeling "an almost irresistible urge to go West. It was the call of the Cascade Mountains." To answer that call, Douglas maintained summer cabins at various places throughout the Northwest as escapes from Washington, DC as soon as the court recessed (and sometimes even before). When it was not feasible to go west, he frequented the local backwoods outside the nation s capital.[12]

In 1954, Douglas gained national attention by protesting a NPS proposal to construct a scenic highway along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in Washington, DC and Maryland. The justice and other conservationists staged a 189-mile hike along the canal s towpath urging the NPS not to build the scenic road. Four years later, Douglas led another protest hike, this time along the remote Pacific Beach in Washington s Olympic National Park. Those two protests targeted those most sacred symbols of the automobile age and the constant bane of wilderness advocates—roads. In both cases, Douglas led groups of hikers who favored trails over roads, hiking over driving, and the unique values of wilderness over mass recreation and consumption.[13]

The controversy in Olympic National Park erupted amid a tumultuous period of wilderness history and national park policies. The NPS had launched ambitious recreational development plans as part of Mission 66 to enhance visitation and the agency s bureaucratic power, with road building a key element to the program. Conservationists meanwhile countered this penchant for development by cultivating a national constituency for undeveloped wilderness, especially in the American West. The controversy over a proposed dam in Echo Park became the most notable example, but similar dynamics appeared elsewhere, including Washington s Olympic Peninsula.[14]

In the mid-1950s, peninsula business interests urged a willing NPS to build a new road that would wind along the park s ocean beach. The road promised to make automobile travel for commercial and tourist purposes easier within the remote peninsula

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[12] Ibid., 5. For Douglas s professional rise, consult his *Go East, Young Man: The Early Years: The Autobiography of William O. Douglas* (New York, 1974); James F. Simon, *Independent Journey: The Life of William O. Douglas* (New York, 1980); Bruce Allen Murphy, *Wild Bill: The Legend and Life of William O. Douglas* (New York, 2003).

[13] Paul S. Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle, 2002); WOD, *East to Katahdin*, 181–211; WOD, *The Pacific West*, 32–49; Fox, *American Conservation*, 239–44; Simon, *Independent Journey*, 326–33; Murphy, *Wild Bill*, 330–6; T. H. Watkins, "Commentary: Justice Douglas Takes a Hike," in *"He Shall Not Pass This Way Again": The Legacy of Justice William O. Douglas*, ed. Stephen L. Wasby (Pittsburgh, 1990), 249–53.

[14] Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven, CT, 1997), 177–81; Mark W. T. Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement* (1994; reprint, Seattle, 2000); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3rd edition (New Haven, CT, 1982), 209–19; Hal K. Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation?: Environmentalism in the United States since 1945* (Fort Worth, 1998), 34–48.

and promote park visitation along the Pacific Coast section. Boosters looked enviously south to the Oregon Coast s booming tourist industry and coveted tourists fuel, food, and lodging dollars for the local economy. In addition, proponents argued that national parks ought to be "made available to everyone, including old folks and children who can t hike along the ocean." Such arguments concerning access became increasingly common in the postwar West. When conservationists protested, boosters reacted against what they perceived as economic colonialism, elitism, and conservationists insensitivity to local economies.[15]

Douglas knew the Olympic Peninsula well from his outdoor activities in the mountains, along the coast, and on the rivers. He also used a cabin on the Quillayute River near Rialto Beach from which he set out on a number of outdoor adventures described in a July 1952 article in *The American Magazine*. One could rough it in varying degrees, Douglas explained, from auto camps and inns to campgrounds and shelters to "trails for those who want to press beyond the limits of civilization." The justice sought wilderness experiences and urged others to do the same. Understandably, when the proposed road threatened the sanctity of this wilderness, Douglas reacted.[16]

In 1957, the justice wrote Conrad Wirth, director of the NPS, expressing concern. As usual, Douglas wrote a personal testimony. "I have hiked this primitive beach," he explained. "As a result of that hike I fell in love with that primitive beach and its great charm and beauty, and its abundant wildlife." He worried that if a road were allowed, the traffic would "drive out the game and we d end up with just another ordinary beach." The justice wanted to maintain the beach as something other than ordinary. According to Polly Dyer of the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs (FWOC), the Wilderness Society s executive secretary Howard Zahniser proposed inviting Douglas to participate in a field trip along the beach in conjunction with the society s planned annual meeting in 1958 at Stehekin in the North Cascades. Dyer ultimately organized the 3-day, 22-mile hike to bring attention to the road debate and to underscore the superiority of hiking over driving, and Douglas happily led it. Besides local residents, the hikers included high profile national conservationists from the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, and the NPS, such as Harvey Broome, Olaus J. Murie, Zahniser, and Wirth. The group included some of the most important members of the postwar

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[15] Byron Fish, "Olympic Wilderness Hikers Hope to Chill Coast-Road Plan," *Seattle Times*, 19 August 1958, p. 30 and Carsten Lien, *Olympic Battleground: The Power Politics of Timber Preservation* (San Francisco, 1991), 299–320.

[16] WOD, "My Favorite Vacation Land," *The American Magazine* 154 (July 1952): 38–41, 94–9, quotation on 41.

wilderness movement, suggesting the importance of the event and the esteem in which they held the justice.[17]

Douglas and the others favored preserving the beach undeveloped for several reasons. He acknowledged the need for a road on the peninsula but maintained it should not cross national park land. Prevailing notions of wilderness held that designated national park land ought to remain sacred as exemplified in the recent battle over the proposed Echo Park Dam in Dinosaur National Monument. "Wilderness all over America is diminishing. Let s not put roads everywhere," pleaded Douglas. "Let s leave some of the state, some of the country, free from roads and from the effects of civilization that roads always bring." The beach was "a place of haunting beauty, of deep solitude," Douglas wrote. The undisturbed processes of nature, the abundance of fauna and flora, the power of marine storms, "the music of the beaches," all overwhelmed Douglas on the Pacific beach. "I like to lose myself in the solitude of this beach," Douglas reflected, "the solitude that no automobile can puncture." Douglas s experiences there shaped his protest, as did prevailing conservationist views of national parks.[18]

The hikers, along with the justice, cited other reasons for the road not to be built. Development especially threatened America s coastlines, making the primitive Ocean Strip portion of Olympic National Park particularly uncommon and thus valuable as wilderness. Excluding Alaska, only 50 miles of the 4,840 miles of U. S. coastline remained in public land and still roadless, newspapers reported at the time. But the opponents of the road relied on more than philosophical rationales. Geology and geography, they maintained, made the proposed road too expensive and downright unsafe. Unlike the popular Oregon Coast, the Washington shoreline consisted of "sliding bluffs" unable to hold a highway. A firm that surveyed the land in the early 1950s cautioned against the "high costs of both construction and maintenance." Estimates placed the costs for the 20-mile section the protest hike covered between $2.75 and $3.8 million even without the bridges needed to cross two rivers. Thus, armed with practical arguments and philosophical predilections against the road, the hike went forth.[19]

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[17] WOD to Conrad L. Wirth, 9 March 1957, in *The Douglas Letters: Selections from the Private Papers of Justice William O. Douglas*, ed. Melvin I. Urofsky (Bethesda, MD, 1987), 241–2; "Justice Douglas, 70 Hikers to Begin Wilderness Trip," *Seattle Times*, 18 August 1958, p. 10; Louis R. Huber, Invitation and Press Release, 4 August 1958; Press Release, 9 August 1958, folder 9, box 5, John Osseward Papers, University of Washington Manuscripts and University Archives [hereafter JOP]; Sally Warren Soest, ed., *Voice of the Wild Olympics* (Seattle, 1998), 36. Dyer s recollection places the invitation to Douglas in 1956. The first reference to the beach hike in the Douglas Papers, however, is in 1957 from Douglas asking Zahniser if a field trip would be feasible. Polly T. Dyer, e-mail message to author, 27 September 2004; WOD to Howard Zahniser, 3 October 1957 in Howard Zahniser (misc. correspondence) folder, box 383, William O. Douglas Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [hereafter WODP]. Citations for the Douglas Papers are organized by item, folder name, box number, and subject series.

[18] "Justice Douglas, 70 Hikers" and WOD, *Pacific West*, 40.

[19] Fish, "Olympic Wilderness Hikers," p. 30 and August Slathar, Letter to the Editor, *Port Angeles (Washington) Evening News*, 29 November 1958, p. 2.

The sponsors and Douglas designed the hike to garner attention. Louis R. Huber, a *Christian Science Monitor* writer and filmmaker in charge of publicity for the hike, invited journalists to "come fully prepared to spend three days in a wilderness area." The group also invited supporters of the road. None accepted, although some apparently canceled only at the last minute. The leaders of the hike hoped to engage the issues that permeated postwar environmental and western history. Indeed, Polly Dyer, the president of the FWOC, called it a "walking national town meeting." In a "fact sheet" marked for release on 21 August 1958, during the hike, organizers explained that the hike s purpose was "to provide an opportunity for all now concerned, as trustees for this wilderness treasure which can be inherited by succeeding generations, to see the wisdom of retaining this small portion of primitive ocean shore which is still undisturbed by man. [The sponsors of the hike] want to encourage walking to beauty that *is*, rather than motoring to beauty that *was*." Douglas, the Wilderness Society, and the FWOC thus pitched themselves as spokespersons for the future of the public s wilderness—a national public, not simply local commercial interests. The "primitive" Ocean Strip in Olympic National Park constituted a rare remnant of America s natural heritage needing protection. After all, they argued, the beach "can never be imitated by the labor and invention of man."[20]

The night before the hike began the hikers gathered for a salmon barbecue at Douglas s cabin. Douglas welcomed the group and set the tone for the event. He instructed the group to travel together to minimize its impact on the wildlife. Finally, he beseeched them: "I hope you are friends of the wilderness and will pass this word along to others, because this wilderness needs friends." Douglas s remarks attested to the importance of publicity and far-reaching networks necessary for political success. The following day the hikers drove north to leave from Lake Ozette. By the time of the hike s departure, the group had grown to seventy individuals, "safari proportions," according to the *Seattle Times*.[21]

A particularly poignant scene met the hikers as they traveled to the trailhead. Clayton Fox recorded the event and the landscape for the *Olympic Tribune*: "On the drive we passed through some completely logged-off land, with all the rubble which follows such logging. . . . This perhaps, heightened the group s desire to save the Ocean Strip from a road, since they could picture similar devastation following construction

[20] Huber, Invitation and Press Release; Clayton Fox, "68 Footsore Hikers Wind Up Beach Trek near LaPush," *Olympic (Port Angeles) Tribune*, 22 August 1958, p. 1; Press Release, 9 August 1958; Louis R. Huber, Press Release, 21 August 1958, folder 9, box 5, JOP, 4, emphasis in original; Soest, *Voice of the Wild Olympics*, 36.

[21] "Beach Hikers Getting Late Start on Three-Day Trek to LaPush Area," *Olympic Tribune*, 29 August 1958, p. 3.

of a road." Fox drew the conclusion Douglas and organizers desired: roads equaled environmental degradation and ruined wilderness experiences.[22]

Participants responded well to the hike and its underlying message. Mrs. Lincoln Morse, proudly reporting that women comprised about one-quarter of the party, told the *Seattle Times*: "I m not a politician and I don t know what good we may have done in the way of preserving the coastline beauty, but I think everyone had a good time in spite of heavy packs. Lots of people learned a lot of things from this hike." She continued, "[A]ll of us agreed that the country up there is worth keeping as it is whether it s for scientific or scenic reasons." Others confirmed Morse s attitudes. For Harvey Broome, a co-founder of the Wilderness Society, the beach made him ponder "the ultimate meaning of life." It was an overwhelming experience for him, being perched at "the meeting place of earth and sea—wild, untamed, and tremendous." Broome also expressed what was surely true for other hikers: Douglas s "consuming interest" in the place and his presence on the hike, prodding the protestors along, made the trip especially memorable.[23]

On the hike s last night, the group met to assess the event s importance and to plan for the future. Douglas urged everyone to return and hike the beach again. Broome recapitulated the frontier thesis with a sharp environmental bent. America s greatness in the past, Broome maintained, was reflected from and forged in the rugged environment and in the struggle of individuals with that environment. Wild, rugged land ought to be preserved "to keep America from softness." Douglas concurred. The consequences of failing to keep the beach in a "primitive" state were clear and the stakes high: American greatness depended on it. The group appointed an Olympic Park-Pacific Ocean Committee to keep the issue in the forefront of the public s attention. Douglas served as chair. Much of the importance of the hike, however, derived from the way Douglas and the beach affected individuals, reflecting the importance of personal experience with wilderness that remained common to the emerging environmental movement. Thus, Douglas s role as a local, no matter if that localness was only seasonal, remained crucial.[24]

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[22] Clayton Fox, "First Day of Beach Hike Easy, Only One Point to Climb Over," *Olympic Tribune*, 19 September 1958, p. 3.

[23] Unfortunately, the source does not list Morse s first name. "Justice Douglas, Party, Finish Protest Hike," *Seattle Times*, 22 August 1958, p. 12 and Harvey Broome, *Faces of the Wilderness* (Missoula, 1972), 128, 137, 126.

[24] Clayton Fox, "Last Night of Hike Happy Affair, Speeches around the Campfire," *Olympic Tribune* 19 September 1958, p. 3; Broome, *Faces of the Wilderness*, 126–37. See also, the following works by Samuel P. Hays: in collaboration with Barbara D. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955–1985* (Cambridge, ENG, 1987), 120; "The Structure of Environmental Politics since World War II," in *Explorations in Environmental History: Essays* (Pittsburgh, 1998), 318; "Comment: The Trouble with Bill Cronon s Wilderness," *Environmental History* 1 (January 1996): 30.

The hike did not proceed without challenges, however. Fox found one disgruntled woman who spoke on condition of anonymity: "If I ever saw a place without a road that needed a road, this is it. As far as I m concerned they can build it down the cotton-pickin beach." In addition, during the hike, Fox questioned Douglas s reasoning for preserving the beach. He cautiously hinted that the hikers who wanted to keep the land for a special few who could hike smacked of the "aristocratic ideas of Alexander Hamilton" that Douglas, "a great liberal justice," ought to abhor. Douglas proceeded to give Fox a civics and history lesson about the rights of individuals and minorities and the government s promise to protect those rights in the American republic. In this instance, wilderness enthusiasts comprised the minority requiring and deserving federal protection. Fox conceded: "Since I did not believe a single college course in American History qualified me to talk Constitutional Law with a Justice of the Supreme Court, I retired very quickly."[25]

Perhaps the hike s defining moment came at trail s end when a single protester with his young son met the group. His presence highlighted the underlying tensions that pervaded the peninsula and hinted at some of Fox s muted criticism. L. V. Venable, the Port Angeles manager of the Black Ball Freight Service and a director of the Automobile Club of Washington, met the group Douglas led as they emerged from the wooded beach trail with four signs:

> WE OWN THIS PARK, TOO. WE WANT A SHORE LINE ROAD
>
> FIFTY MILLION U.S. AUTO OWNERS AND
> THEIR FAMILIES LIKE SCENERY, TOO!
>
> SUPER HIGHWAYS FOR 47 STATES BUT PRIMITIVE
> AREAS FOR US BIRD WATCHER GO HOME

Despite the acrimony presented by Venable, Douglas offered a friendly greeting. "Sorry you weren t on the hike with us," Douglas ventured. Although Venable agreed the beach was beautiful, he remained steadfast in his support for the road, primarily for the sake of the peninsula s economy. In a parting plea, Douglas proffered a compromise to Venable: "We ll settle for a road east of Lake Ozette. We ll give you 99 percent of the U. S. but save us the other 1 percent, please." The justice then moved on, unleashing the rest of the hiking group to argue with the Port Angeles man. However, the confrontation, captured by several photographers, symbolized important disagreements, and, even more importantly, it provided a dramatic moment perfect for media attention. Indeed, Dyer reminisced that Venable "made our day. He made our story legitimate for the

[25] Fox, "68 Footsore Hikers" and "Hikers Glad to Reach Cedar Creek after Rugged Day on Rocks," *Olympic Tribune*, 19 September 1958, p. 3.

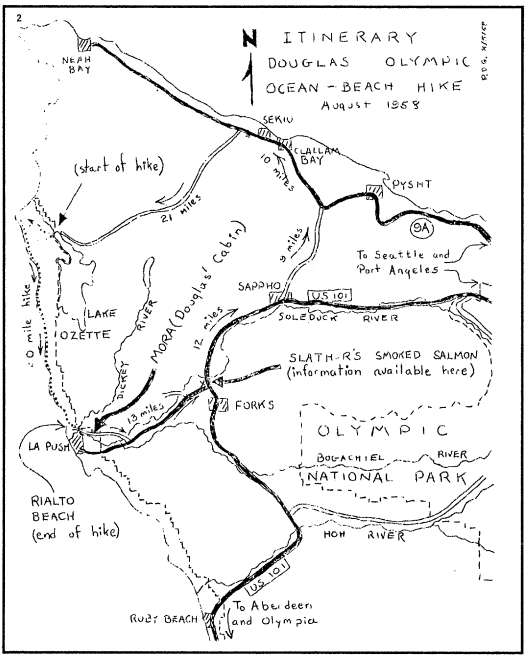

Figure 1. Olympic Beach Hike, 1958. This map, part of the publicity prepared for the protest hike, shows the hike route and national park boundaries, as well as Douglas s cabin site. From John Osseward Papers, Acc. 3818, box 5, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division. Courtesy of John Osseward Papers.

press. We couldn t have hoped for a better opportunity for spreading our story—that the Olympic Coast *had to remain roadless.*"[26]

In Douglas s comment to Venable, he offered a significant alternative. He and the hikers would accept a road routed east of the Ocean Strip portion of Olympic National Park that would not cross NPS land. They still held to the dichotomy of sacred and profane lands. The legacy of the sanctity of parks, inherited from the Hetch Hetchy dam controversy down through the Echo Park Dam debate, remained engrained. The strategy, too, had much in common with those earlier fights, for Douglas and his allies took their position to audiences beyond local constituencies. Since local boosters like Venable tended to promote economic development, conservationists, from the 1910s to today, have worked to garner national support and link it with notable local conservationists to overwhelm local opposition. Indeed, in addition to Venable s sign telling the bird watchers to go home, local news coverage and letters to the editor on the Olympic Peninsula complained about "outsiders" coming to the peninsula and preventing economic development. Such arguments about the loss of local control in environmental matters remains a central piece in western political controversies. The dynamics of localism here were more complex than Venable allowed. Peninsula residents may have seen these conservationists as simply outsiders who needed to go home. To the national conservation community, however, Douglas s larger regional identification as a Pacific Northwesterner and his peninsula summer cabin constituted sufficient local connections and legitimacy.[27]

The 1958 beach hike portended several aspects of the post-World War II movement in the West. It reinforced the significance of national parks among wilderness advocates.

[26] Lien, *Olympic Battleground*, 303; *Seattle Times*, "Justice Douglas, Party, Finish Protest Hike"; Fox, "Last Night of Hike Happy Affair"; Fox, "68 Footsore Hikers"; Soest, *Voice of the Olympics*, 36–7, emphasis in original.

[27] L. V. Venable, Letter to the Editor, *Port Angeles Evening News*, 28 January 1959, p. 2 and William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York, 1995), 69–90.

In addition, the beach hike affirmed public protest as an effective method for wilderness advocates in these days before substantial legislative protections. Finally, it reflected the dynamics of environmental protest and anti-environmental opposition mounted by local people in various locales throughout the country but especially in the American West and Northwest. With Douglas in the midst of this early wilderness confrontation, the protesters odds improved, for as a local with a national reputation he helped legitimize their cause. Most importantly, journalists and citizens took notice. In this instance, Douglas and the road s opponents ultimately emerged triumphant; no road has been built. The late T. H. Watkins, former editor of *Wilderness* magazine and vice president of the Wilderness Society, afforded Douglas a great deal of the credit for stopping the road "and for a good part of most of the depressingly few conservation victories we have enjoyed since World War II." Constant threats to the Ocean Strip necessitated another hike in 1964 that Douglas again led, but increasingly Douglas moved away from the coast to maneuver against the Forest Service in northwestern mountains where he owned a series of summer residences.[28]

The USFS proved the greater and more enduring bane to Douglas, and after the Wilderness Act passed, national forests took center stage in wilderness contests. The Forest Service presided over millions of acres of administratively designated wilderness, but that wilderness remained weakly protected and constantly threatened, especially by timber sales and attendant road-building. In response, Douglas brought forth his full influence, energizing local activists, corresponding with national conservation leaders, and haranguing politicians and political appointees when they did not act with the environment s best interest in mind or undermined the open democratic processes he valued so deeply. In effect, as he described in the *Ladies' Home Journal* article, Douglas created Committees of Correspondence to guard vigilantly the region s wilderness. Comparing the struggle to protect wilderness to the American Revolution, Douglas called for "Committees of Correspondence to coordinate the efforts of diverse groups to keep America beautiful and to preserve the few wilderness alcoves we have left. . . . Our common cause today is to preserve our country s natural beauty and keep our wilderness areas sacrosanct. . . . Local groups need national assistance; and that means joining hands in an overall effort to keep our land bright and shining." One of his central tasks in the Cascades from the late 1950s to the early 1970s became cultivating such relationships. Douglas used these networks to organize national conservation and political leaders along with grassroots conservationists. He and his allies called for public hearings where conservationists, particularly local ones, would use the opportunity to argue against the proposed logging and road projects.[29]

As Douglas worked to promote his vision of wilderness protection on regional forestlands, national wilderness politics significantly transformed. Although the Forest Service began recreational planning in the 1910s, the agency had not developed a permanent wilderness preservation system. Wilderness or primitive area designations rested

[28] Watkins, "Commentary," 252 and Soest, *Voice of the Olympics*, 38.

[29] WOD, "Vanishing Wilderness," 77. Committees of Correspondence formed in the revolutionary era to keep American colonists informed of British activities affecting the colonies.

fundamentally on administrators interest and goodwill toward wilderness, and thus they did not enjoy permanent status. Political scientist Craig W. Allin aptly explained this vulnerability: "With only administrative protection, national forest wilderness could conceivably be eliminated by a stroke of the agriculture secretary s pen." By 1960, the USFS incorporated the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act (MUSY) to manage various resources and recreation on USFS land sustainably, however, most of the agency s practices still focused on maximizing timber harvests or grazing resources as its primary function. In this context, Douglas worked to defend wilderness, while he closely monitored recreational development and timber practices as they increasingly conflicted with wilderness protection.[30]

Although this case study focuses on Cougar Lakes in the Cascade Mountains, Douglas built Committees of Correspondence slightly earlier over concerns in the Minam River Canyon in the Wallowa Mountains of northeastern Oregon. There, as in the Cascades, road-building to support timber sales and lack of public input alarmed Douglas. Much of Douglas s thinking on these issues found its way into a chapter on the Wallowas in *My Wilderness: The Pacific West* and is worth summarizing here since he approached similar problems in Cougar Lakes with identical values. He celebrated the Minam River Canyon in its roadless state, arguing, "Fishing can never be good on a stream like the Minam, if any car can reach it. When trucks can get to the heart of the Wallowas, the big game will be on the way out. Fishing on these small streams, like hunting in the basins, can be good only so long as extra effort is needed to get there. The value of roadless areas is partly in the rewards which are at trail s end." Moreover, the multiple-use agenda pursued by the Forest Service would, he indicated, actually be overuse and did not value wilderness: "Lumbering and real wilderness, motoring and real wilderness, hotels and real wilderness are mutually exclusive. The choice must be made." Outdoor recreation demanded wilderness, and Forest Service policies jeopardized such conditions. Importantly, Douglas charged both production- and consumption-oriented activities as potentially damaging to wilderness, suggesting a bridge between older conservation concerns over production and newer environmental interests in consumption. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the public had to inform the choice rather than bureaucrats dictating it. Douglas also advocated an act of Congress to protect this and other wilderness areas. Besides expressing the value of roadless wilderness experiences, these passages clearly demonstrate the justice was engaged in the currents of conservation debates of the time, for his proposals reflected laws working their ways through Congress.[31]

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[30] Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 60–73, 84–9, 252–4; Harold K. Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service: A History* (Seattle, 1976), 152–62, 209–13, 278–307; C. Frank Brockman, *Recreational Use of Wild Lands* (New York, 1959), 166–8; Craig W. Allin, *The Politics of Wilderness Preservation* (Westport, CT, 1982), 60–95, quotation on 94; Paul W. Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests since World War Two* (Lincoln, 1994), 171–92.

[31] WOD, *Pacific West*, 199–200. Samuel P. Hays has argued postwar environmental concerns focused on consumption, distinguishing them from earlier concerns over production. Paul Sutter and others have begun challenging the timing of this shift. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence* and Sutter, *Driven Wild*.

Douglas continued using legislative reforms in the wilderness campaign for Cougar Lakes Limited Area in Washington s central Cascade Range. This effort was, in many ways, Douglas s most exemplary western environmental struggle. It lasted the longest, best demonstrated his political organizing skills, and accurately reflected regional and national conservation concerns and ideologies. The limited area designation made this area east of Mount Rainier National Park and west of the Yakima Valley weakly protected. The administrative classification, unique to USFS Region 6, could be changed by the regional forester, and indeed, the USFS proposed ending the semi-protected status to open the Cougar Lakes area to logging. Douglas and his allies spent much of the 1960s combating these proposals and, alternatively, proposing an official Cougar Lakes Wilderness Area. Thus, they operated defensively against timber sales and road-building and offensively for wilderness status.[32]

A general pattern developed in Douglas s correspondence concerning Cougar Lakes that closely resembled his idea about Committees of Correspondence: he learned of a situation threatening Cougar Lakes, usually from his friends and neighbors at his Goose Prairie residence in the Cascade Mountains, Kay Kershaw and Isabelle Lynn; contacted agency officials, typically Snoqualmie National Forest Supervisor Larry Barrett, U. S. Forest Service Chief Forester Ed Cliff, or Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman; lobbied power brokers in the nation s capital, most often Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Washington; and alerted regional and national conservationists like John Osseward of the North Cascades Conservation Council and David Brower of the Sierra Club. He exhorted them all to protect nature s resources, specifically to halt timber sales and road-building plans and open up the decision-making process to the public.

Although Douglas fleetingly protested a road in this region in 1954, a timber sale proposed in the limited area near Copper City in 1959 roused Douglas to sustained action through the 1960s.[33] This timber sale bothered Douglas for familiar reasons: a road would be built and ruin wilderness qualities. On 3 October 1960, Douglas sent several letters enlisting the help of conservationists he knew. He emphasized several things objectionable about the prospect. For example, timber cutters would profit primarily from the road-building contract, not the timber. Indeed, Douglas said local loggers had reported that the timber was commercially worthless. More at the heart of the issue, the road would extend to the edge of Blankenship Meadow. Eventually, jeeps, as well

[32] Isabelle Lynn and Kay Kershaw to WOD, 14 January 1958, folder 41, box 1, Double K Mountain Ranch Papers, Manuscripts, Special Collections, University Archives, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, [hereafter DKMRP]; Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism*, 226–9; Michael McCloskey, "Wilderness Movement at the Crossroads, 1945–1970," *Pacific Historical Review* 41 (August 1972): 347–50.

[33] WOD to Lawrence Barrett, 12 June 1954, Conservation 1951–1959 folder, box 548, Environment series, WODP. Please note that Douglas inconsistently spelled Barrett s first name; I have followed Douglas s usage.

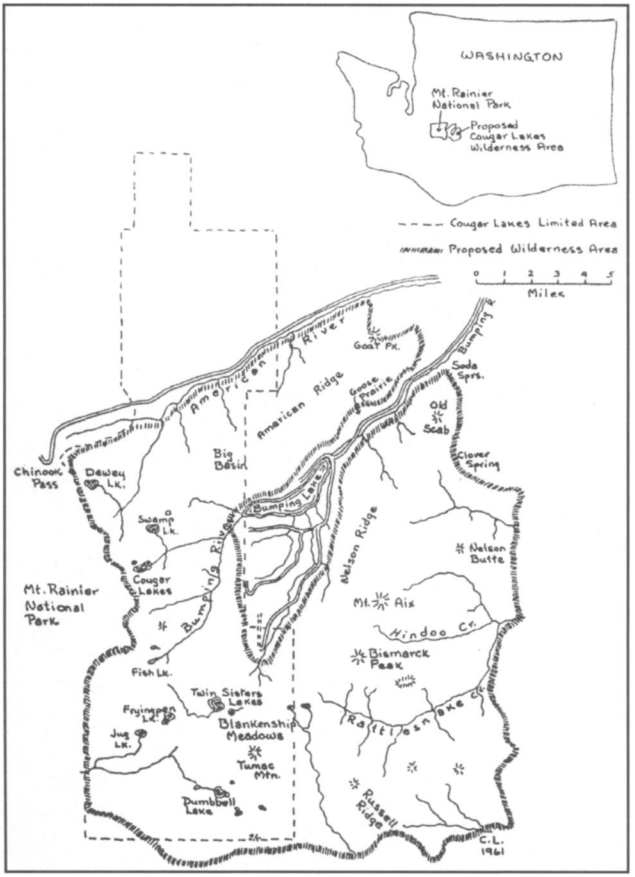

Figure 2. Proposed Cougar Lake Wilderness Area Boundaries, 1961. This map shows the area conservationists hoped would be included in the wilderness area, as well as the limited area boundary. Note Goose Prairie, where Douglas owned a home, and Blankenship Meadows, "one of [his] favorite spots since [he] was a boy." From Cougar Lakes Wilderness Area folder, box 61, RG 95, United States Forest Service, Region 6, Portland OR, Historical Collection, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle, WA).

as loggers, would invade the area, which Douglas claimed had "been one of my favorite spots since I was a boy." Douglas asserted jeeps already had surreptitiously entered Blankenship Meadows and an extended road would only increase their presence. Finally, the advancing road system threatened to eliminate the buffer zone between wilderness and developed lands.[34]

Since the threat seemed clear and significant, Douglas worked to stem the tide of development in the Cascades. He wrote to Snoqualmie National Forest Supervisor Larry Barrett: "There is something terribly irrevocable about logging roads that put jeeps into the heart of a wilderness area. And the fact that there is no pressing need to get the lumber to the consumer seems to some of us to make a hearing to give all interests a chance to be heard the most appropriate course to take."[35] In addition, he urged Senator Jackson to call on the "[r]egional [f]orester to see if a halt cannot be

[34] All of the following 1960 correspondence is located in folder 42, box 1, DKMRP: WOD to David R. Brower, 3 October; WOD to John Osseward, 3 October; WOD to Pauline Dyer, 3 October; quotation from WOD to Laurence O. Barrett, 3 October. For jeeps in Blankenship Meadows, see Kay Kershaw and Isabelle Lynn to WOD, 25 October, WOD to L. O. Barrett, 29 October; WOD to L. O. Barrett, 2 November.

[35] WOD to Barrett, 3 October 1960.

put to timber sales, including this one, until there is a chance to review the whole situation."[36] The proposed development would permanently alter and eliminate the charm and beauty that Douglas associated with it from his long-standing relationship to the place and would prevent others from developing the same connection.

In his initial strategy, Douglas encouraged a personal bond not altogether different from the Olympic Beach hike. Recognizing the importance of knowing a wilderness firsthand, Douglas invited Barrett to hike the region with him in the summer of 1961, to see the wilderness directly. In his invitation to the supervisor, Douglas confessed great concern for the Snoqualmie and Gifford Pinchot national forests derived from the "emotional hold" they had on him since "I tramped them as a boy." Believing in the power of place to affect individuals, Douglas believed Barrett might call off the timber sale after a two- or three-day backcountry trip with the justice. Douglas misplaced his hope; although they did hike together, Barrett pressed forward with the timber sale.[37] Besides his fundamental concern over diminishing wilderness values that the timber sale and road-building exemplified, Douglas intimated that the USFS undermined democratic values in promoting timber sales on national forests without sufficient citizen input. He was convinced his solution—public hearings—would constitute a reliable way to serve the public interest. He pressed Barrett to hold hearings to encourage an open debate and to discover public sentiment before "a tragic stand was taken."[38] A hearing, Douglas implied, represented a fair way for public opinion to make itself known. Later, after the USFS finalized the timber sale, Douglas angrily claimed in a draft letter to Barrett that the only good thing to come of it was that when people traveled to the mountains "to escape civilization, [they would] see the destruction [he had] wrought, [and] they [would] insist on drastic changes in Forest Service procedures." Furthermore, Douglas suggested a yearly pilgrimage to Copper City on the anniversary of the timber sale to "be reminded of the monstrosities sometimes committed by an uncontrolled bureaucracy." These were harsh words, as Douglas recognized in a handwritten note on the draft to Kershaw: "Is this too strong?" It appears that the letter Douglas did send Barrett, dated over a month after this draft, did not include the statement about bureaucratic monstrosities, although he still called for procedural changes to the USFS and an annual pilgrimage.[39]

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[36] Jackson s voice was a powerful one in the Senate on matters of land management, but it took time before he gave it much attention, despite his claim to Douglas: "You may be sure I am never too busy to look into a matter which you believe conflicts with the principles of good conservation." Jackson to WOD, 18 October 1960, folder 1, box 1, DKMRP. See also, WOD to Henry M. Jackson, 15 November 1960, folder 42, box 1, DKMRP.

[37] WOD to Barrett, 22 December 1960, folder 42, box 1, DKMRP.

[38] WOD to Barrett, 3 October 1960.

[39] WOD to Barrett, 7 September 1961, folder 1, box 1, DKMRP and WOD to L. O. Barrett, 12 October 1961, Conservation (June–December 1961) folder, Environment series, box 548, WODP.

Drawing both from his long experience as a justice and his involvement in conservation circles, Douglas proposed several legal changes to require the Forest Service to open its decision-making up to public scrutiny. Writing to David Brower, Douglas urged two specific changes to USFS laws. Predictably, Douglas first proposed a public hearing before a timber sale or road construction. Next, Douglas suggested the hearing be conducted "before an independent board or panel which [did] not represent the men who drew up the plan and who [were] not beholden to the Regional Director." Douglas believed timber interests had captured USFS management, so his proposals attempted to wrest away decision-making power from a small group of Forest Service administrators. The sense of urgency Douglas felt was palpable: "We must get a bill introduced. We must start arousing the people. We must start writing and speaking and campaigning. Without these two basic protections we are lost. The remaining bits of wilderness in the U. S. Forests will be preserved or destroyed depending on the caprice of the [s]upervisor or [r]egional [d]irector." Douglas focused on solving the impermanence of USFS wilderness. His comments proved not to be merely idle strategizing with a fellow conservationist. Soon, Douglas spoke to the White House liaison to the Department of Agriculture, Myer Feldman, calling for similar rule changes. Of course, Douglas was not alone among those in conservation calling for public hearings. However, few were so well placed to meet with White House liaisons, agency administrators, and legislators.[40]

Public hearings of the type Douglas proposed eventually became legislated in the Wilderness Act (1964). The act set aside over fifty wilderness areas amounting to over nine million acres drawn from USFS lands already designated as wilderness or wild areas. The act required the secretary of agriculture to review existing primitive areas and the secretary of interior to review roadless areas in national parks to determine their suitability to wilderness. In a victory for democracy and public involvement, the creation or destruction of a wilderness area henceforth required a public hearing for local citizens and government agencies to make their case. Thus, the public hearing Douglas and others had clamored for rested, after 1964, on a legitimate basis in law. It became one of the wilderness movement s crowning achievements and a significant contribution to American democracy.[41]

Not surprisingly, when Congress passed the Wilderness Act, the political landscape of the Cascades changed, and Douglas and his Committees of Correspondence adjusted strategies. However, they confronted a significant challenge. No part of the act required any review or any public hearing for limited areas. Thus, Cougar Lakes remained in a somewhat nebulous zone with few legal safeguards for its roadless area. Quickly after

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[40] WOD to David R. Brower, 7 September 1961, Conservation (June–December 1961) folder, Environment series, box 548, WODP and WOD to Charles A. Reich, 3 March 1962, Conservation (January–April 1962) folder, box 549, Environment series, WODP.

[41] Michael Frome, *Battle for the Wilderness*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City, 1997), 145. The Wilderness Act, Public Law 88-577, is reproduced in Frome, 213–25.

the passage of the Wilderness Act, Douglas and his allies proposed using the act to protect Cougar Lakes. Cougar Lakes, though, became a piece in the larger wilderness struggle in the Pacific Northwest. The North Cascades Study Team, a joint Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture committee, surveyed the Cascades to determine appropriate areas for wilderness preservation and to solve competing agency claims on the region. Among other things, the team recommended four new wilderness areas (Alpine Lakes, Enchantment, Mount Aix, and Okanogan), extended boundaries in the existing Glacier Peak Wilderness, and advocated creating North Cascades National Park. Although much of this constituted good news for conservationists, the report also proposed declassifying the Cougar Lakes Limited Area to open up over 100,000 acres of commercial timber land, perhaps to placate the Forest Service, who stood to lose much land to the new national park. Thus, the new attention to wilderness did not achieve all Douglas had hoped.[42]

With *The North Cascades Study Report* offering a blueprint for Cascade wilderness without Cougar Lakes, Douglas reorganized. A number of conservation groups, including the Wilderness Society, the North Cascades Conservation Council, the Sierra Club, the Federation of Outdoor Western Clubs, the Mountaineers, the National Parks Association, the Mazamas, the Cascadians, and the C & O Canal Association, publicly favored a Cougar Lakes Wilderness Area, and this support bolstered Douglas. All of those groups submitted statements opposing declassification of the limited area and alternatively supporting a permanent wilderness area. Douglas and others used this strong existing constituency to show the widespread regional and national political support for wilderness designation and to slow the bureaucratic inertia of timber cutting so dominant in the USFS in the postwar era. Giving authority to Congress rather than to local administrators, the Wilderness Act transformed national forest wilderness into a national concern, just as national parks had been since their inception.[43]

Later, the Forest Service marked trees for cutting before the Regional Office finalized its report for Cougar Lakes, prompting Douglas to write Secretary Freeman multiple times asking for a stay until more studies and hearings could be conducted, this time citing the authority of the Wilderness Act.[44] Douglas also contacted members of the North Cascades Study Team, who did not personally visit Cougar Lakes, argu-

[42] WOD to Orville Freeman, 8 December 1965, Cougar Lakes Wilderness Area, WA (1962–1971) folder, Environment series, box 553, WODP. [Hereafter, materials from this folder will be cited by item name and CLWA, WODP.] Henry M. Jackson to WOD, 23 February 1971, in folder 1, box 1, DKMRP; North Cascades Study Team, *The North Cascades Study Report* (Washington, D.C., 1965), 14–5. One member of the study team, Owen S. Stratton, dissented from the proposal to declassify Cougar Lakes, see Study Team, *North Cascades Study Report*, 127–8.

[43] WOD to Edward C. Crafts, 4 November 1964, in folder 1, box 1, DKMRP and WOD to Patrick Goldsworthy, 4 November 1964 in CLWA, WODP.

[44] WOD to Freeman, 8 December 1965; WOD to Orville L. Freeman, 2 March 1966; WOD to Orville L. Freeman, 14 April 1966; WOD to Harvey Broome, 28 January 1966 all in CLWA, WODP.

ing that if they had seen it firsthand they would have enlarged it and recommended its preservation.[45] His standby arguments—public hearings and firsthand experience—continued to shape Douglas s response to the politics of wilderness preservation.

In addition, Douglas talked or wrote to Secretary Freeman, to the head of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Edward Crafts, and to Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. Locally, Douglas told Lynn that the only thing she could do, since the prime movers were ignoring Cougar Lakes, was to "get all the conservation groups hollering."[46] But more needed to be done. To engage the broader public, Douglas wrote an article for *National Geographic* to bring attention to the environmental struggle in the Cascades. Unfortunately, the editors refused to print it, believing it too controversial. Incensed, Douglas wondered: "But what the hell isn t, that is worth talking about?"[47]

Finally, Douglas suggested a new tactic. Regional wilderness advocates might write a short, specific statement about the proposed wilderness area that local people could sign as a petition. He believed: "[W]e could use it both at the White House and at the Forest Service office here in Washington, DC and on the Hill." He thought it might serve as an effective lobbying tool and impetus to action. Douglas adapted the petition from a statement Lynn wrote that included remarks by Frederic W. Braun from within the lumber industry, arguing that sometimes "the wilderness concept and use overrides all other facts." Furthermore, Braun argued that the timbered area in Cougar Lakes was marginal and could not be harvested on a sustained-yield basis. Douglas and allies hoped that using someone from within the timber industry furnished some credibility that did not exist when only conservationists urged the protection of Cougar Lakes. Ever mindful of the need for local political support, the justice also pointed out that when the Interior Committee held hearings in Seattle, few objected to the establishment of the wilderness area. This support no doubt gratified Douglas who had long been arguing that public hearings would reveal broad support for wilderness protection. Meanwhile, Douglas worked to line up local support for the petition, demonstrating his role in a Committee of Correspondence constantly urging movement. The informal letter-writing campaign, conservation group activism, and local citizen alerts continued the campaign and represented a broader and more coordinated approach than Douglas s efforts for the Olympic Beach. He proved he would be present, oiling the political wheels and directing professional and amateur conservationists, national and grassroots, in their efforts to secure wilderness protection.[48]

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[45] WOD to Goldsworthy, 4 November 1964; WOD to George A. Selke, 14 November 1964; WOD to Owen Stratton, 4 March 1966; WOD to Henry M. Jackson, 4 March 1966; all in CLWA, WODP.

[46] WOD to Freeman, 25 January 1966; WOD to Isabelle Lynn, 14 January 1966; WOD to Robert F. Sutphen, 21 January 1966, all in folder 1, box 1, DKMRP.

[47] WOD to Lynn, 14 January 1966 and WOD to Broome, 28 January 1966.

[48] WOD to Cragg Gilbert, 29 March 1966 and WOD to Isabelle Lynn, 26 February 1966, both in CLWA, WODP. The statement was attached to Lynn s letter.

In the meantime, Supervisor Barrett encouraged the residents of Yakima to believe that the wilderness area proposal had already failed. Infuriated, Douglas wrote to Secretary Freeman "[I] plead with you, beg you, to implore you, not to cast the die against us conservationists by going ahead with development programs before we have had a chance for a hearing." Douglas reminded Freeman of the new statutory requirement of public hearings for wilderness areas. Furthermore, dismayed by Barrett s past record of environmental insensitivities, Douglas argued that with Barrett in charge locally, "the public will not even get due process and that is a thing that I know you and [Chief Forester] Ed Cliff would be the first to demand." The emphasis on due process reflected Douglas s concerns about procedural legalities and fundamental fairness. Freeman assured Douglas that nothing would be done in Cougar Lakes until every side could air its views. But as Douglas continued for months to call for hearings, Secretary Freeman and the Forest Service continued to politely rebuff or ignore him.[49]

Nevertheless, by 1971, promising developments encouraged Douglas and his allies. Douglas s hometown paper, the *Yakima Herald Republic*, published an article in April explaining the new situation. Republican Representative John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania, a key sponsor of the Wilderness Act, introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to create a wilderness area encompassing Cougar Lakes. That a Pennsylvanian proposed the Cougar Lakes Wilderness Area indicated the extent that wilderness in national forests had become a nationalized concern. Senator Jackson would soon introduce one in the Senate. The district s new Representative, Democrat Mike McCormack, remained undecided in his position on the wilderness designation. Douglas immediately wrote the editor of the *Yakima Herald Republic*, encouraging the paper s entire staff to visit Blankenship Meadows or another area in the proposed wilderness. He believed, then, they "would rise up in wrath at proposals to destroy it." This comment illustrated Douglas s tendency to privilege firsthand experience, believing that with immediate and personal experience one would naturally favor permanent wilderness protection. In addition, Douglas explained that he hiked the area as a boy and felt like frontier folk hero Daniel Boone: "Does your paper want that to become impossible? Do you want all boys—as well as old folks—carried to the few sanctuaries we have left? Is there to be no place for the adventuresome lad? Should there be a funicular on Rainier to make it easy for your great-grandchildren?" The rhetorical questions revealed how Douglas valued wilderness challenges and feared the irrevocable loss when roads invaded such sanctuaries. To him, wilderness represented a necessary legacy to be protected for the nation s future.[50]

His long efforts on behalf of Cougar Lakes illuminated many things. Douglas used multiple connections with friends in Pacific Northwest conservationist circles and in the power circles of Washington, D. C. to communicate strategies and developments. In

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[49] WOD to Freeman, 2 March 1966 and Freeman to WOD, 8 April 1966, both in CLWA, WODP.

[50] Robert W. Lucas, "A Bumping Wilderness?" *Yakima (Washington) Herald Republic* 26 April 1971 and WOD to Editor, *Yakima Herald Republic*, 30 April 1971, in CLWA, WODP.

essence, he served as the liaison between those groups, informing Senator Jackson or Secretary Freeman of Pacific Northwest activists perspectives on Cougar Lakes policy. In turn, he kept friends apprised of beltway politics. Through his activities, he worked to keep conservation politics open, asking for hearings and informing Freeman of errant forest supervisors. Moreover, as he explained to the editor of the *Yakima Herald Republic*, the nation needed wilderness areas for the young and the old. It was part of Americas heritage and needed to be preserved as such. Eventually, the combination of his deep personal connection with the region and his long political advocacy for its preservation in a wilderness area, not to mention the tireless work of many other regional and national conservationists, bore fruit. In 1984, four years after Douglass death, Congress set aside as a wilderness area much of the land he and others proposed in the early 1960s. It is fittingly called the William O. Douglas Wilderness Area.

To understand wilderness, some scholars have focused on specific places and struggles over designating wilderness, while others have taken a cultural or ideological approach, and still others have grounded their analysis in the structure of American politics.[51] The approach here combines all those perspectives and views them through the prism of a prominent individual. Douglas was a product of and heavily invested in particular western landscapes, articulated specific personal and cultural values of wilderness, and negotiated the ever-shifting political system. Such an individualistic approach is appropriate, for the encounter with wilderness, after all, is typically an individual encounter, mediated by ones culture and politics.

Douglas and other conservationists had long argued for the need to permanently protect wilderness areas from encroachment by roads and destructive economic development. And *Justice* Douglas, especially, urged that resource management decisions be open to democratic processes to protect the public interest and minority rights. In an age with only weak legal protection for wilderness, the symbolic power of having a representative from the nations highest legal authority could not be overstated. Ultimately, the Wilderness Act and later the National Environmental Policy Act (1970) helped inscribe many of those ideals into an enduring place in the American political and natural landscape with significant ramifications especially in the West. This transformation meant that wilderness management became much more beholden to democratic processes and the public, encouraging and allowing conservationists to shift their tactics from defense to offense.[52] The democratization of conservation can be counted as one of the most significant results of activism like Douglass in the two decades when the wilderness movement and environmentalism generally matured.

Douglass personality and long-standing identification with the region also made a difference in these examples. Douglas could be accused of practicing a form of NIMBY

[51] Place-based approaches include Kevin R. Marsh, "This Is Just the First Round: Designating Wilderness in the Central Oregon Cascades, 1950–1964," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 103 (Summer 2002): 210–33. Cultural and ideological approaches include Cronon, "Trouble," and Nash, *Wilderness Mind*. Political approaches include Allin, *Politics of Wilderness*, and Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence*.

[52] McCloskey, "Wilderness Movement."

(Not-In-My-Back-Yard) activism, given that he owned cabins near the Olympic Beach and Cougar Lakes areas. Rather than reflecting narrow self-interest characteristic of the charge against NIMBYism, the strategy Douglas and regional conservationists employed demonstrated a key reality of postwar conservation battles: people fought to protect the wildernesses they personally knew.[53] After all, it was no accident that the elegiac book the Sierra Club produced about the submergence of Glen Canyon beneath Lake Powell was titled *The Place No One Knew.*[54] Thus, although protestors may have labeled him a bird-watcher from outside the region, Douglas knew these local places and represented, at once, a vital regional and national voice in conservation. With Douglas in the fray, newspapers, resource managers, and politicians took notice, helping wilderness causes in incalculable, but no doubt substantial, ways. By bringing national attention to regional causes, Douglas helped nationalize concerns for the Northwest s beaches and mountains. Simultaneously, by bringing western issues to the nation s capital, Douglas advanced a regional conservation agenda and created a trans-regional network of dedicated conservationists and their political champions. Historians need to pay close attention to how these grassroots Committees of Correspondence ensured local and national activists coordinated with national political figures during long-standing political struggles over specific western landscapes. These organizations and dynamics demonstrate how wilderness ideology and democratic politics interact in practice.

Besides bringing a national reputation to bear and advancing the democratization of conservation, Douglas s activism on behalf of these northwestern places demonstrates his ability to utilize diverse methods and evolve with the changing movement. His dramatic actions on the beach and trail and his more prosaic letter-writing, phone-calling, and power-lunching from the Court illustrate the many avenues on the path to wilderness protection. Moreover, they illustrate how well Douglas straddled the two worlds of beltway and backcountry politics; indisputably no Supreme Court Justice and arguably no politician bridged that bifurcated existence so well. Much of the west s history, especially its environmental history, has been fraught with tensions between the national and the local, the centralizing and decentralizing impulses of American society.[55] Douglas furnishes an example of a significant public figure navigating these contradictory and complementary trends. For the West generally, and the Pacific Northwest specifically, Douglas s legacy remains significant.

[53] Marsh, " Just the First Round, " 212, 229–30 and three pieces by Hays: *Beauty, Health, and Permanence,* 120, "Structure of Environmental Politics," 318, "Comment," 30.

[54] Eliot Porter, *The Place No One Knew: Glen Canyon on the Colorado* (San Francisco, 1966). Douglas also championed conservation causes in other areas where he had less of a personal stake. A notable example is Texas. See WOD, *Farewell to Texas: A Vanishing Wilderness* (New York, 1967) and Adam M. Sowards, "Modern Ahabs in Texas: William O. Douglas and Lone Star Conservation," in *Journal of the West* (forthcoming).

[55] This is a major theme of Samuel P. Hays s work. See *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890–1920* (1959; reprint, New York, 1975).