Nature's Nations: The Shared Conservation History of Canada and the United States

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Historians have an affinity for borders. With some exceptions, we tend to focus our historical works on the development of particular nations (and at times states, provinces, and territories), allowing us to confine our stories to well defined historiographical traditions, relatively linear political developments and a manageable number of public archival sources. Historians of the conservation movement in Canada and the United States are no exception, having stayed firmly entrenched within their respective national (or in some cases regional) traditions. Although many historical works on the Canadian conservation movement briefly acknowledge the all-pervading influence the American pantheon of conservationists such as John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, and Aldo Leopold, U.S. historians have largely ignored events and ideas from north of the border. With some notable exceptions, the rise of conservation activism in late nineteenth and early twentieth century North America is depicted as is if it were the product of primarily national forces ranging from internal bureaucratic growth to the rise of a domestic popular conservationist culture. For many historians, the early conservation movement is a particularly Canadian or American story, two nations in relative solitude from one another with only minor seepages of conservationist ideas or practices across the border [1].

A very few brave scholars have tried to step outside of these comfortable boundaries and adopt a comparative approach to conservation history in Canada and the United States. Most of these works have reiterated the distinctiveness of national conservation histories in each country, focusing in particular on distinct attitudes to wilderness in each country. At a 1968 conference on Canadian National Parks held in Calgary, the pioneering American environmental historian Roderick Nash somewhat infamously argued that Canadians were fifty years behind their southern neighbors in developing an affinity for wilderness. With so much undeveloped wild

country stretching across a huge landscape, Canadians have remained historically indifferent to a wilderness that Americans came to love as it became scarce in the late nineteenth century. Nash argued that development of resort towns and tourism facilities within Canadian national parks outpaced that of the U.S. parks system, suggesting that Canadians had initially created pockets of civilized leisure resorts amid a sea of wild country while Americans hoped to cling to the last vestiges of a wilderness that was fading in the face of the axe and the plow [2]. In 1973 Robert Turner and William Rees echoed Nash's argument, suggesting that, in terms of nature preservation, legislation and management policies placed U.S. national parks far ahead of their tourism-oriented Canadian counterparts [3]. Marilyn Dubasak's extensive 1990 study argued further that Americans revered wildness because of foundational myths associating the development of a democratic political culture with the historical encounter of open wild country. In contrast, Dubasak invoked Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood's terror thesis to suggest that Canadians have regarded nature as hostile and dangerous, a malevolent force that should be domesticated and controlled. In terms of national parks, this meant that Canadians created and embraced civilized leisure resorts rather than wilderness areas [4]. In the early 1990s, the eminent environmental historian Donald Worster produced two papers highlighting differing attitudes and policies toward nature in Canada and the United States. Although the discussion is nuanced, for the most part Worster maintained the Nash thesis: the U.S. was the innovator and Canada the follower in the realm of conservation policy due to a range of factors that included a lack of Muir or Pinchot-like prophets of preservation and resource conservation in Canada and the absence of a corresponding frontier myth in Canadian culture.

Worster argues further that the most critical factor marking off Canada's approach to wilderness protection from the United States were constitutional provisions in the British North

America Act granting the original four provincial governments broad control over land and natural resources, a division of powers finally confirmed in law for the three western provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta with the Natural Resources Transfer Act of 1930 [6,7]. With no large western land base after 1930 similar to the vast federal holdings in the United States, the Canadian government maintained only a relatively small network of national parks, Migratory Bird Sanctuaries (established under the Migratory Convention Act of 1917) and later National Wildlife Areas (under the Canada Wildlife Act of 1973) in the region. Always conscious of provincial jurisdiction, the Canadian government backed away from the creating vast networks of National Forests, National Wildlife Refuges, and national parks that became the basis for the unique wilderness system concentrated in the western United States; nor has any single western Canadian province come close to matching the American zeal for wilderness preservation. Indeed, the federal government's commitment to wilderness protection was questionable after a period of national park growth in the 1910s and 1920s. In the territorial north, a huge area where public land remained in federal hands, the government created only Wood Buffalo National Park and the Thelon Game Sanctuary and fourteen migratory bird sanctuaries prior to the 1970s [9,10].

The differences between the two countries' approaches to conservation and wilderness preservation are thus very real. This is to be expected, however, where two nations followed different trajectories in terms of their political evolution, their cultural allegiances, and economic priorities. Indeed it is not clear that North American conservation history can be characterized solely, or even primarily, as a story of sharp divergence between Canadian and American methods. The historians cited above wrote prior to the recent development of significant work within the field of Canadian conservation and environmental history; the presumed comparative

shortcoming in Canada's historical commitment to conservation may reflect gaps in the writing of history rather than absences in the actual history of Canadian conservation [11]. A small number of more recent historical works have suggested significant movement of conservationist ideas and policy initiatives across the Canada–U.S. border beginning in the late nineteenth century [12,13]. A more expansive body of work suggests that Canada was not the conservation laggard some have assumed [14,15,16], while at the same time some areas of supposedly U.S. exceptionalism, particularly wilderness preservation, have been compromised by similar commercial development pressures as in Canada [17,18,19,20].

I raise these points not as an overtly nationalistic defense of Canada's conservation record (indeed, I have been openly critical of this record in my other work), but to suggest that conservation may be a more continental historical movement than we have previously assumed. Historian Ted Binnema has also recently warned that comparative approaches to Canada–U.S. environmental history should avoid superficial assumptions of convergence between seemingly similar policy regimes [1]. But at the same time, it is important not to presume radical difference across an international border. From the beginning of heightened popular and state conservation activism in the late nineteenth century to the relative decline of the movement during the Depression and World War II, very similar approaches to conservation emerged in both Canada and the United States. Although there was important embryonic environmental activism directed toward issues such as urban parks, public health, industrial hazards, water management and air pollution, this paper will mirror the mainstream conservation movement's focus on managing and preserving threatened natural resources such as wildlife, forests, wilderness parks and freshwater fisheries. To address such issues, conservationists in Canada and the United States developed a philosophy that was grounded in the main tenets of the Progressive era, embracing

both the scientific management of resources for human use, but also the preservation of at least some vestige of primitive North America's wildlife and wilderness spaces.

One important and often overlooked piece of evidence in support of North American convergence in the field of conservation is the fact that many key ideas in the Canadian and American movements emerged from common European sources. By the early nineteenth century, there were well developed natural history movements in the United States and the Canadian colonies. While there was much intellectual diversity and disagreement among this group, they began to articulate several key conservationist ideas: the idea of order and balance in the natural world, the presence of the divine in nature, and the practical need to conserve wildlife and forests. As with later conservationists, many naturalists also paradoxically maintained a strong allegiance to development and expansionism, promoting botanical, taxonomic, and geological knowledge as an essential precursor to the spread of a North American civilization hungry for natural resources [21,22,23,24,25]. Although a diverse group, early American naturalists such as William Bartram, John Bartram, Alexander Wilson, and Thomas Nuttall would find much in common with Canadian counterparts Catherine Parr Traill, William Dawson, and Abbé Léon Provencher. Certainly all of them shared common intellectual debts to the pantheon of European natural historians that included Alexander von Humboldt, Comte de Buffon, Charles Lyell and Gilbert White. By the late nineteenth century, the emergence of the hunter-naturalist movement and its attendant lobbying for wildlife conservation had become international in orientation, with adherents throughout North America and Europe disseminating their ideas widely through popular publication and practical application in the European empires [26,27,28,29].

In terms of policy, there are many common European based historical antecedents to the late 19th century push for game and forest conservation laws in Canada and the United States. The first game laws in the United States were passed in the mid-17th century during the early British colonial period [30]. In Canada, one of the earliest wildlife conservation initiatives can be traced to the London-based Hudson Bay Company, which enacted a pioneering and comprehensive wildlife conservation program as beaver populations plummeted in the early nineteenth century. Under the direction of Scottish Governor George Simpson, appointed in 1820, the HBC adopted harvest quotes and gear restrictions, closed trading posts in trapped out areas, and created some of the earliest fur sanctuaries in North America [14,31]. In the field of forestry, European models of scientific management and conservation, particularly the influential Prussian school of ordered monocrop regeneration, were not only a seminal influence on major North American conservation thinkers such as George Perkins Marsh, Gifford Pinchot and Bernhard Fernow (a German-born and trained forester who worked in both Canada and the United states), but dominated North American forestry schools and bureaucracies for decades [32,33,34]. Although the migration of ideas from Europe did not preclude early localized and grassroots responses to conservation issues [35,36,37], the international flow of conservationist ideas suggests the difficulty of containing them within singular national histories.

Certainly within North America conservation ideas and policy initiatives regularly migrated across the Canada–U.S. border. The conduits were many: professional congresses and meetings, diplomatic exchanges, the movement of prominent conservationists and the dissemination of popular culture. Admittedly, a great deal of the flow of ideas was one-way from the United States to Canada. In the area of forest conservation, for instance, Elihu Stewart, head of Canada's first Forestry Branch from 1899 to 1905, followed almost to the letter Gifford

Pinchot's approach to forest administration as Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, expanding state control and management over declining forests through the creation of federal Forest Reserves [38]. The U.S. government established Yellowstone in 1872 as the world's first national park, thirteen years before the at-first tiny Rocky Mountains National Park in western Canada. When the Canadian government finally created the first National Parks Act in 1930—a full fourteen years after equivalent U.S. legislation—it copied word for word the U.S. declaration that the national parks should be left "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" [39]. Even in the realm of practical conservation science, Canadians were sometimes deeply dependent on expertise and initiative, perhaps most notably during the 1940s and 1950s, when U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel dominated waterfowl monitoring and conservation programs in the Prairie Pothole region of Manitoba due to a lack of surveying expertise within the recently established Canadian Wildlife Service [15,40,41]. In the realm of private conservation initiatives, the U.S. group Ducks Unlimited opened a Canadian chapter in 1938 to facilitate prairie wetland restoration [14]. The North American Fish and Game Protective Association, formed in 1902, included prominent and wealthy members from both sides of the border [16]. Individual conservationists such as Muir and Pinchot achieved an iconic status in Canada, their ideas often invoked in government reports and popular writing on conservation issues. Canadian conservationists reserved special admiration for William Hornaday, prominent wildlife conservationist and director of the New York Zoological Gardens. In government circles, he was often consulted for his views on the conservation of large fauna such as bison or muskoxen, while quotes from his written work appear frequently in popular Canadian publications such Gordon Hewitt's *The Conservation of the Wild Life of Canada* and the magazine *Conservation,* a bulletin of the Canadian Commission of Conservation [42,43].

In the diplomatic realm, the U.S. took the lead on several fronts: Pinchot organized and presided over the first North American Conservation Conference in 1909, where delegates from Canada, Mexico, Newfoundland and the host country pledged to created independent conservation commissions [38]. Beginning in the 1890s U.S. officials also worked tirelessly to limit unsustainable fur seal harvests in the North Pacific, an initiative that resulted in the U.S., Japan, Russia, and the U.K. (for Canada) signing the North Pacific Fur Seal Convention in 1911 [13]. When one considers later U.S. initiatives—the Wilderness Act of 1964, the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970, the Endangered Species Act of 1973—it is easy to see why many historians have positioned the U.S. as the leader and Canada as follower on conservation and environmental policy initiatives.

The story is not always so clear-cut, however, as the Canadian federal government did take a leadership role in several early conservation policy arenas. With the creation of the Parks Branch of the Department of the Interior in 1911, for example, Canada became the first country in the world to create a specific bureaucratic entity devoted to the systemic management of national parks, five years ahead of the U.S. National Parks Service. The appointment of energetic first Parks Commissioner, James Harkin, to the new branch ushered in an impressive era of growth in new parks up to 1930 [44]. In addition, Canada positioned itself as the continent's leader in bison conservation when in 1907 the federal government purchased 350 plains bison from Montana herder Michael Pablo at a cost ($140,000) that caused the U.S. Congress to balk. The herd was eventually moved to the newly created Buffalo National Park in Wainwright Alberta in 1911 (with some animals remaining at Elk Island National Park outside Edmonton), a conservation initiative that earned high praise from the American Bison Society and gave Canada bragging rights to the one of the biggest public herds on the continent [16,45]. In

addition, Canada was the only participant in the 1909 North American Conservation Conference actually to fulfill its promise to establish a Commission of Conservation, an interdisciplinary body of politicians, academics and bureaucrats that between 1909 and 1921 produced over two hundreds reports on conservation issues surrounding wildlife, fisheries, agriculture, forests, minerals, water and public health. Both the federal and provincial governments were slow to adopt the Commission's recommendations, however, and historian Michel Girard has pointed to its abolishment in 1921 as a sign of waning enthusiasm for conservation within the federal government typical of the decline in idealism and Progressive reform impulse following the carnage of World War I [46, 47].

Girard's argument is nevertheless overstated, as the federal government remained committed at least to wildlife conservation issues both during and after the war. In 1916 the Canadian government established an Advisory Board on Wildlife Protection, a small group of leading wildlife, parks, and Indian Affairs officials that was crucial to the formation of federal wildlife policies until its dissolution in the late 1950's, particularly in the areas of antelope, bison, and migratory birds conservation [16]. The creation of Wood Buffalo National Park in 1922 to protect the largest remaining free roaming herd of the larger and darker wood bison further solidified Canada's reputation as a world leader in bison conservation. Management problems associated primarily with disease and overcrowding resulted in the disastrous transfer of 7,000 plains bison, many sick with tuberculosis, from Buffalo to Wood Buffalo National Park between 1925 and 1928, and the slaughter of the Buffalo National Park animals in 1939 [48,49]. Nonetheless, the establishment of the bison parks, along with three national parks on the Prairies to preserve antelope (Nemiskam, Wawaskesey and Menissawok) in 1922, and Point Pelee National Park in 1918 to protect important migratory bird habitat, the creation of the Northwest

Game Act in 1917 to protect large game in the territorial north, in addition to the previously mentioned Migratory Birds Treaty, suggests a high degree of concern over declining wildlife among Canadian government officials during the war years and immediately afterward. Austerity measures curtailed federal conservation initiatives in the 1930s (see below), but Wilfrid Laurier's conservation-friendly government (1896-1911) and the growth of a conservation bureaucracy through the 1910s to 1920s enabled Canada to seize the initiative and act ahead of the United States on several domestic wildlife conservation issues [16].

Canada was also able to take a surprising lead on some transnational conservation issues in the early twentieth century, despite the fact that Britain officially retained control over foreign affairs until 1931. Canada, for example, took a much stronger regulatory approach to the Atlantic fisheries in the 1860s, including harvest limits, size restrictions, and pollution control, while the U.S. adopted a more passive scientific approach focused on determining causes of stock declines and artificial propagation [50]. Canada similarly adopted a much stricter regulatory approach to conserving the shared resource of the Great Lakes fishery beginning in 1868. In contrast to the U.S. emphasis on stocking, Canada adopted a licensing system, closed seasons, gear restrictions and pollution laws to protect fish from sawdust or other industrial effluent. In 1888, Charles Hibbert Tupper, Canada's Minister of Marine and Fisheries, pushed for uniform regulation of the Great Lakes fishery, a position that was in part a response to Canadian fisherman who complained of lax rules on the U.S. side of the lakes. Working closely with British diplomats, the Canadian government convinced the Americans to establish a joint commission to study the possibility of a unified regulatory system in 1892. It was not until 1908, however, that both countries ratified the uniform regulations contained in the Inland Fisheries Treaty (which applied to other boundary waters such as Puget Sound). The House of Representatives ultimately failed

to approve the regulations in a 1914 vote and the British subsequently withdrew the treaty [12,13]. Similar collective diplomatic failure is more indicative of fisheries conservation on the Pacific Coast than broad-based Canadian leadership on the issue. The historian Joseph Taylor has argued that a similar joint Canada–U.S. failure to implement the measures of the 1937 Fraser River Sockeye Convention (and ultimately adopt a more rational river-base approach to conserving salmon stocks) has characterized the management of West Coast salmon fishery throughout the period of commercial exploitation [51]. Nonetheless, in the case of the Great Lakes and Atlantic fisheries Canada remained ahead of the U.S. for nearly four decades.

The United States certainly took the lead on the most important wildlife treaty of mid-century: the Migratory Birds Convention of 1916. The treaty was conceived in the U.S. as a legislative tool for Washington to fend off state challenges to federal authority over migratory birds established in the Weeks–McLean bill of 1913. The Americans nevertheless found a willing if at times slow moving partner for the treaty in Canada. Indeed, Canada's provinces had already built a stronger legislative foundation for bird protection than the U.S. states before 1913. At the federal level, The Commission of Conservation, the respected National Museum ornithologist Percy Taverner, and wildlife bureaucrats such as Parks Commissioner James Harkin, Chief of the Animal Division Maxwell Graham, Dominion Entomologist C. Gordon Hewitt all actively promoted the treaty within the halls of government. In the public realm, Canada's bird conservation lobby was not as well organized as in the United States. Despite the wild popularity of Canadian bird activist and conservation celebrity Jack Miner (see below), non-governmental activism was confined to local groups such as the Essex County Wildlife Association (of which Miner was a founder) without the national reach of the Audubon Society. Nonetheless, if the Americans took the initiative in terms of legislating and building popular

support for the treaty, negotiations between governments reflected a spirit of shared purpose: to establish joint federal regulatory control over a type of wildlife that inevitably moves across borders [13,16,52].

For all these achievements in the policy realm, some historians have assumed they were the product of a small number of bureaucrats working in very small and narrow corners of the larger government. As mentioned previously, historians have often assumed that there was no popular conservation movement in Canada, and in particular, no Muir or Pinchot-like figures who promoted conservation within the public realm [15,16]. Recent historical work, particularly Tina Loo's seminal book, *States of Nature*, suggests otherwise. In particular, Loo devotes an entire chapter of her volume to the conservation philosophy and activism of the farmer Jack Miner, who settled in Kingsville, Ontario after spending his first 13 years in Ohio. In 1904 Miner established a bird sanctuary on his farm, feeding the thousands of ducks and geese that migrated there every year in an effort to protect them from rapacious sports hunters. Miner also wrote books, worked the lecture circuit, and produced regular radio broadcasts, a veritable conservation rock star by the standards of the day. Miner was not a preservationist in the same manner as Muir—he made no effort to hide his antipathy (and often lethal violence) toward predatory birds—but his utilitarian focus was entirely in keeping with prevailing conservation philosophies. In addition to his wide popular following, the success of Miner's bird sanctuary and his conservation message earned him mainstream devotees such as Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King and industrialist Henry Ford. Miner has not been deified in the same manner as Muir and other U.S. conservationists, perhaps because his folksy demeanor and rural mannerisms do not appeal to contemporary observers as much as Muir's more eloquent defense

of nature. But this does not belie the fact that he was a significant, popular and internationally renowned Canadian conservation hero in his own time [14,53].

Miner was not the only important popular figure in the early Canadian conservation movement. Although much maligned for his fraudulent depiction of himself as a native, Grey Owl (aka Archie Belaney) was a prolific and extremely popular writer of books and magazine articles who argued eloquently for the cause of game preservation (especially in the case of the beaver) and the protection of nature within the national parks. Had he not been exposed as an eccentric impostor, Grey Owl's body of writings might legitimately sit alongside Muir's as canonical in the field of conservation [14,54]. A less well known, but no less passionate popular nature writer was Hubert Green, a police officer and park warden who lived near Riding Mountain National Park and wrote articles (under the pen name Tony Lascelles) in the 1920s and 1930s celebrating local natural history, but also critiquing park managers for allowing logging in the park and not being tough enough on poachers [55].

In the realm of direct activism, pioneering conservationists such as the biologists A.F. Coventry and J.R. Dymond helped establish the Federation of Ontario Naturalists in 1931, a proto-environmental organization dedicated to the promotion of wilderness preserves and parks in Ontario [56]. Further west, Arthur Wheeler, a founder of the Alpine Club of Canada, used the organization as a platform to oppose hydroelectric development within Rocky Mountains National Park (now Banff) in the 1920s [57]. The status of the fisheries garnered some of the earliest attention from Canadian conservationists, with prominent anglers such as New Brunswick's Moses Perley, and bureaucrats such as Richard Nettle (Lower Canada's superintendent of fisheries in the 1850s) and Samuel Wilmot (appointed the federal government's first fisheries overseer in 1868) sounding the earliest alarm bells about declining

fish habitat and overfishing in the rivers of the Maritimes and the Great Lakes [58,59,60,61]. In broader cultural terms, there is ample evidence to suggest that the U.S. back to nature movement was a powerful force in Canada also during the early 20th century, producing natural history societies, woodcraft movements, Boy Scout troops, wilderness inspired artwork, summer camps and hunting and angling clubs [62,63,64,65].

One measure of the interchange of conservation ideas and policies between Canada and the United States is the conservationists who operated comfortably on both sides of the border. The naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton was born in England, but moved to Canada in 1866 where he acquired his love of nature on boyhood rambles through Toronto's Don Valley. He became one of the continent's most famous naturalists, penning wildly popular "real life" animal stories that landed him in the midst of a high profile public debate with naturalist John Burroughs and President Theodore Roosevelt over the scientific veracity of his animal fiction. He also produced an extremely influential multi-volume natural history of North American wildlife, *The Lives of Game Animals*, published in 1928. In Canada, Seton worked with the Canadian government to select sites for antelope reserves in the 1910s, and produced a popular travelogue on the wildlife and people of Northern Canada after his trip to the region in 1907. Seton also lived in New York, where he worked as a wildlife artist in the 1880s. In addition, he attracted international following as a youth leader, a founding member of the American Boy Scouts in 1910, and the founder of the more Native focused Woodcraft Movement in 1915 with youth chapters in Canada and the United States [66,67,68,69,70]. Similarly, the naturalist Roderick Haig-Brown emigrated from England to the Pacific Northwest as a young man in the 1920s, worked in Seattle and Vancouver areas before finally settling on Vancouver Island in 1934 to become British Columbia's foremost conservationist. As a writer on the practice and philosophy of angling, Haig-Brown's approach

to conservation was typically North American, marrying an anti-modern critique of a rapidly industrializing provincial economy and a defense of wilderness values with a utilitarian sportsmen's ethic focus on recreational fishing [71]. In the field of forestry, the German trained forester Bernhard Fernow was not only the third chief of the United States Department of Agriculture's Forestry Division from 1896 to 1898 and first Dean of Forestry at Cornell University beginning in 1898, but he became the first Dean of the forestry school at the University of Toronto in 1907. For his advocacy of sustained-yield forestry, Fernow was a seminal figure on both sides of the Canada–U.S. border. The historian Stephen Pyne has called Fernow, "a point of integration, linking the concerns of east and west, of America in Canada, of North America and Europe, of forestry as plantation to silviculture and forestry as the administration of wooded wildlands" [72]. Clearly for figures such as Seton, Haig-Brown and Fernow, conservation was not a product of national myths and sentiments, but a more universal discourse that could be transported easily across international borders.

Considering the fluid nature of conservation ideas and personalities, is there any basis to suggest that the United States was uniquely nature's nation, much more advanced in terms of preservationist thinking than Canada? This frequent claim may, in fact, rest on a false distinction between preservationist and utilitarian camps in the early conservation movement. In recent years, many historians on both sides of the border have argued that leading figures in the conservation movement adopted a mix of preservationist and utilitarian ideas to promote their cause. In the U.S., significant figures in the wilderness movement such as Aldo Leopold, Robert Sterling Yard, Benton MacKaye and Robert Marshall advocated utilitarian approaches to game and forest management early in their careers. They never abandoned the idea of integrating human use in wilderness areas even as they advocated for more protected and roadless areas as

founding members of the Wilderness Society [73]. In many of the most iconic national parks in the U.S., places such as Yellowstone, Olympic National Park, Mount Rainier and Great Smoky Mountains, tourism developments such as railroads, highways, ski hills, and hotels played an equally prominent role in park management strategies as in Canada [18,19]. If the scale of development has been more extreme at some Canadian parks such as Banff (for instance, Banff had 51 hotels compared to nine in Yellowstone in 2008) [74], the basic approach to selling the Parks as tourist destinations was the same in both countries. On both sides of the border, park administrators such as Commissioner James Harkin and U.S. National Park Service Director Stephen Mather tried to mix preservationist management policies with the promotion of tourism and public use within the national parks [20,39,44,75]. In both countries' park systems, wildlife were put on display in pens for visitors, using public animal shows, and sometimes designated as surplus stock and slaughtered for their meat, all part of the paradoxical effort to preserve the species from the more random and uncontrolled exploitation of human hunters [48,76]. Obviously a detailed comparison of Canadian and U.S. Parks policy would reveal many specific differences over time, but in general protected areas in both countries prior to World War II were meant to preserve some vestige of primitive nature while it the same time attracting tourists along an ever expanding network of railroads and highways.

Other resource management arenas suggest a similar congruence between Canadian and U.S. policy regimes. Prior to World War II, fish and wildlife managers on both sides of the border adopted a suite of policies designed to produce a viable crop of sport fish and game animals for recreational hunters and anglers. In both countries, state regulation through licensing and legislation, and state management interventions such as predator control, game and fish stocking and species introductions formed the basis of fish and wildlife conservation policy. As

mentioned previously, hunting and fishing organizations played a huge role lobbying for production-oriented fish and wildlife policies throughout North America [14,28,77]. On both sides of the border, class and race politics infused the fish and wildlife discourse as elite sport hunters convinced resource agencies to manage fish and game as a recreational rather than a subsistence resource while at the same time deriding rural working class 'pot-hunters,' African Americans, Italians or aboriginal people for their supposedly barbaric and excessive hunting and fishing methods [78]. The cross-border dimensions of this sport hunting fraternity were readily apparent: a convergence of sport hunting interests and government conservationists from Canada and the United States called for standardized fish and game regulations throughout northeastern North America—rules that would inevitably favour the production of wildlife crops for sport hunters over local subsistence users—at the first meeting of the North American Fish and Game Protective Association in 1900 [79]. In both countries, rural subsistence and commercial hunters often engaged in conscious political resistance to fish and game regulations through various types of lawbreaking: poaching, trespass on wildlife reserves, and the use of prohibited equipment [59,60,80,81,82,83]. Many historians have characterized the introduction of fish and wildlife conservation regulations in Canada and the United States as the imposition of modern state power on the folkways or traditional knowledge of rural and aboriginal people [14,49,84]. Darcy Ingram has argued that Quebec remained an exception because a mostly Anglo elite invoked a backward looking British patrician culture and notions of customary privilege as justification for enclosing fishing and hunting areas up to 1914 when the state began to play a more prominent role [85]. In most states and provinces, however, fish and game management was one of the many ways that state managers asserted control over the supposedly idiosyncratic material cultures of the rural hinterland.

Canadian and U.S. governments also adopted similar managerial and production-oriented approaches to managing North America's forests. Forest management through much of North America was founded on several key principles: the harvest of even age and single species stands on rotation, strict fire suppression where possible, and state-driven scientific management of public forestss. In both countries, state regulators simultaneously promoted forest conservation objectives and a production-based ethos founded on the principle of maximum sustained yield. As Richard Rajala's regional study of the Pacific Northwest suggests, provincial, state and federal regulators in Canada and the U.S. largely failed to balance the conservation of the timber supply with their desire to promote capital accumulation in the forest industry [86]. If the Canadian federal government abandoned a strong role in forest management when it signed over control of natural resources to the western provinces in 1930, thus abandoning attempts to imitate U.S. forest reserve policy, provincial governments often created their own forest reserves and established scientific management policies on Crown lands that mimicked (albeit weakly and imperfectly) Gifford Pinchot's utilitarian approach to forest conservation [87].

Despite these points of convergence, a discerning critic could point to a host of significant differences between the Canadian and U.S. approach to conservation and preservation. Worster suggests that, in addition to the greater U.S. affinity for wilderness (witness the far more extensive network of protected areas in Alaska in comparison to the Canadian north as evidence), the far greater prevalence of aridity in the western United States as compared to Canada has ensured that the issue of water conservation is much more salient south of the border, likely accounting for the greater federal presence within the American West [7]. Undoubtedly the two countries diverged during the Great Depression as the Roosevelt administration placed conservation work and agricultural rehabilitation at the core of federal

programs designed to restore the nation's shattered economy and provide relief work for the mass of unemployed workers [88,89]. In Canada, the federal government created the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration in 1935 to introduce sweeping conservation initiatives in response to drought and soil erosion in the Prairies, but partisan politics and the desire of Manitoba and Alberta to maintain provincial jurisdiction over agriculture prevented widespread application of these programs outside of Saskatchewan [90]. In contrast with the United States, the Canadian government assigned only a very small portion of funding for unemployment camps to the conservation-oriented National Parks Branch, preferring instead to place relief workers under the auspices of the Department of National Defense [44,91]. Even in some specific instances where the two countries have put on the best appearance of cooperation on environmental policy, the differences are palpable. When borderland protected areas were created in the Quetico–Superior Boundary Waters Area or the Waterton–Glacier International Peace Park, each country jealously guarded its sovereignty and refused to submit to a truly international park management regime [56,92,93]. Clearly international borders do matter, and it would be folly to dismiss the divergent conservation policies in Canada and the United States as insignificant.

And yet, if one considers the broad umbrella of ideas and policy regimes that influenced the conservation movement in Canada and the United States, it is possible to see a relatively unified North American response to the environmental issues of the early 20th century. In both countries, conservationists embraced many of the central tenants of the Progressive era, particularly the idea that the state should control and scientifically manage natural resources to ensure the optimal production of fish, wildlife, timber and water for recreational and industrial uses [94]. In keeping with this embrace of modernity, conservationists in both countries were

generally willing to align themselves with private capital – whether in the form of timber companies or tourism operators – to ensure the natural resources would be managed in a manner consistent with the material and recreational needs of an industrial capitalist society. By the early 20th century, most conservationists in North America had embraced the idea of the state as regulator *and* enabler of resource production for large-scale private interests [95]. In almost all areas of resource management, the state remained indifferent to the concerns and protests of local people who faced unprecedented restrictions on hunting, barriers on access to forests and expulsion from parks and protected areas. The imposition of state conservation initiatives in the early twentieth century carried particularly dire consequences for aboriginal people in Canada and the U.S., not only due to restrictions on access to food and fur animals, but also because conservation regulations were often introduced as part of a larger colonial effort to assume control over local resources and shift supposedly backward subsistence hunting and trapping economies toward agriculture or modern wage labor [14,49,75,84,96,97]. With a few small exceptions, there was little divergence from the model of the state as regulator of natural resource exploitation by large-scale private capital in the form of a movement toward, for instance, state ownership of resource companies for the purpose of promoting conservation.

At the same time, prominent conservationists ranging from James Harkin to Aldo Leopold attempted to balance their embrace of modern management techniques with a more anti-modern critique of the increasingly artificial and urban culture that had come to dominate North America. Hence conservationists on both sides of the border embraced vestiges of what they believed symbolized North America's primitive heritage: hunting, fishing and extended unmechanized travel within relatively undeveloped wilderness areas. While there may have been debates within certain corners of the conservation movement about issues such as the ethics and

efficacy of predator control, the relocation of wildlife, or the role of fire within forests, generally the lines of disagreement did not run along the Canada-U.S. border. Conservationists in both countries looked toward each other for ideas and inspiration, turning their gaze forward and toward a modern and managed nature but also backward toward a fading primitive culture grounded in the North American wilderness.

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