

Law Center Assesses Park Survival Chances

"External Development Affecting the National Parks: Preserving 'The Best Idea We Ever Had'" is the title of a conference held Sept. 14-16 in Aspen, Colo., sponsored by the Natural Resources Law Center of the University of Colorado School of Law. The conference focused on conflicts that arise when activities outside park boundaries adversely affect the values and purposes for which the park was established. Participants included Dick Briceland, NPS Associate Director for Natural Resources; Prof. Robin Winks of Yale University; Prof. A. Dan Tarlock of the Chicago-Kent College of Law, Illinois Institute of Technology; and a roster of authorities on the legal aspects of air and water pollution, wildlife, public and private lands, and restoration projects.

Professor Alfred Runte of the University of Washington's History Department introduced the session on historical misconceptions and ecological realities of the National Park idea with this comment:

"Historians of the national parks traditionally describe the parks as one of the highest expressions of American Culture. The merits of this interpretation aside, the issue is no longer the quality of the idea, but whether Americans are in fact committed to protection of the national parks in perpetuity. Mounting threats to the national parks, both external and internal, have finally confronted the United States with its moment of truth. National park history, regrettably, leaves little room for optimism."

A report on the conference (which was underway at press time) will be carried in the Winter issue of *Park Science*.