

Preserving Nature

Having lived, worked, and suffered through the sloughs of despond that characterized the effort to create and sustain a credible NPS science program, I once more raise my grizzled head and sniff the breeze created by Dick Sellars' *Preserving Nature in the National Parks* [17(2):1, 8]. Is that real live hope I smell in the wind? Or just a wish that will expire as so many previous signs of hope have done?

The forces for status quo and inertia have carried the day so far, keeping the still magnificent park system firmly tethered to the notion that park landscapes should be moulded to human perceptions. The emulsification agent that would allow science—especially ecology—to join the traditional mix of landscape architects, foresters, and engineers has yet to be found....

I understand that Director Stanton has undertaken once again to resuscitate our still unparalleled system and our once proud Service. If science is at last guaranteed a seat at management's head table, then perhaps

the tarnished phrase
“wise use” has a chance
of regaining its integrity.



Thomas Hardy wrote,
“If a path to the better there
be, it lies in taking a full look at
the worst.” Science for years now
has had the capability of showing
us the worst and helping us avert
it. So far we have elected instead
to let the park system act it out.
Here’s one fervent Amen on be-
half of the new resolve!

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