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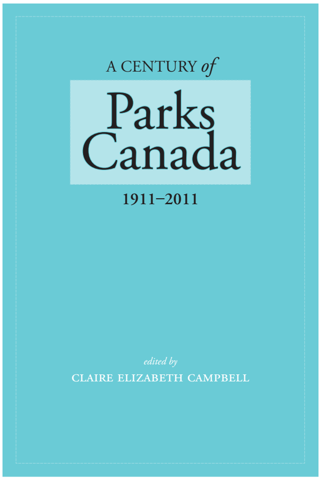

A CENTURY OF PARKS CANADA
1911-2011

Edited by Claire Elizabeth Campbell

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Films, Tourists, and Bears in the National Parks: Managing Park Use and the Problematic "Highway Bum" Bear in the 1970s

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In the 1960s and 1970s, Canada's national parks system was the closest it had ever been to fulfilling its earlier promoters' wildest dreams, and their nightmares. North American automobile culture joined with a popularized wilderness movement to expand park use to unprecedented levels. Every year, Canadians and Americans by the tens of thousands drove over improved highway systems, taking advantage of a federally managed network of camp and picnic grounds within the parks. Roads offered "drive-in" convenience in nature. Camping, barely contained within crowded, centralized sites with biffies, water pumps, and standardized outdoor film screens and auditoriums, now replicated the very suburbs from which parks visitors had hoped to escape.[2] All the while, parks were more effectively colonized by tourists using a variety of newfangled "leave-no-trace" consumer tent and hiking products that could support mass back-to-nature tourism and even greater visitor numbers.[3] To say the least, meeting the needs and expectations of car-driving urbanites presented enormous challenges for Canada's National Parks Branch dealing with what Turner has termed "the paradoxes of popular wilderness."[4]

C.J. Taylor, in this volume, describes the surging "second wave" of wilderness preservationism gaining force by the 1970s. Many of the movement's adherents were young activists with ties to universities and civil society wilderness advocacy groups who were reacting against the perceived overuse and development in the parks. Often overlooked, but indicative of the growing pressures on park managers in this period, was one of the most innovative wildlife films in Canada's government film history. Funded by Parks Canada and produced by the National Film Board, the twenty-five-minute *Bears and Man* was filmed as debate around use-versus-preservation grew in national parks across Canada, and indeed, North America.[5] This chapter, examining *Bears and Man* and other films of the era, suggests that their significance can be better understood in a longer history of visual representations of parks landscapes and of the animals and humans within them. After World War I, infrastructure and road-building projects had done more than engineer parks space to better exploit its tourist potential. Rather, these roads and automobile technology began influencing animal-human relationships whereby humans and wildlife in these "wilderness" settings evinced a host of mutualistic and rewarding behaviours. One involved the long-standing and enormously popular pastime of tourists feeding bears along roadsides and photographing themselves doing so.[6]

When *Bears and Man* appeared in 1978, it reached expanded audiences through movie theatres and television and presented a radically different portrait of human-animal relationships in the parks system.[7] Cinematographer Bill Schmalz, with parks officials and other individuals working in the context of their times,[8] used the film to rearrange elements of North American popular culture according to the growing ethic of wilderness preservation and the emerging science of bear ecology. The final product was far more comprehensive than the original project first discussed by the Parks Branch in 1967, which had been to create a "training film" for visitors encountering bears in the parks.[9] The 1978 film offers insights into how independent film-making, bear behavioural science, and the wilderness movement were coalescing in new ideas about nature itself. *Bears and Man* redefined space between wild animals and park visitors in a new "hybrid landscape," and in an ideal that, arguably, remains influential to the present day.[10]

Almost from the moments of their technological birth moving and still photo cameras complemented conservation efforts in North America.[11] American conservationists such as Henry Fairfield Osborn had long understood how wildlife films, in particular, could spread and shape conservation messages to wide audiences and gather public support for the further establishment of American parks.[12] Given the malleability of images in film and photographic media, film-makers could blur reality and recreate Nature itself by depicting wild animals in a variety of ways.[13] In one popular medium, that of very cheap and mass-produced postcards, the wild in Canada's mountain parks – what Keri Cronin termed "National Park Nature" – was profoundly shaped by the depiction of its animal life, especially of black bears.[14] Bears eating at hotel tables, wandering around on Banff's golf course, chained to poles, sniffing for food along park roadways, or sitting behind steering wheels of automobiles were not only popular in the interwar years, they were important in defining through "photographic clichés" park wilderness for larger numbers of tourists using roads and automobiles.[15]

These postcards were made locally for the mountain parks and sold en masse in tourist shops. A "Black Bears" postcard taken in the 1940s, one of many based on a photograph by Byron Harmon, suggests how autotourism and bears joined in a wilderness ideal: it shows a mother and her cubs crossing a highway in Banff, undoubtedly looking for handouts. In turn, the postcard was purchased by an autotourist from Minburn, Alberta and posted home with the note: "Here is a picture of the bears we keep watching for but haven't seen yet. We'll be at Banff tonight so I'm sure we'll see some there. We've had a fine time. Love, Auntie."[16] As tourists chugged through mountain parks in their new technological monstrosities – as some at first had viewed automobiles within parks – their visits were necessarily mediated in the landscape through graded roadways, roadside stops, and scenic loops and views cut through forest screens to best facilitate sight-seeing, often at a rapid pace.[17] Meanwhile, wildlife finding reward by frequenting roadways and auto stops to mooch for food were quickly conditioned to tourist traffic. Both parties seem to have enjoyed their encounters. The love-at-first-sight between wildlife and automobilists was romanticized further in tourist promotion.

image not available

Fig. 1. A quite typical Banff postcard ca. 1920s. "Tourists' Cars are subject to inspection by wild game on the Auto Road near Banff, Alberta." Postcards like these were sold in tourist shops well into the 1960s. [Glenbow Archives, na-4334-25.]

Habituated wildlife was featured feeding along the roadsides of some of the earliest automobile road films to thrill theatre audiences in the 1920s.[18] As Alan MacEachern and John Sandlos have noted in this volume, the Parks Branch was already skilled at tourism promotion. The promotion-savvy parks commissioner James B. Harkin knew how to please automobilists by suggesting that salt licks be put out beside the newly built Banff highway system in 1922.[19] Mabel B. Williams' own promotions of the new "auto parks" in Western Canada celebrated the ways that wild animals seemed "tamed" along roadways, in effect sharing the road with drivers. Park drivers, she promised, would encounter animals that innately understood that "within these boundaries" humans had "laid aside" their "ancient enmity." Animals, in return, were "quick to offer in return the gift of equal friendship."[20] She did not mention that, really, most of the animals were there for the free lunch. The pandering elk, mooching squirrels, and cheeky bears in park picnic areas and driveways had conditioned themselves to the handouts and very quickly confirmed expectations of drivers and auto passengers around ideas of wilderness itself: part of a larger intellectual complex that David Louter has termed "windshield wilderness."[21]

Bear ecology and behaviour reinforced its central presence in that conceptualization. Camera-toting visitors could snap photos of many compliant park animals, from the reintroduced elk species to deer. But it was the Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) that became something of a "keystone" species in road landscapes. It adapted quickly to the rising numbers of tourists and the habitat changes within park areas in Canada and parts of the United States by the mid-twentieth century. Its remarkable adaptation in turn contributed to the growing popularity in bear-feeding. Research in the United States at Yellowstone and Great Smoky Mountains and in Canada's mountain parks would later show that bears displayed a manifestly "tolerant" behaviour. Once rolling in their vehicles into the confines of park boundaries, tourists could usually find a bear that had learned to "beg" along roadsides in order to elicit handouts. Many showed remarkable talent in "dancing," performing or aping gestures to please drivers and passengers. Some learned to aggress without inflicting injury in order to bully picnic tourists to share their food. Stephen Herrero found that, although the Black Bear did aggress tourists, it (unlike the Grizzly, *Ursus arctos*) did so in much lower numbers in proportion to the numbers of encounters, and inflicted comparatively minor injuries.

image not available

Fig. 2. Black bears became “keystone” species in tourist understandings of parks roads landscapes. This bear is crossing a park road in Alberta or British Columbia before 1942. [Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies; v263/na-2862, Byron Harmon.]

Animal behaviour, then, contributed to a cultured space between animal and human, with bears learning strategies that, for the most part, rewarded them.[22] Before the truly dangerous congestion of the 1960s – a decade also fraught with debate about the corruption of the wilderness by over-development and tourist use – bears and humans complemented each others’ behaviours and bears themselves gained prominence in tourist-animal landscapes.

All the same, for parks staff the convergence of roads, automobilists, and bears was inviting a head-on collision of unintended outcomes, to say the least. In the United States, the bear problem loomed with increasing urgency, accelerated by greater numbers of tourists and, by the 1960s, ecologists suggesting a variety of controversial remedies.[23] Canada, of course, saw its own rapid increase in vehicular traffic in the post-war period. Vehicle passenger numbers at Banff's East Gate rose from around 300,000 in 1947 to 800,000 in 1957, and to almost 2.4 million by 1970.[24] Despite increased efforts to discourage highway liaisons, National Parks Branch officials were dismayed to find bear-feeding postcards still selling in Banff townsite tourist shops in 1959, the very year when the first conviction for the practice occurred.[25] Many of the maulings, as reported to wardens, often occurred at roadside lookouts, suggesting drive-in tourists had unrolled windows, much like they would have in a hamburger joint, to bear moochers in return for a photograph. Such exchanges, always loaded with misunderstandings, sometimes went very badly.[26] As J.R.B. Coleman, a senior Branch official, pointed out in one memorandum in 1965, "postcards depicting bears in the driver's seat of cars are on sale in various U.S. and Canadian National Park tourist shops and they encourage some foolish people in the belief that such a photographic set-up is easy and safe to arrange." He referred to the case of one Banff visitor who was observed *pushing* a "large black bear behind the steering wheel of his car so that he could take an unusual photograph."[27] The problem was that tourists simply saw the interaction as an integral element of a parks experience. Even the *Kingston Whig Standard* could find the Parks Branch's pamphlets that year reminding tourists "of the dangers of feeding and molesting bears" worthy of a comical editorial cartoon.[28]

With tourist expectations so dependent on such practices, it is interesting to see the somewhat mixed messages arising in a film produced in 1959 by the Branch entitled *Wildlife of the Rockies* (tellingly, originally titled "Zoo of the Mountains"). This film represented an effort by the Branch to both promote the parks system and remedy a problematic scarcity of Canadian national parks films available in the post-war period. What films it did have were perhaps informative but had all of the interest of high school biology lectures. Canadian and American audiences demanding films of Canadian mountain parks for Rotary Club dinners and bridge nights found the official selection of 16-mm films wanting, to say the least. By the late 1950s, documentary selections produced earlier by the federal government's film bureau were hopelessly bogged down in natural history detail, out of date, or simply too tattered from repetitive viewings for continued use.[29] After assessing the comparatively more exciting films promoting U.S. national parks, the Canadian Parks Branch liaised with the National Film Board to produce something, in the parlance of the times, hipper, and used wildlife to do so.

The decision was made to let a Banff cinematographer film what he could from a list of preferred mammals found in the parks system. The list ranged from moose to mountain goat and mountain sheep, to black and grizzly bear, deer, elk, and buffalo.[30] A storyline, it was thought, could be built up later. This approach was later defended in departmental memos as the project's costs began to balloon with few results to show. Given the difficult challenges of wildlife cinematography, the film-maker spent a year filming what amounted to Dall sheep.[31] The Branch realized that nothing new was being added to its existing stock and appointed cinematographer Dick Bird, a Regina-based film-maker with a "good reputation in North America" in wildlife cinematography and a number of park film projects under his belt, to take up the project.[32] The main contract, however, went to Bill Carrick, promised a per-season wage and contacts with park wardens to compile footage of animals. Carrack had already worked for the Parks Branch filming Point Pelee and had other credits with the Canadian Wildlife Service. A "highly skilled man in this field," with experience working with Walt Disney Productions, Carrick seemed right for the job. Still, the storyline was left to emerge from whatever animals proved "co-operative."[33]

The sheer difficulty of filming wildlife, the problem of scene composition, and the need to create an appealing and interesting script decisively influenced the film emerging from initial footage. An editor worked to make sense of what was coming in from Carrick, who managed to shoot ptarmigan, deer, bear, and the like; a biologist was appointed to make sense of it all, and to work with the editor who eventually added a storyline. By the end, both the "longshot" landscape scenes introducing the film and the original title were determined too uninteresting and were dropped. Television audiences, it was thought, "would likely turn off their sets" otherwise. The opening shot was changed and the title "Wildlife in the Rockies" was adopted instead.[34]

Perhaps planning the production had left little room for innovation, but the end product worked within the expectations of tourists of the time. *Wildlife of the Rockies* introduces a hypothetical "mammalogist resident" who encouraged autotourists to stop their cars and take a moment to look at park wildlife. The film opens with a family pausing impatiently on the side of the road, having vacated their car, and, "seeing nothing," as narrator Budd Knapp tells the audience, "piling into their car, this family concludes that the woods and mountains are deserted."[35] He goes on to say, however, that the mammalogist knew better. As the family returns to its prominent 1950s American vehicle and roars off down the road, the narrator explains that had they known better or been willing to look beyond the roadside, there would be plenty of animals to view. Even when the family stops again to chat with a park warden – through a rolled-down window – they are evidently in too much of a hurry to listen to his advice. And leaving him and the viewer in the dust of their vehicle, the film then turns to the warden who scans through Alpine, sub-Alpine, and valley complexes where communities of animals awaited, very apparent to the eye but invisible to autotourists moving too quickly to pause and take a careful, studious glance at their surroundings.

Whatever the original intent of the production, the drafts of commentary, shortened and synced to film, ended up reinforcing tourist behaviour along park roadsides. Given that many of the shots were taken from roadside vantage points, this is not surprising. About 230 seconds into the film, the narrator says, "Finding most of the wildlife in Banff and Jasper requires some careful searching. But even the road home can bring its surprises. You don't need binoculars to spot a black bear. He moves where he wants, and the presence of a few human beings doesn't bother him at all."[36] The key objective of the film, i.e., to have tourists "spend a bit more time in the parks, instead of speeding through them in their cars,"[37] was then obscured in the very infrastructure and road amenities tourists were using. The framing of the film around autotourists, in the end, reinforced current expectations and affirmed Steve Jones's idea that "cinematic and touristic ways of seeing" complemented each other quite naturally in the post-war period.[38]

Wildlife of the Rockies was added to the roster of films being shown to audiences in campground amphitheatres across the Canadian parks system.[39] The Branch developed two more films by 1969 to encourage tourism – each, however, revealing the growing problem facing park managers who were tasked with promoting parks as much as preserving them. *Away from it all* (1961), featuring Terra Nova National Park, was a fifteen-minute short that juxtaposed urban life and its many "daily urban struggles" with that of wilderness parks and sanctuaries, "natural retreats for the worried man," as the outline narration read.[40] A more explicit celebration of wilderness – as opposed to tourist promotion – appeared in the Branch's award-winning *The Enduring Wilderness* (1963), directed by nature cinematographer Christopher Chapman. The film provided a montage of scenes from park spaces across Canada. It too reinforced a message of the need for parks in a society increasingly "feeling the impact of civilization" beyond roadways, the din of traffic, and technological amenities supplied for auto-driving tourists. But the film was organized around "the whole idea to provide the experience of natural beauty and the feeling for it,"[41] quite innovatively seeking to provide a "philosophy film on National Parks," one of the reasons why its initial title was planned as "The Meaning of Wilderness."[42]

In Chapman's case, however, the film's original purpose was at odds with the promotional mandate still being managed by the federal ministry overseeing the project – and paying its production costs. An initial script read by the Education and Interpretation Section and the deputy minister of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources – of which the Parks Branch was only a part – felt that Chapman had scripted a film that did not encourage the use of parks by visitors. "Nowhere in the script is there any direct identification of the wilderness with people," Chapman was told. "Could not some people be shown ...? I feel rather strongly that all parks, National or otherwise, are, and should be for people – for their recreation, their education, their appreciation of nature … it is an obligation on the trustees [of a park] to allow it to be used appropriately by people."[43] Closer to the events unfolding around them and the pressures on the ground, parks officials backing these new films were already anxious to support such efforts and even present to the public the "use and preservation dilemma" confronting them. Winston W. Mair, the new director of the Branch, developed the extraordinary idea of a film relating "the use-conserve dilemma as experienced system-wide – perhaps putting across the idea of public understanding as the only real solution." Mair perhaps was voicing the concerns of his own officials in a parks system grappling with logistic issues of garbage, road-widening, ski hill development, and other uses. His idea of telling "the story of the wild lands, without too much concentration on the spectacular,"[44] however, was quashed at the ministerial level. The Parks Branch's most recent film, *The Enduring Wilderness*, had already gone far enough in giving "the 'soft sell' type" to the public. The minister felt that "it was *not* what he wanted. What we need is something more aggressive and spectacular to ensure his continued support for more films in the future."[45] Whatever "philosophy" of wilderness Chapman had wanted to explore in his film, the times were not best for expressing them. Chapman's original film title, indeed, had gone through its own considerable modification. From the proposed "the Meaning of Wilderness," expressing a philosophy of wilderness, the film's title was changed to the "Vanishing Wilderness." However, the Parks Branch understood even that term's problematic semantics and tweaked it to a more reassuring title: "The Enduring Wilderness." At least on film, the Parks Branch was still attempting to balance tourism and increased use with its mandate to preserve Canada's great wild lands.

Against this backdrop of massive development and increased tourism in the parks, a series of bear culls and highly publicized mauling incidents brought into stark view a number of now unsustainable traditions in parks tourism. As early as the 1940s, and certainly by 1959, western parks wardens were shooting bears in greater numbers in an effort to reduce animal-human conflicts. Superintendents explored numerous remedies to address the problems posed by these omnivore "highway bums,"[46] but, given the costs of bear-proof garbage disposal, the largely unsuccessful educational campaigns to tourists, and complicity among concession and tour bus operators who were still escorting tourists to road-side bear photo-ops, parks managers believed that only large-scale culling and even complete eradication were solutions for areas frequented by visitors.[47] By the early 1960s, with some 100,000 people camping in Jasper National Park alone,[48] it was evident that there was not enough room for habituated "campground" bears in the Canadian parks system. In 1962, for example, wardens trapped 146 black bears and destroyed 112 (compared to 75 and 38 respectively a year before).[49] The superintendent of Kootenay National Park, K.B. Mitchell, voiced concern over the "highly accelerated control of the bear population." But he had also seen, as had the superintendent at Jasper, habituation increase with these expanding visitor numbers. By then, bears along the highways had "availed themselves of the supply of food offered by the increased numbers of tourists using the roadways and picnic grounds."[50] In turn, heavy culling led to noticeable declines in bear numbers by the late 1960s and early 1970s, at least in terms of animals seen by visitors. Wardens doing most of the culling, and grimly clearing out roadsides with control methods, were telling tourists wanting to see bears that the animals had simply "gone off" into the backcountry.

There was certainly more urgency in the issue now. The case brought successfully by a bear maul victim in the United States against the U.S. Parks Service raised the worrisome possibility of legal liability arising from mauling incidents. In 1967, an Alberta man brought to the courts his own, ultimately unsuccessful, case, which had occurred in Jasper.[51] The Parks Branch now broached the possibility of having "a short film produced as a public service message in which we would attempt to explain to tourists the procedures they should follow to avoid being confronted by a wild animal or what to do in the case they are."[52] Branch director, J.R.B. Coleman, supported the idea, hoping that such could provide "a training film on bear behaviour and the results of human carelessness and lack of judgment in dealing with bears." An "invaluable aid to such a training program," he imagined the film being shown to "general park visitors and the public-at-large as well."[53]

However, a broader change was occurring in wildlife film-making beyond the Parks Branch. In 1971, broadcaster and public commentator Warner Troye completed *Where Has Sanctuary Gone?*, a twenty-three-minute film that showed, not only the rising tensions of "modern" urban life, but the contrived element of park management whereby autotourists lined up for hours to gain entrance into the national parks. The scene of traffic jams outside Banff's east gates reinforced Troye's larger message of the disappearing wilderness areas in Canada, even within the national parks. The film identified a problem of too many automobiles, too many roads, and too many campgrounds, which offered too little "wilderness" beyond that which could be found in a suburban backyard. Troye captured some of the unreasonable extremes of "use" in Canadian parks, especially that accessible by roadways and filled with family station-wagons.

Even as the wilderness movement affected film-makers and parks promoters, bear studies launched in the 1960s in Yellowstone, Alaska, Great Smoky Mountains, and Glacier National Parks were beginning to elucidate the nature and meaning of bear behaviour, migration, and habituation. These explored bear movement in park areas, surveyed bear-feeding tourists in American parks, studied habituation, and analyzed footpath encounters. Before 1970, very little scientific study of the kind on bears and their habituation had been undertaken, and parks officials had little means of understanding the behaviour or even of guessing the ratio of "campground" and "wilderness" bears in the parks system.[54] The science of bear-feeding, however,

Fig. 3. The 1950s saw larger numbers of tourists and greater bear habituation, some of it encouraged by tourist bus operators and concessionaires who often stopped their vehicles to let tourists get photos of bears along roadways. [Glenbow Archives, na-5611-81.]

changed rapidly in the early 1970s, when international conferences for bear biologists consistently featured sessions on human-animal interaction and the problematic outcomes of habituation.[55] This research led to new social and ecological understandings of animal behaviour and psychology. In Canada, sensibilities were shaped by Stephen Herrero, whose work on animal behaviour focussed on Canadian bears and followed up John and Frank Craigheads' research in Yellowstone.

Such streams of influence informed Parks Canada's decision to support a clearly different kind of bear film. In the early 1970s, wildlife cinematographer Bill Schmalz was returning to Western Canada from a stint of work with the National Film Board when he proposed a bear documentary to the agency's prairie regional office in Calgary. Schmalz had begun his career filming a fisheries research project in the Gulf of Alaska before studying biology at UBC for a year. He then went on to spend several years filming bighorn sheep and other wildlife in the mountain parks. While with the NFB, he finished shooting and directing *Bighorn*, a theatrical short that, like Chapman's wilderness film, had no narration and instead provided a montage of images of areas "still untouched by man."[56] His knowledge that bears were "systematically being shot and killed" along roadsides, including what he believed had been the unnecessary killing of two grizzly cubs by parks wardens, prompted Schmalz to propose *Bears and Man*.[57] His idea of a bear film found evident support in the NFB organization. For the next three years, Schmalz worked with wardens at Kootenay, Banff, Jasper, and Waterton. *Bears and Man* (in French titled *L'Ours mon Frère*) can be viewed as an emerging compilation of environmentalist concerns and scientific understanding of bear behaviour. In terms of the latter, Schmalz was well aware of current science through bear conferences. He consulted with Herrero on the project, and, indeed, Herrero provided advice to Parks Canada as the film took shape.

Schmalz's proposal moved beyond a merely informational production and employed state-of-the-art film editing, music, and narration that emotively disassembled the bear-automobile landscape that had been idealized and preserved in popular photography. His first report, dated December 1974, describes the film's planning process. Its major points were developed thematically on storyboard in consultation with Parks officials. Schmalz had already collected footage of bears in parks from previous work; during his first filming on contract, he witnessed a horrific mauling when the translocation of a drugged grizzly went wrong, and the bear attacked and killed Canadian Wildlife Service biologist Wilf Etherington.[58] Deeply traumatized, but encouraged to continue the project, Schmalz spent the 1974 season capturing sequences for the "Bears in Nature" section of the film, which included shots taken in the summer of two grizzly families (counting a sow with three yearling cubs) and of two lone cubs. During the filming, the warden service helped Schmalz find locations and provided carcasses of road-killed elk and moose to attract bears to open areas "suitable for filming."[59] Eventually, the film moved from "Bears in Nature" to "Bear-People Interaction" – which included the film's most dramatic moment, "bear-people highway feeding" – to "Bear immobilizing and translocation." The film adhered tightly to the eventual script storyboard, although Schmalz's initial hope to include shots showing the warden service shooting problem bears in the "Bear Confrontation Conduct" section were dashed when they were "deleted from scene" by parks officials despite his protests.[60]

Blocked in five sections, the final film went far beyond "instructional" fare; its overarching message promoted a negotiated space between humans and the national parks' now-declining black and grizzly bear populations. The editor eventually working on the project, Kalle Lasn, who had returned from a filming project in Japan with "avante-guard" editing techniques, changed the first editions of the film to be more effective in that respect. Chief Dan George was chosen as narrator for the opening sequences, using narration written by Schmalz and the film editor so that the famous Salish chief could very directly plead viewers to "respect the bear."[61] The original script called for "Old Indian" to say: "the ways of the city are lost in the wilderness. Here the spirit of the great bear fills the land. He was wilder and stronger than we are, we must learn to respect its ways."[62] Considering its long exclusion from national parks, the First Nations' voice was effective but also logical given the popularity of the idea of the "ecological Indian" in the North American environmental movement at the time.[63] The narrator in effect reconceptualized aboriginal history in saying that "at the time of my great grandfather the spirit of the bear filled our land." The native voice then drew bear behaviour around tourists in critical terms. Their feeding was not idealized but criticized as "spoiling" the animal:

> DAN GEORGE – Man, once he is given power over the wilderness and its creatures, but he does not have the power to make a spoiled bear natural once more.

Here, the film's characterization of bear behaviour reflected current scientific behavioural research, effectively branded in the native voice. The leading narrator, Patricia Best, went on to further define the "spoiled" bear, the animal habituated around garbage cans and roadside feeds, killed by traffic, tranquillized, transported or destroyed by parks officials. In one scene, a mother black bear and two cubs converge upon a garbage dumpster in Jasper. Adroitly lifting the lid, the mother, then a cub, nose around and disappear into the receptacle. The mother bear's sudden charge from the dumpster suggests the violence and danger of such habituated animals. It provides the transition to footage of a vehicle completely destroyed by a bear attack, its side ripped out and interior plundered for food.

> NARRATOR – They call them "spoiled" bears. They have given up their natural feeding habits and learned to survive on human garbage.

The film goes on to explicitly undermine linkages between complementary automobile culture and tourist bear-feeding and negotiated space for both in park recreation. In sequences played by actors, "Russ and Jenny" hike through a park to camp in the wild. They happen upon bear tracks along a stream:

> RUSS – "Grizzly tracks."
> JENNY – "Is it still around?"
> RUSS – "Could be. We're not going to stick around to find out though. I know a better spot about a mile down the trail."

Russ and Jenny eventually locate their camp out of bear's way. They start a fire for cooking distanced at least a hundred yards from their tents. Russ pulverizes burnt cans and then elevates them and other food leftovers by a rope to a high tree limb beyond a bear's reach.

The film's most dramatic scene further defines animal-human parks space in a bear-feeding scene shot between Jasper and the Mile 45 warden station. Bear jams often formed there in a stretch of highway. The scene shows droves of camera-toting tourists converging on a mother with two cubs, which have appeared along the shoulder. Unlike earlier films showing tourists and bears sharing the photographic space, the camera trains attention mostly on the humans who appear as habituated to the bears as the animals to them. In the scene, one brazen youth is seen handing cherries to the mother, which nearly bites his hand.[64] A family passes a brown paper bag to the bears through a rolled down window. The mother is later seen climbing atop of a vehicle, its delighted owners laughing at the bear's pandering. Perhaps the most effective shot comes at the scene's conclusion, when one of the cubs traversing the highway is nearly killed by a motorist who drags it a few metres before its screeching tires; the cub runs to safety, apparently unharmed. Film-editing and another acted sequence shows a park warden arriving, radioing in a "244" bear-on-road call, and confronting the occupants of a car who had just fed the bears in question.

Bears and Man disassembled a terrifically popular, but problematic, photographic ideal that had linked humans and wildlife in North American national parks. This happened at an important moment in parks history, when the growing and increasingly heavy tourist use of national parks was animating anew the "use-versus-preservation" dilemma. It was not, however, a statist imposition into popular culture, or simply the tourist instruction film originally talked about by the Parks Branch. Herrero, indeed, remembered the film "was a celebration of the wild with suggestions on how to keep it that way."[65] Indeed, Parks Canada gave its blessing for the film project at a time when managers themselves were at something of a crossroads in solving the almost-century-old "bear problem." In the context of mauling incidents, heavy culling, and the possibility that victims of bear attacks might sue the government for "mismanaging" the bear problem, this type of popular tourist recreation was no longer tenable in the parks system. Challenges raised by mass tourism had gone beyond the mere question of distinguishing between and managing differently "campground" versus "wilderness" bears. The Parks Branch itself, contemplating a complete eradication of bears in tourist areas, was likely aware of at least a minority of scientific experts who advocated the ridding of the animals in parks in order to protect visitors.

The film represented, then, its endorsement of a management compromise, that of providing new scientific advice and more effective re-education to the public aimed to modify tourism and maintain space in parks for humans, black, and even grizzly bears.[66]

In reorganizing aspects of tourism, however, *Bears and Man* did as much to propose a new bear psychology as it did to delineate an ideal space between humans and these animals. Throughout Schmalz's production, viewers were asked to "respect the bear" as Chief Dan George stated in the film's opening and ending sequences, an admonition suggesting both the unknowable and frightening aspect of a bear's makeup, whatever it truly is. This did not mean that bears lost their keystone status in tourist landscapes. Hardly. If *Bears and Man* enjoyed any success in reshaping tourist behaviours, it was likely because it reassembled, rather than threw away, pieces of older, popular understandings of parks wilderness. The film reinforced the importance of bears in a wild space now understood as "bear country"; catching a larger shift, identified by Tina Loo, in wildlife conservation in Canada by the 1970s, whereby government acted to conserve wild areas and not merely wild animals within them.[67] In the new assemblage, hikers, drivers and sightseers could continue to find recreation in parks, but they did so upon a backdrop of a wilderness idealized by the bear's invisible presence, his "spirit," in Dan George's narration. The bear and its wilderness habitat is of such importance that the roadway is almost completely erased. Once used by visitors to experience and define nature in national parks, it now figured only as a backdrop element, but one now looming as another problem in parks' management of humans and wildlife.

NOTES

1 The author wishes to thank Alan MacEachern and Jim Taylor for references to parks bear files, films, and photographs, André D'Ulisse and François Houle, National Film Board Archive, for documents; and Ted Hart and Stephen Herrero for reading and commenting on an early version of this paper. Thanks, too, must go to Pamela Banting for her initial suggestions. I am indebted, in particular, to Bill Schmalz for taking much time in recounting his experiences filming *Bears and Man*. The article is dedicated to my "little bear," Gabriel.

2 Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada became Suburban, 1900–1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 11–12, 130–32; Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); on overall American trends and the development of a "Drive-In Society," see Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); in Ontario, see Steve Penfold, "'Are we to go literally to the hot dogs?' Parking Lots, Drive-Ins, and the Critique of Progress in Toronto's Suburbs, 1965–1975," *Urban History Review* 33, no. 1 (2004): 8–23. James Morton Turner, "From Woodcraft to 'Leave no Trace': Wilderness, Consumerism, and Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America," *Environmental History* 7, no. 3 (2002): 475–76; Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada 1935–1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 162–63, 224, 220–22; Gregg Mitman, *Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife in Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 105.

3 James Morton Turner, "From Woodcraft to 'Leave no Trace'," 467–68; Victor B. Scheffer, *The Shaping of Environmentalism in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 41–42.

4 Turner, "From Woodcraft to 'Leave no Trace'," 468–69; see, also, *Reel Nature*, 91; PearlAnn Reichwein, "Holiday at the Banff School of Fine Arts: The Cinematic Production of Culture, Nature, and Nation in the Canadian Rockies, 1945–1952," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39, no. 1 (2005): 56; Mark W.T. Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 57–63.

5 See "Of preservation and Use," in Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 14–19. In many ways, the period was marked by the growing stress of unresolved pre-war contradictions implicit in marketing "wilderness" to tourists, who in turn peopled these places. See Gabrielle Zezulka-Mailloux, "Laying the Tracks for Tourism: Paradoxical Promotions and the Development of Jasper National Park," in *Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park: Studies in Two Centuries of Human History in the Upper Athabasca River Watershed*, ed. I.S. MacLaren, 243–45 (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2007); in the United States, see Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University

of Washington Press, 2002), 30–35, 40–47.

6 Paul Schullery, *Searching for Yellowstone: Ecology and Wonder in the Last Wilderness* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 195–98.

7 National Film Board Archives, Montreal (hereafter "NFBA"). See overview of the film's potential television and theatrical audiences in Helène Dennie to Ken Preston, 4 May 1978, 'Bears and Man' correspondence file.

8 From his present home in Langley, BC, Schmalz acknowledged the important contribution of parks naturalist Larry Halverson, Jasper warden Gordon Anderson, and glaciologist Dr. Ronald Goodman. He singled out Mike Porter, then information officer, later a prominent director in national parks, as key to shepherding the earlier stages of the production and seeing it approved by government. He also acknowledged the invaluable contributions of Kalle Lasn and Barbara Baxendale. Telephone interview, Schmalz to author, 2 July 2010.

9 Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa [hereafter "LAC"] AC. J.R.B. Coleman used the term to describe the possible film project, 21 August 1967, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2130, file U212, pt. 5.

10 Richard White, "From Wilderness to Hybrid Landscapes: The Cultural Turn in Environmental History," *The Historian* 66 (2004): 558. Schullery describes "a widespread public consciousness" of such parks as Yellowstone as "part of a greater ecosystem," probably the most "important conceptual shift in public understanding." *Searching for Yellowstone*, 197.

11 See Mitman, *Reel Nature*, 85–87; D.B. Jones, *Movies and Memoranda: An Interpretive history of the National Film Board* (Toronto: Canadian Film Institute, 1981); Ted Magder, *Canada's Hollywood: The Canadian State and Feature Films* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

12 Mitman, *Reel Nature*, 90–91; on Henry Fairfield Osborn and films, see 101–2.

13 Cynthia Chris, *Watching Wildlife* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), x, 28–34. Ralph H. Lutts, "The Trouble with Bambi: Disney's 'Bambi' and the American Vision of Nature," *Forest and Conservation History* 36, no. 4 (1992): 160–71. In Canada, currents of post-war ideals in film are explored by PearlAnn Reichwein, "Holiday at the Banff School of Fine Arts: The Cinematic Production of Culture, Nature, and Nation in the Canadian Rockies, 1945–1952," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39, no. 1 (2005): 37. Jennifer Cypher and Eric Higgs, "Colonizing the Imagination: Disney's Wilderness Lodge," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 8, no. 4 (1997): 107–30; and Eric Higgs, *Nature by Design: People, Natural Process and Ecological Restoration* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

14 Keri Cronin, "'The Bears are Plentiful and Frequently Good Camera Subjects': Postcards and the Framing of Interspecies Encounters in the Canadian Rockies," *Mosaic* 39, no. 4 (2006): 77–92. On the culturing of wilderness, see I.S. MacLaren, "Cultured Wilderness in Jasper National Park," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 3 (1999): 7–58.

15 Almost with the very official opening of some park areas to autos – in Banff by 1910 – bear feeding followed. By 1921 the *Edmonton Journal* could report that "Feeding Bears is Popular Past Time in Jasper." The 1921 article is cited (n.d.) in "Evolution of Bear Management in the Mountain National Parks." Parks Canada, 2003.

16 Tourists were warned of the potential danger of feeding bears from the very first decades of the century; signs discouraged the practice and the parks superintendent proposed formal educational campaigns as early as 1939; the *National Park Game Act* explicitly prohibited feeding bears by 1951. "Evolution of Bear Management in the Mountain National Parks." Parks Canada, 2003. See the amendments to the regulations respecting game in the national parks of Canada, "to curb the dangerous practice of touching or feeding bears by making this practice an offence under the Game Regulations." LAC, Précis, Nov. 16, 1951; RG 84, a-2-a, vol. 2129, file u212, pt. 2.

17 David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 59–60.

18 Mitman, *Reel Nature*, 97. The tamed wild animal figures centrally in the 1919 film, "Back to God's Country," where a pet bear protects the heroine from villains. For analysis of the film, see Christopher E. Gittings, in, *Canadian National Cinema: Ideology, Difference and Representation* (London: Routledge, 2002), 21–25. Also, Pierre Berton, *Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of our National Image* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1975), 27.

19 See, in this volume, John Sandlos, "Nature's Playgrounds: The Parks Branch and Tourism Promotion in the National Parks, 1911–1929."

20 Mabel B. Williams, *Kootenay National Park and the Banff-Windermere Highway* (Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1928), 32, quoted in George Colpitts, *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 160–63.

21 Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, 3–4, 12–13, 37–39; the individualism of autotourism is suggested in Hall K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 146–47.

22 See Stephen Herrero's documentation of bear habituation along roadsides in *Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance* (Piscataway, NJ: Winchester Press, 1985), 52; and on the 'tolerant black bear,' 92–94.

23 In the U.S., parks officials were facing a similar problem on a much larger scale. Alice Wondrak Biel, *Do (Not) Feed the Bears: The Fitful History of Wildlife and Tourists in Yellowstone* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006), 14–15, 21–23.

24 R.C. Scace, "Man and Grizzly Bear in Banff National Park, Alberta," MA thesis, University of Calgary, 1972, 86.

25 LAC. The postcards were "detrimental" to "any campaign we carry out against the feeding of bears," Superintendent of Banff National Park, D.B. Coombs, 15 May 1959, RG 84 A 2-a, vol. 229 K212, pt. 2.

26 LAC. "[D]rivers of sightseeing buses and taxis are among the worst offenders, in

that on sighting a bear they frequently stop and permit their passengers to alight from the vehicle for the purpose of taking pictures and feeding the bears." H.A. deVeber, 3 November 1951; RG 84, a-2-a, vol. 2129, file u212, pt. 2. For a good example of typical encounters, see "Bear clawing incident," 10 July 1962, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 229, file K212, pt. 2.

27 LAC. J.R.B. Coleman to Johnson, 4 January 1965, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2130, file U212, pt. 5.

28 *Kingston Whig Standard*, 15 July 1959. The cartoon was sent on to the parks director. RG 84, A-2-a-, vol. 2130, file U212, pt. 4.

29 LAC. "Catalogue of Motion Picture Films Distributed by the National Parks Bureau," appearing in National Parks files in 1964, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2063, file U1117-56, pt. 5.

30 NFBA The first to take on the project was Harry Rowed. "Mammals of the Mountain Parks" Memorandum, National Film Board, 29 April 1955, 54–411.

31 NFBA Michael Spencer to Col. Homer S. Robinson, 4 May 1955, 54-411.

32 NFBA Spencer to Robinson, 5 July 1955, 54-411; David Bairstow in Memorandum, 4 June 1956. Ibid. Bird's qualifications are described in Spencer to J.R.B. Coleman, 27 July 1956, 54-411.

33 LAC. Carrack was retained for a summer contract, Spencer to Robinson, 11 June 1956.

34 NFBA, Proposed Title Slide, and Letter, Michael Spencer to H. S. Robinson, 28 May 1957. 54-411. By 12 June, the title was changed to "Mammals of the Mountain Parks."

35 NFBA "Commentary," Wildlife in the Rockies, National Film Board Archives, 54-411.

36 The narrator added a cautionary note: "Visitors should avoid the temptation to make friends, or to feed the bears. They are unpredictable, and sometimes dangerous. Their diet ranges from ant eggs to small deer." NFBA "Commentary" Short Version, Wildlife in the Rockies, 54-411.

37 NFBA "Mammals of the Mountain Parks" objective and description, 54-411.

38 As quoted in Reichwein, "Holiday at the Banff School of Fine Arts," 57.

39 LAC. Robinson to Greenlee, 17 January 1961, NAC, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2062, file U117, pt. 46.

40 LAC. 4 July 1960, Outline, "Away from it all," RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2063, file U117-56-19, pt. 1.

41 LAC. Marsha Porte, Review, 'The Enduring Wilderness,' *Film News*, October 1964, in RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2064, file U117-56-20.

42 LAC. RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2062, reel T-16023; See RG 84, A-2-a-, vol. 2063 U-117-56-20 for George Stirett to Coleman, 22 October 1962.

43 LAC. S.L. Roberts to Chapman, 28 June 1962, ibid.

44 LAC. Mair to Reeve, 24 December 1964. RG 84, A-2-a-, vol. 2063, file U117-56, pt. 5.

45 LAC. Alex Keen memo, same date, ibid.

46 LAC. The expression was made on 10 September 1958 by the superintendent

of Kootenay National Park, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2130, file U212, pt. 3.

47 LAC. Coleman admitted that culling was "one of our most effective measures of control" in a memorandum 22 October 1958, ibid., Supt. G.H.W. Ashley, at Prince Albert, 12 September 1958, was pessimistic: "If we must accept that bears are undesirable in areas of the Park frequented by visitors, it is my belief that the solution to the problem will depend on the application of all of the practical aspects of the suggestions mentioned, including the trapping and destruction of all bears entering such used areas. This will be a continuous seasonal operation, and will eventually result in a very drastic reduction in the bear populations in Parks."

48 LAC. RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 229, T-12954, J 36, Jasper National Park Campground Report, 1963–64.

49 LAC. Western national parks: Cumulative totals for season as at end of October 1962, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2130, file U212, pt. IV.

50 LAC. Mitchell memorandum, 6 September 1962, in RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 229. K.B. Mitchell, in Jasper, stated that "up until 1957 it was a rare occurrence to see a bear [in town] but last year for some unknown reason the bear population suddenly increased and the townsite was invaded by about a dozen bears at one time." 9 September 1958, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2130, file U212, pt. 3.

51 LAC. R.T. Flanagan, 14 September 1967, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2130, file U212, pt. V. It involved a parks worker, Frederick Sturdy, who was mauled at night near the Maligne Lake garbage dump in Jasper in 1965. See Sid Marty, *The Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek*, 30.

52 LAC. R.T. Flanagan, 14 September 1967, RG 84, A-2-a, vol. 2130, file U212, pt. V.

53 LAC. Coleman Letter, 21 August 1967, ibid.

54 LAC. "I am afraid there is no information on the ratio of 'wilderness' bears to 'campground' bears on which I can base a statement. Certainly there are sizeable wilderness areas in all the National Parks of the mountains but I do not know if bears living in these areas would not, on occasion, wander into visitor-use areas." J.R.B. Coleman to Johnson, 4 January 1965, RG 84, A-2-a-, vol. 2130, file U212, pt. 5.

55 Stephen Herrero, "Introduction to the Biology and Management of Bears," in *Bears: Their Biology and Management* (Papers of the International Conference on Bear Research and Management, Calgary, Canada, November 1970), (Morges: International Union, 1972), 11–12.

56 "Bighorn" Theatrical Release Publicity, NFB, 1970. National Film Board of Canada website, http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca.

57 In a note to the author, Schmalz recounted that it "was the avoidable mishandling" of a situation involving a female grizzly and her two cubs by parks wardens that prompted him to propose the film. He had spent time observing and filming the cubs with their mother while they lived "undisturbed" by humans. A few months later, the trio was attracted to a nearby recently opened campground and its easily available food. Wardens then set up a single live trap in which only the

mother ended up being caught. This left two very upset 'orphaned' cubs to wander through the campground. The wardens then shot and killed the cubs. Instead of closing the campground when the grizzly family first appeared, "the campers were given priority and allowed to remain and the bears had to go." Wardens told Schmalz and the public that the cubs had been simply "tranquilized." "Apparently they were afraid of park visitor reaction to the killing. However, it was clear to me that … [o]nce educated, park visitors would understand and tolerate campgrounds or trails closures when bears were present. They would be motivated to be careful with keeping their food and other attractants from bears and to respect their wildness. I knew a good film would help do this." Personal communication, Schmalz to author, 7 July 2010.

58 Herrero described Wilf Ethrington's mauling in *Bear Attacks*, 45–47. The impact of Ethrington's death on parks wardens is well described by Sid Marty, *The Black Grizzly of Whiskey Creek*, 33.

59 NFBA, Schmalz, "Bears and Man Film Report, December 1974," *Bears and Man* correspondence file.

60 Telephone Interview with Bill Schmalz, 18 August 2008; in the rough cuts, Schmalz had included the shot because it showed what happened when tourists fed bears, "the consequences of their actions. But the park service did not want that in the film."

61 Schmalz interview, 18 August 2008: "We had to write for [Dan George]. He was getting on by then, maybe he was getting tired. He would fall asleep in his chair, and it took two or three or four sessions working with him, trying to get him to say his lines. Finally we had him read the script. We both worked on that (the lines that include the spirit of the great bear)."

62 NFBA *Bears and Man* script, undated.

63 Shepard Kretch III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 20–24.

64 Schmalz remembered that teenagers on the scene had initially feared the bears, but, after a half hour of watching other tourists feeding them, they gained their bravado to join in.

65 Communicated to the author, 15 June 2010.

66 Herrero disagreed with the view of those advocating eradication and supported the need for public education, "to be carried out by parks personnel, scientists and wildlife appreciators." Herrero, "Introduction to the Biology and Management of Bears," 13.

67 Tina Loo, "From Wildlife to Wild Places," *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Widllife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 183–209.