DEFENDING NATIONAL PARK IDEALISM:
THE MYSTIQUE

MEMOIRS FROM A CAREER IN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PART 2. 1965–93

by

B. Riley McClelland

2014
"If we are going to succeed in preserving the greatness of the national parks, they must be held inviolate. They represent the last stand of primitive America. If we are going to whittle away at them we should recognize, at the very beginning, that all such whittlings are cumulative and that the end result will be mediocrity. Greatness will be gone" Director Newton B. Drury (1949).
Introduction

Part 1 covered the years 1949–65. In 1965, with the abolishment of my job, the North District Naturalist position in Yellowstone National Park (YNP), we were subject to a directed reassignment. To our great fortune, we were transferred to Glacier National Park (GNP), Montana. If we could not be in YNP, GNP would surely have been our choice (we were not given a choice). We had two weeks to pack and prepare for the move after I completed an Interpretive Methods Training Course at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

Part 2 begins with our move from YNP to GNP, in 1965, and progresses through my retirement from the National Park Service (NPS) in 1991, and from the University of Montana (UM), in 1993.

Mission 66 is often referred to in Part 2, as it was in Part 1. To review the program, on 8 February 1956, NPS Director Conrad Wirth announced a 10-year plan for the national parks. He named the project Mission 66, timing its completion to coincide with the agency's 50th anniversary in 1966. The program's focus was on the improvement of physical facilities in all national parks, including new visitor centers, employee housing, concession facilities, and new roads (Sellars 1997:183). The construction and "development" aspect of Mission 66 was severely criticized by most conservation groups. The program became a great disappointment to employees who believed that the NPS mission should more appropriately be focused on the preservation of natural resources.

Part 2 is dedicated to: Don Marble, attorney, conservationist, and friend; American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Regional Representative Robert Nogler, AFGE Attorney Jim Rosa (who presented our case before a three-judge panel of the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, in Washington, D.C., and AFGE Vice President Morton Davis. These men made possible our challenge of the NPS's illegal action firing me for refusing to transfer from GNP to a meaningless position in the Regional Office, Omaha, Nebraska. We could not have persisted through 13 years (1971–83) of hearings, appeals, court cases, and ultimate vindication without the support of these generous and public-spirited individuals.

To: Dr. Michael Frome, author, teacher, and greenspeaker; Dale Burk, author, investigative journalist, and Harvard Nieman Fellowship awardee; Dr. James Habeck, plant ecologist, teacher, conservationist, and agency "monitor." The numerous newspaper and magazine articles, and letters written by these conservation advocates bolstered our spirit and gave us courage to persist.

To: NPS employees who, in the face of Superintendent Briggle's threats and coercion, testified or wrote letters on my behalf, for the various hearings and appeals. And to Olympic National Park Ranger Jack Hughes, who established the Professional Rangers Organization and the Glacier Defense Fund, and to all those who supported the Fund.
Errata

Wherever Tenth (10th) District Court of Appeals, or U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth (10th) District appears, that reference is incorrect.

It should read consistently: United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.
# PART 2.

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