



Doctrine in its Social and Legal Context, 1880s–1930s
(University of Oklahoma Press, 2000).

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Wise Use Movement

THE WISE USE movement is a conglomeration of grassroots activists and organizations presenting an alternative philosophy regarding resource extraction and access on U.S. public lands. The movement started in the late 1980s by a handful of influentials such as Ron Arnold, Chuck “Rent-a-Riot” Cushman, and Allan Gottlieb. Arnold has been Executive Vice President of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise since 1984, and was honored as the “Father of the Wise Use movement.” His blatant and harsh criticism of environmentalists has made him a veritable spokesperson for the movement.

The authors (Maughan & Nilson) identified the seven predominant strategies of the movement:

- (1) bills itself as the “true” environmental movement; (2) tries to marginalize environmental groups by highlighting the views and actions of the radical fringe of environmentalism, and in other ways promote the perception that environmentalists are atypical of the public; (3) downplays threats to the environment; (4) tries to form coalitions with interests who perceive they have been harmed or are threatened with harm from environmental policies; (5) forms coalitions with groups that share part of the Old West ideology; (6) stresses the economic costs of environmental policy; and (7) creates the perception that the real goal of environmentalists is attainment of authoritarian power.

Overall, the Wise Use movement is regarded by many in and outside of the movement as “anti-environmental.” A quick look at the Wise Use Agenda reveals a philosophy that is in many regards contrary to the policies advocated by environmentalists, conservation organizations, and U.S. federal agencies.

Since there are numerous Wise Use organizations that focus on a myriad of specific issues, the goals stated below are not supported by every Wise Use

group. However, at a Multiple Use Strategy Conference in Reno, Nevada in August 1988 sponsored by Ron Arnold’s Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, Wise Use organizations collaborated on their mutual concerns about resource management. As a result of the conference, Alan Gottlieb compiled *The Wise Use Agenda*, a book detailing the goals of the movement. Note that many of the policies presented were subsequently adopted by the George W. Bush administration. The first 10 goals are stated below:

1. Initiation of a Wise Use public education project by the U.S. Forest Service explaining the wise commodity use of the national forests and all federal lands (to reduce the federal deficit).
2. Immediate wise development of the petroleum resources of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.
3. Advocate the passage of an Inholders Protection Act, giving broader property rights to inholders (persons who own land within the borders or tangent to federal or state lands).
4. Passage of the Global Warming Protection Act that works to remove all decaying matter from national forests to be replaced by young stands of carbon-dioxide absorbing trees.
5. Designate 3 million acres in the Tongass National Forest in Alaska for timber harvest.
6. Open all public lands (including wilderness areas and national parks) to mining and energy production.
7. Assert states’ sovereign rights in matters pertaining to water distribution and regulation.
8. Commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Forest Service by calling attention to the commodity use of forests and the homestead settlement of these areas.
9. Increase harvesting of trees in national forests to promote “rural, timber-dependent community stability” through the Rural Community Stability Act. These sales will be exempt from administrative appeal.
10. Create a national timber harvesting system that allows for greater harvesting of timber on public lands.

Many of the individual groups within the Wise Use movement were at one time funded in part by the oil, off-road (recreation), timber, mining, and ranching industries, as well as anti-environmental

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politicians. In 2001 the Sierra Club reported that Boise Cascade Company (timber company), DuPont (chemical manufacturers), and Chevron (gas and oil company), at one time funded Wise Use movement conferences. However, many of the corporate interests quickly soured on the wise-use groups' overheated rhetoric (and sometimes aggressive tactics) and pulled their funding.

The Blue Ribbon Coalition, the Mountain States Legal Foundation, and the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise are among the more prominent Wise Use groups in the United States

The Mountain States Legal Foundation was founded in 1987 by Clark Collins to advocate for motorized access for off-road vehicles on U.S. public lands. Of note, the Coalition joined in a lawsuit against the U.S. Forest Service over the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The rule was developed following years of scientific evidence, hundreds of public meetings across the country and 1.6 million public comments. Since 2006 the Forest Service has received more than four million comments on the rule, 95 percent in favor. The rule received the largest turnout of public comments in U.S. Forest Service history.

According to their website, the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise (CDFE) is highly interested in environmental issues and "was founded by a group of distinguished businessmen, educators, legislators and students who were deeply concerned about the rollback of 200 years of individual rights and the multitude of restrictions being imposed on America's free enterprise system by big government."

SEE ALSO: Bush, George W. Administration; Industry; Timber Industry.

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Wittfogel, Karl A. (1896–1988)

KARL A. WITTFOGEL, a German historian and prominent sinologist, is most noted for his theory of the hydraulic civilization. Applied by Wittfogel primarily to ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, China, the Indus Valley, and regions in pre-Columbian Latin America, he contended that the strong central political control was necessary to control the source and disposition of water. The degree of centralization within these civilizations was extreme to the point of being despotic. All of the civilizations noted in Wittfogel's studies existed in arid regions, where vast irrigation systems supported extensive agricultural operations, with the exception of China. It is on this point that his theory has been sternly criticized. The prominent China scholar, Joseph Needham, argued that early Chinese governments, although exercising central control, were not despotic. Needham, along with other scholars, also correctly pointed out that the most productive agricultural regions in China are not arid, sources of water are widespread, and water control measures are locally administered.

Wittfogel moved to the United States and became a naturalized citizen in 1939, after enduring two years in a Nazi concentration camp for his vocal attacks on fascism in Germany. He served on the faculty at Columbia University before joining the Far Eastern and Russian Institute at the University of Washington in 1947. It was here that Wittfogel completed his most important book, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (1957), which laid out his schema for the origins of bureaucratic totalitarianism based on the control of a society's water supply.

Wittfogel drew heavily on the works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Max Weber in developing his ideas about early non-European societies and their governmental structure. Weber, in particular,