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Governance, Politics, and Environmentalism in the Age of Mass Recreation: The Campaign Against 'Village Lake Louise'[1]

Abstract

This article examines the successful environmental campaign against a massive ski resort development proposal known as 'Village Lake Louise' that was to be established in the 1970s in Banff National Park, Canada. Using postmaterialism and governance as conceptual lenses, the article presents this campaign as an early example of an environmental conflict that did not centre on primary resource extraction industries, for example forestry, mining, or hydroelectric development. At issue in this case was a growing recreation-based economy that drew on and reflected many of the same postmaterial values and perspectives that informed the environmentalists opposed to the project. In the process, the article demonstrates how the campaign against Village Lake Louise contributed to the institutionalisation of Canada's environmental movement and to the development of a complex framework for environmental governance in that nation.

Keywords: *social movements; postmaterialism; Canada; Banff National Park; Lake Louise;; tourism; Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS); National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC)*

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1 The phrase "Age of Mass Recreation" appears in A. P. Frame: The National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada: A Review of its Purposes and Objectives. Address to the Federal-Provincial Parks Conference, Ottawa, 21 October 1965: 7, Trent University Archives (hereafter TUA), Gavin Henderson fonds, 1887–1991, 93–012, Box 1, Folder 6.

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> "What do you expect to do with all your own money, Mr. President, when the last pieces of the continent have been despoiled by actions such as Imperial Oil are contemplating? Will you eat it?" Arthur R.M. Lower, President of the Quinte Historical Sites and Parkways Association, to the President of Imperial Oil, December 1971[2]

Introduction

Despite being on the bucket list of tourists worldwide, Banff National Park's Lake Louise remains surprisingly undeveloped. For many visitors, their encounter begins at the Visitor Services Centre. Tucked into the forest canopy between the TransCanada Highway on the north side of the Bow Valley and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and Bow River on the valley's south side, it comprises two gas stations, an information centre, and the remarkably quaint Samson Mall, along with a hostel, three hotels, a campground, and accommodation for part of the local population of less than 1000. From there, a road winds upward four kilometres to the lake and the Chateau Lake Louise, a dominant but carefully contained complex established in the late nineteenth century as part of the CPR's chain of luxury hotels. On the other side of the valley is the ski resort—also remarkably quaint given that the ski hill itself boasts no accommodation services whatsoever. All three sites draw crowds at peak seasons throughout the year, but even today, with a city of 1.5 million less than two hours away, it only takes a quick trip along one of the many trails in the region to escape them. From there, the wilderness beckons. Readers well-versed in the cultural contingency of things like 'wilderness' or 'nature' might find that description cheesy, and any serious backwoods explorer today will be equipped with all the trappings of modern life—Gore-tex, cell phone, GPS, maps and passes among them.[3] But it is worth considering how rare such opportunities have become. Just try to find a similar site in Europe, or in many other parts of the world including Canada where the opportunity to commodify wilderness has been met head-on.

It almost was not like this. In February 1972, the internationally-renowned Canadian architect Arthur Erickson unveiled the design his firm had produced for the region: a massive ski resort complex at the base of the hill, complemented by further development at the present site of the Visitors Services Centre. In total, it comprised accommodation for more than 4,000 visitors, housing for 4,000 employees and dependents, and a full

2 Arthur R.M. Lower: Letter from Arthur R.M. Lower, in: Park News: The Journal of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada: Special Issue on Village Lake Louise, March 1972, p. 14.

3 On the intersection of wilderness and culture see William Cronon: The Trouble with Wilderness: or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature, in: Environmental History 1:1 (1996), pp. 7–28.

complement of commercial and social infrastructure.[4] Commissioned by development partners Imperial Oil and local ski hill operator Lake Louise Lifts Ltd. in response to a call for proposals from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's National and Historic Parks Branch, "Village Lake Louise" was the answer to dreams of development, dollars, and decades of hodge-podge expansion. By the standards even of critics, this was a world-class initiative. But it was also a problem, given that the project rested within the borders of Canada's oldest and equally world-class national park, and was at odds with the Parks Branch's preservation mandate. Were we simply to point to the careful observation of parks policy to explain the demise of Village Lake Louise, however, we would miss much. What prevented the federal government and its private partners from establishing a large-scale resort complex at Lake Louise reminiscent of Whistler, Aspen, or Chamonix was a campaign that drew energy from dozens of non-governmental organisations and thousands of individuals. In itself, an analysis of the campaign against Village Lake Louise has much to offer activists facing similar challenges today. As a conflict that galvanised environmentalists across Canada and internationally, it ranks alongside both the Clayoquot Sound protest on Vancouver Island in 1993 and Greenpeace's Vancouver-based Amchitka campaign of the early 1970s.[5] Given the prominent role of multiple environmental NGOs including a number of new and explicitly 'national' organisations, the degree to which the issue captured the attention of people and media across Canada, and the ways in which it highlighted many of the environmental tensions that had come to the forefront across North America since the end of the Second World War, one might even consider it to be the nation's first truly national environmental campaign.

Embedded in that argument are two more. First, the campaign against Village Lake Louise contributes to our understanding of the long history of environmental governance in Canada. In recent years, Canadian environmental historiography has done much to de-centre the state and to promote a better understanding of the role of civil society in environmental matters in ways that complement discussion among political and social movement scholars of the transformation from government to governance in political practice and analysis.[6] This is immediately apparent in the sometimes-hostile response to

4 Erickson/Massey Architects and Planners: Village Lake Louise, 1971, pp. 37, 56; Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development: Departmental Statement: Lake Louise Planning Area Banff National Park, Ottawa 1972, p. 5.

5 On Greenpeace see Frank Zelko: Make It A Green Peace!: The Rise of Countercultural Environmentalism, New York 2013; on Clayoquot Sound see the collection by Warren Magnusson/Karena Shaw (eds.): A Political Space: Reading the Global through Clayoquot Sound, Montreal and Kingston 2002.

6 On the transformation from 'government' to 'governance' see for example Mark Bevir/R. A. W. Rhodes: The State as Cultural Practice, Oxford 2010; Vasudha Chhotray/Gerry Stoker: Governance Theory and Practice: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach, Basingstoke 2009; Jon

Janet Foster's pioneering 1978 study *Working for Wildlife*. Itself a response to a comment from the influential American environmental historian Roderick Nash that Canada's environmental movement lagged fifty years behind that of the US, Foster's study rightly pointed to the longstanding role of the federal civil service in the development of wildlife conservation in the nation.[7] In doing so, however, it also drew criticism from many environmental historians who followed, on the one hand for presenting a celebratory picture of the state, on the other for leaving out the provinces and civil society. Those gaps are now being filled by more subtle and wide-ranging interpretations of Canada's environmental movement, its relationship to the state, and the trans-national and global contexts in which it has long been embedded.[8] As part of filling that gap, Village Lake Louise presents a context in which long-established strategies familiar to an older generation of environmentalists were only just beginning to merge with newer forms of activism—a bridge between what Greenpeace historian Frank Zelko has described as "middle-aged Sierra Club hikers in corduroys and cardigans" and a generation more directly embedded in the counterculture contexts of the 1960s and 1970s.[9]

Second, the campaign against Village Lake Louise presents an opportunity to revisit the relationship of postmaterialism to the environmental movement and to the evolution of environmental conflict. Frequently, postmaterialism has been employed to explain environmental concern as a product of the world's wealthier nations. Numerous studies have problematised that connection, however, pointing to the vibrancy of the

Pierre/B. Guy Peters: Governance, Politics, and the State, New York 2000; Margaret E. Keck/Kathryn Sikkink: Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics, Ithaca and London 1998.

7 Janet Foster: Working for Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada, 2nd ed., Toronto 1998, p. 222.

8 On environmental governance in Canada during this period see Dean Bavington: Managed Annihilation: An Unnatural History of the Newfoundland Cod Collapse, Vancouver 2010; Darcy Ingram: Governments, Governance, and the "Lunatic Fringe": The Resources for Tomorrow Conference and the Evolution of Environmentalism in Canada, in: International Journal of Canadian Studies 51 (2015), pp. 69–96; Gerald Killan/George Warecki: The Algonquin Wildlands League and the Emergence of Environmental Politics in Ontario, 1965–1974, in: Environmental History Review 16:4 (1992), pp. 1–27; Tina Loo: States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century, Vancouver 2006; Alan MacEachern: Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935–1970, Montreal and Kingston 2001; Ryan O'Connor: The First Green Wave: Pollution Probe and the Origins of Environmental Activism in Ontario, Vancouver 2015. For a comparison of Canada to the United States see John Sandlos: Nature's Nations: The Shared Conservation History of Canada and the USA, in: International Journal of Environmental Studies 70:3 (2013), pp. 358–371; Alan MacEachern: Canada's Best Idea? The Canadian and American National Park Services in the 1910s, in: Adrian Howkins/Jared Orsi/Mark Fiege (eds.): National Parks Beyond the Nation: Global Perspectives on "America's Best Idea", Norman, OK 2016, pp. 51–67.

9 Frank Zelko: Make it a Green Peace!, p. 5.

environmental movement in societies around the world regardless of their postmaterial status.[10] In the case of Canada's mountain parks, it is tempting to pass over such subtleties. Indeed, as Canada's oldest and most famous national park, long shielded from the kind of resource extraction activities prevalent in so much of that nation, Banff in particular is rife with contestations that speak to the clash of postmaterial environmental values and the resource sector.[11] On turning to that park's Lake Louise region in the 1960s and 1970s, however, one finds this model a poor fit. Instead, we find in the controversy over Village Lake Louise one set of postmaterial values in conflict with another. In the same way that preservation-minded environmentalists reflected a distinctly postmaterial desire to protect the Lake Louise region from development, many of the project's proponents reflected values associated with their society's increasingly postmaterial character—among them health, recreation, leisure, and aesthetic values—in their identification with the wilderness environment. As one prominent Canadian environmentalist explained in 1970, many people were "beginning to look on facilities-oriented recreation as the same kind of threat to the landscape of Banff and other national parks, as lumbering, mining, and similar enterprises were in the past."[12] Those dynamics speak to an important shift in the relationship of wilderness recreation to wilderness protection. Across North America, the

10 Ronald Inglehart: Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society, Princeton 1990. For critiques see Ramachandra Guha/J. Martinez-Alier: The Environmentalism of the Poor, in: Ramachandra Guha/J. Martinez-Alier: Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South, London 1997, pp. 3–21; Riley E. Dunlap/Richard York: The Globalization of Environmental Concern and the Limits of the Postmaterialist Values Explanation, in: Sociological Quarterly 49 (2008), pp. 529–563; Mohamed M. Mostafa: Wealth, Postmaterialism and Consumers' Pro-environmental Intentions: a Multilevel Analysis Across 25 Nations, in: Sustainable Development 21 (2013), pp. 385–399. For a broader consideration of the intersection of environmental values and environmental politics see Jennifer Clapp and Peter Dauvergne: Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment, Cambridge, MA 2005.

11 See PearlAnn Reichwein: "Hands Off Our National Parks": The Alpine Club of Canada and Hydro-Development Controversies in the Canadian Rockies, 1922–1930, in: Journal of the Canadian Historical Association 6 (1996), pp. 129–155; Theodore Binnema/Melanie Niemi: "Let the Line Be Drawn Now": Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park in Canada, in: Environmental History 11 (2006), pp. 724–750; Christopher Armstrong/Matthew Evenden/H. V. Nelles: The River Returns: An Environmental History of the Bow, Montreal and Kingston 2009; Christopher Armstrong/H. V. Nelles: Wilderness and Waterpower: How Banff National Park Became a Hydroelectric Storage Reservoir, Calgary 2013; E. J. Hart: J. B. Harkin: Father of Canada's National Parks, Edmonton 2011. See also Susan E. Markham-Starr: W. J. S. Walker and the Canadian National Parks Association: Protectors of Canadian Leisure Interests, Leisure/Loisir 32:2 (2008), pp. 649–680.

12 J. Gordon Nelson: Man and Landscape Change in Banff National Park: A National Park Problem in Perspective, in: J. G. Nelson/R. C. Scace (eds.): Canadian Parks in Perspective, Montreal 1970, pp. 63–96, p. 88.

protection of wilderness through what evolved into the national parks framework during the nineteenth and early twentieth century went hand in hand with recreation-based tourism. Put simply, recreational development was oftentimes inseparable from early understandings of wilderness preservation, to the point that it stood not only as essential infrastructure that enabled nature-oriented visitors to better encounter those spaces, but as a viable economic alternative to resource exploitation that was in some cases promoted vigorously by state and corporate interests.[13] That understanding, however, developed when the leisure time that permitted such excursions was a luxury and the key means of transportation to and around such areas were trains and horses. In long-developed tourist sites such as Niagara Falls, tensions over recreational development were already of long standing, and by the middle of the twentieth century, the protection/recreation equation was proving problematic in places such as Banff National Park on numerous fronts, from the introduction of the automobile and roads infrastructure that fragmented wilderness spaces to complementary services—accommodation, gas, food, and entertainment—that catered to the growing number of parks visitors.[14] As governments both in Canada and the United States looked to develop infrastructure to meet these growing demands, they found increasingly that recreational development came up against a growing perception of the national parks as pristine wilderness spaces to be protected from all but the most basic forms of development necessary to experience that environment. Such considerations steer discussion of Village Lake Louise in the direction taken by scholars such as Paul S. Sutter on the growing incongruence between environmental recreation and wilderness protection that underpinned the development of wilderness advocacy in the United States.[15] Making sense of the Village Lake Louise controversy thus involves recognising the intersection of a variety of postmaterial considerations now articulated routinely

13 This tension is discussed in its US context in detail in John C. Miles: Wilderness in National Parks: Playground or Preserve, Seattle 2009. In Canada see Leslie Bella: Parks for Profit, Montreal 1987; Paul Kopas: Taking the Air: Ideas and Change in Canada's National Parks, Vancouver 2007.

14 Patricia Jasen: Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790–1914, Toronto 1995. See also Leslie Bella: Parks for Profit; Paul Kopas: Taking the Air.

15 Paul S. Sutter: Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement, Seattle 2002. On the evolution of tension between preservation and recreation see John C. Miles: Wilderness in National Parks. A wide body of related literature now exists on the merits and tensions of nature tourism or 'eco-tourism', a recent critical discussion of which can be found in Robert Fletcher/Katja Neves: Contradictions in Tourism: The Promise and Pitfalls of Ecotourism as a Manifold Capitalist Fix, in: Environment and Society: Advances in Research 3 (2012), pp. 60–77. For discussions of ecotourism in Canada see Timothy W. Luke: On the Political Economy of Clayoquot Sound: The Uneasy Transition from Extractive to Attractive Models of Development, in: Warren Magnusson/Karena Shaw (eds.): A Political Space: Reading the Global through Clayoquot Sound, Montreal and Kingston 2002, pp. 91–112; Mark C. J. Stoddart/Elahe Nezhadhossein: Is Nature-Oriented Tourism a Pro-Environmental Practice?: Examining Tourism-Environmentalism Alignments

in debates over the environmental impacts of tourism and recreational development as well as the thoroughly material, economic interests that lay behind the postmaterial consumption of Canada's Rocky Mountains wilderness.

Village Lake Louise—Why and Why Not

The unveiling of Erickson's design marked a high point in the federal government's work with the private sector to develop recreational infrastructure in Canada's Rocky Mountains parks. As such, it is emblematic of the development agenda that had taken shape throughout North America's parks systems. Though established in 1885, Banff National Park had maintained a relatively low profile during its first decades. After the Second World War, however, things changed dramatically. Fed by growing levels of affluence, urbanisation, and the automobile, North Americans turned to the continent's national parks in droves, and Canada's mountain parks were no exception. Between 1950 and 1967, visitor numbers to Banff increased fourfold to upwards of two million, and numbers in the adjacent mountain parks, once negligible by comparison to those of Banff, were catching up quickly.[16] By the early 1950s, the Parks Branch was concerned over the inadequacy of its mountain parks infrastructure to meet this demand. In similar fashion to the United States' Mission 66, the ten-year modernisation plan set out by the National Park Service in 1956 to meet the growing recreational demands of the postwar era, it responded with a series of plans to develop recreational infrastructure in the parks.[17] Included in those plans was the expansion of downhill skiing facilities, which the branch hoped would promote year-round use of the parks and would thus level the boom-bust fluctuation between the busy summer months and the rest of the year. To that end, the Parks Branch, the federal government, and the region's business community entertained the possibility that Canada might host the Winter Olympics, first in Calgary in 1966, and when that bid failed, in a subsequent bid to hold them in Banff in 1972. The federal government's 1965 report *Winter Recreation and the National Parks* spoke in similar terms to the federal government's winter objectives,[18] which matched neatly with those of Lake

Through Discourse Networks and Intersectoral Relationships, in: The Sociological Quarterly 57:3 (2016), pp. 544–568.

16 J. Gordon Nelson: Man and Landscape Change, p. 64; Leslie Bella: Parks for Profit; Paul Kopas: Taking the Air; C. J. Taylor: Banff in the 1960s: Divergent Views of the National Park Ideal, in: Claire Elizabeth Campbell (ed.): A Century of Parks Canada, 1911–2011, Calgary 2011, pp. 133–152. See also Rodney Touche: Brown Cows, Sacred Cows: A True Story of Lake Louise, Hanna, AB 1990.

17 Ethan Carr: Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma, Amherst, MA 2007.

18 Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources: Winter Recreation and the National Parks: a Management Policy and a Development Program, Ottawa 1965.

Louise Lifts Ltd., a subsidiary of the Ski Club of the Canadian Rockies that had been considering establishing a year-round mountain ski resort since it gained the rights to develop ski facilities in the region in 1946.[19]

Understanding those events helps to situate the conflict surrounding Village Lake Louise within the evolving landscape of parks and environmental politics in North America. As part of its planning, the Parks Branch was looking for a partner to develop a Visitor Services Centre, not at Lake Louise itself, but in the Bow Valley corridor, which was already home to the railway, the TransCanada highway, and a limited range of facilities. Referred to as the lower Lake Louise site, it is located midway between Lake Louise to the south and the ski hill on the valley's northern slopes. During the mid-1960s the federal government floated various plans for the site, but fears of financial insecurity connected to the parks' leasehold system of land tenure and the seasonal nature of parks tourism made it difficult to find a private partner. It finally succeeded in March 1970, when it signed a letter of intention with Village Lake Louise Ltd., a consortium that linked Lake Louise Lifts Ltd. to Imperial Oil, a subsidiary of the New Jersey-based Standard Oil.[20] Upon its establishment, Village Lake Louise Ltd. set to work on a proposal far more expansive than anything the federal government had entertained. By January 1971 Village Lake Louise Ltd. had announced that it was working on two complementary developments: one at the lower site; the other at the base of the ski hill on the Whitehorn parking lot, which the federal government had built in anticipation of a successful Olympic bid.

As a tourist resort, 'Village Lake Louise' met and in many cases exceeded expectations (see figures 1–3). Both sites were to undergo a complete overhaul. At the lower site (figure 1), existing development would give way to a Visitor Services Centre comprising 1300 visitor beds, 1200 beds for staff and dependents, and complementary services and infrastructure. At the upper site (figures 2 and 3), where no significant development had occurred to date, plans were even more extensive. There, future visitors were to find an array of buildings up to twelve stories tall, home to 3000 visitor beds, 2500 beds for staff, and 160,000 square feet of commercial space for everything from health, postal, and municipal services to restaurants, movie theatres and discotheques. Use of a pedestrian theme to frame both sites, active discouragement of automobiles, and emphasis on containing development spoke of the project's progressive character.[21] Complementing all of this was the expansion of the ski hill, which would more than double in capacity

19 Robert C. Scace: The Visitor Services Centre and Developments at Lake Louise, Banff National Park, in: Park News: The Journal of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, July 1971, pp. 15–26; See also Rodney Touche: Brown Cows, Sacred Cows.

20 Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development: Departmental Statement: Lake Louise Planning Area Banff National Park, Ottawa 1972, pp. 5–6

21 Erickson/Massey Architects and Planners: Village Lake Louise.

in order to serve 8,500 day-users.[22] Considering the fact that Chateau Lake Louise was not winterised at this point, and that the total number of visitor beds at the lower site amounted to about 200, this was a dramatic change.[23] As its promoters noted, Village Lake Louise would propel ski tourism in the region to world-class levels.

Figure 1: Village Lake Louise: Architect's conception of the Lower Village site. The road to the left crosses the Bow River and winds up the south side of the Bow Valley to Lake Louise; on the right, the road winds up the valley's north side to the Upper Village site. Source: Erickson/Massey Architects and Planners, Village Lake Louise, 1971, p. 49. Courtesy of the Canadian Centre for Architecture. From the Arthur Erickson fonds, Gift of Arthur Erickson, Architect. © CCA, Montréal.

22 Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development: Departmental Statement: Lake Louise Planning Area Banff National Park, p. 9.

23 Erickson/Massey Architects and Planners: Village Lake Louise, p. 12.

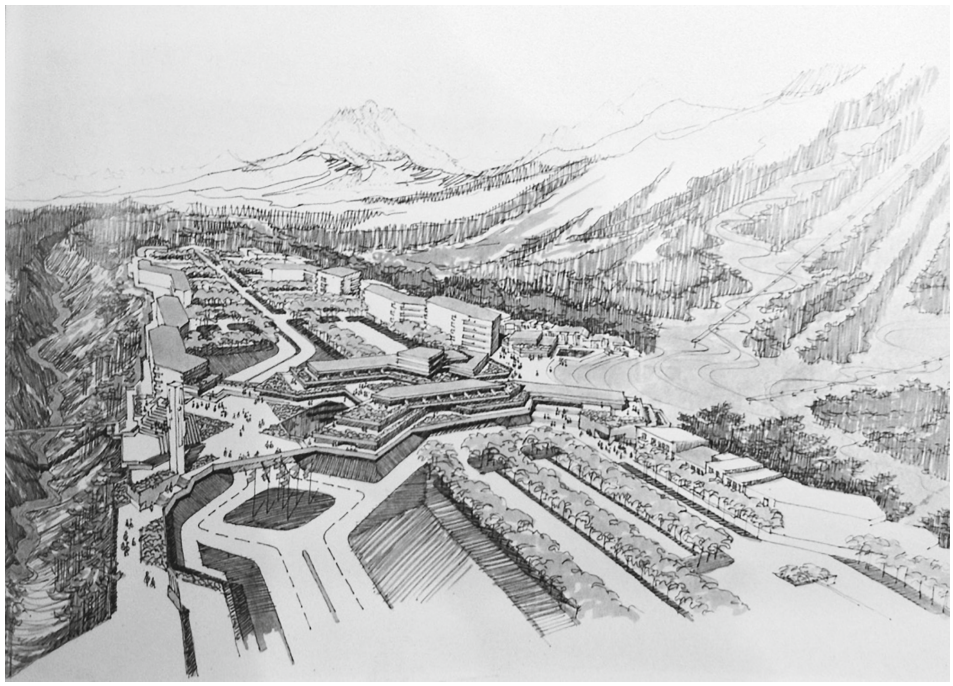

Figure 2: Village Lake Louise. Architect's conception of the Upper Village site. The ski hill appears on the slopes immediately to the right of the development. Source: Erickson/Massey Architects and Planners, Village Lake Louise, 1971, p. 79. Courtesy of the Canadian Centre for Architecture. From the Arthur Erickson fonds, Gift of Arthur Erickson, Architect. © CCA, Montréal.

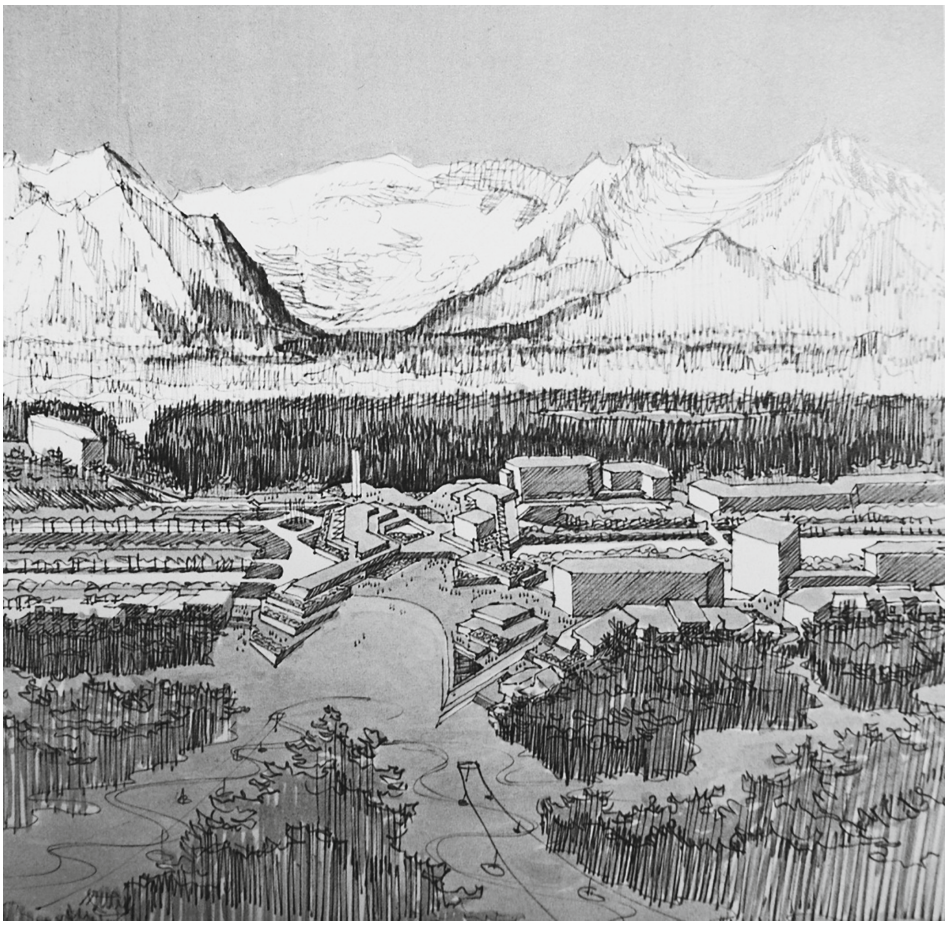

Figure 3: Village Lake Louise: looking south from partway up the ski slope. Lake Louise is located between the mountains just left of centre; the proposed Visitor Service Centre (not depicted) is located in the valley floor between the lake and the ski resort complex. Source: Erickson/Massey Architects and Planners, Village Lake Louise, 1971, p. 88. Courtesy of the Canadian Centre for Architecture. From the Arthur Erickson fonds, Gift of Arthur Erickson, Architect. © CCA, Montréal.

But not everyone was happy with the direction taken by the Parks Branch. Though not as extensive as it was in the United States, where wilderness preservation was a priority for numerous non-governmental organisations and had recently been emphasised in a major way through passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964, the preservation ethos was relatively well established in Canada.[24] Represented in institutional form by a wide range of non-governmental organisations, that ethos took on new dimensions during the 1960s through the formation of a number of national environmental NGOs.[25] For many of these organisations, further development by the Parks Branch contradicted what had come to be seen as a preservation mandate that outweighed such interests, as outlined in the Parks Act of 1930:

> The Parks are hereby dedicated to the people of Canada for their benefit, education and enjoyment, subject to the provisions of this Act and Regulations, and such Parks shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.[26]

During the 1960s, these organisations found multiple opportunities to challenge the Branch's policies and plans. As a result, by the time the Village Lake Louise project came to the forefront of the debate over parks policy, opponents had spent considerable time studying the various ideas in circulation, developing their arguments, and networking on the issue.

The key NGO to respond to Village Lake Louise was the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (NPPAC), now known as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society or CPAWS. It was established in 1963, and was one of three explicitly national environmental NGOs that emerged from the 1961 *Resources for Tomorrow* Conference and the frustration voiced there over the lack of state leadership on environmental issues.[27] Due to its focus on parks advocacy, the NPPAC was an obvious contender for a leadership role in this area. Indeed, its co-founders had been working for years on environmental issues in other organisations, and had direct experience of the various concerns that had been taking shape in North America since the end of the Second World War, including

24 On the American context see James Morton Turner: The Promise of Wilderness: American Environmental Politics Since 1964, Seattle 2012.

25 Darcy Ingram: Governments, Governance, and the "Lunatic Fringe"; Gerald Killan/George Warecki: The Algonquin Wildlands League and the Emergence of Environmental Politics in Ontario. On the growing importance of transnational advocacy networks see Margaret E. Keck/Kathryn Sikkink: Activists Beyond Borders.

26 An Act Respecting National Parks, Statutes of Canada, 20–21 George V, 1930, c. 33, s. 4.

27 The other two are the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Federation, both established in 1962. See Darcy Ingram: Governments, Governance, and the "Lunatic Fringe".

not only wilderness preservation but also pesticides, pollution, urban sprawl, nuclear technology, and agricultural issues.[28] As such, they were well informed on the politics of postwar environmentalism and were eager to enter the debate over parks policy. That debate quickly became a training ground as the association balanced internal tensions over its direction, mandate, and tenuous financial state. By the time NPPAC President A. P. Frame declared in 1969 that the association was ready to focus less on finances and more on policy, the NPPAC had weighed in on two Olympic bids; submitted numerous parks reports; participated in governmental advisory boards on rural development, parks policy, and northern resources; networked with its NGO counterparts to put forward common policies on the future of the nation's national parks; and partnered with the University of Calgary to host a week-long conference, *The Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow*. Heeding the warning from NPPAC trustee and well-known Canadian environmentalist Ian McTaggart-Cowan over its conciliatory approach to the 1972 Olympics ("you cannot give an inch while there is any chance at all of winning"), it also shed some of its more conservative and tourism-oriented voices as it adopted an increasingly adversarial stance on key issues.[29] By this time, the NPPAC had begun to expand via the establishment of NPPAC chapters, first in Edmonton in 1969, and soon after in Calgary/Banff and elsewhere. In addition to shifting the NPPAC's centre of gravity away from Toronto, those new branches brought forward a younger cohort who challenged even further the NPPAC's more conservative supporters. Encouraged by the association's activities, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development responded in 1971 with a 10,000 dollar grant. The NPPAC immediately hired media consultant Walter Gray, a veteran journalist well-versed on environmental matters who did considerable work during the 1960s on the *Resources for Tomorrow* Conference, and tasked him to raise the NPPAC's profile and drive up membership.[30]

As such, the NPPAC was prepared to assume a strong position during a series of public hearings to address the federal government's recently developed mountain parks provisional master plans, which were to be held in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver

28 The classic test on postwar environmentalism is Samuel P. Hays: Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955–1985, Cambridge 1987. For an overview of environmental politics in the US in 1970 see Adam Rome: The Genius of Earth Day: How a 1970 Teach-In Unexpectedly Made the first Green Generation, New York 2013.

29 Letter, Ian McTaggart-Cowan to Gavin Henderson, 3 March 1996, TUA, NPPAC (National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada) fonds, 1952–1978, 86–002, Box 1, Folder 6. An example of this tension can be found in the NPPAC's related discussion of the place of tourism in Banff National Park. See Memorandum to all Trustees, 7 February 1966, TUA, NPPAC fonds, 1952–1978, 86–002, Box 1, Folder 6.

30 National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, Report of the Executive Director, 12 November 1971, TUA, Gavin Henderson fonds, 1887–1991, 93–012, Box 1, Folder 6.

in April 1971.[31] Part of a series of national parks hearings held across the country, they offered an opportunity to reflect on over a decade of policy initiatives, and the response was considerable. Together the NPPAC and many other environmental NGOs came forward to address issues including zoning, road construction, wildlife management, and recreation infrastructure. Most were critical not just of the plans' various features but also of the development ethos behind them, and the relatively open character of the hearings invited considerable commentary. In all, the 1971 mountain parks hearings produced 3500 written pages of materials including more than 300 briefs, many of which came from environmental NGOs including the NPPAC, the Audubon Society of Canada, the Alpine Club of Canada, the Sierra Club of British Columbia, Voice of Women, the YMCA, and others representing naturalists, hikers, union members, sportsmen, and biologists. The results were impressive. In response to those materials, the federal government revisited its zoning system for the mountain parks in order to better emphasise ecological parameters; it revised its plans for road construction and dropped a number of proposed roads altogether; and it abandoned plans for three Visitor Services Centres at Pocahontas (Jasper National Park), Poboktan (Jasper National Park), and Saskatchewan River Crossing (Banff National Park), leaving only that of Lake Louise.[32]

By this point, rumours regarding the future of Lake Louise had been circulating for some time, but little concrete information was available. During a March 1971 meeting in preparation for the mountain parks hearings that April, NPPAC stalwarts outlined a plan to initiate a public confrontation over Village Lake Louise. The key component of that plan was to request during the April hearings that the federal government hold a separate public hearing specifically on Lake Louise. From there, the group established a series of objectives through which they set out to frame the issue, including a history of the events behind Village Lake Louise, articles in the NPPAC journal *Park News* and elsewhere, illustrations of the proposed development, and related lobbying and media activities. It also set out to secure the help of a law firm to explore potential legal obstacles to the project. As it did so, it thought through carefully the grounds on which the NPPAC would build its case. Alongside the Parks Act's preservation mandate, the group decided to focus on issues of due process, government arrogance, and corporate control. In addition to highlighting Village Lake Louise as a state and industry-based approach to development that lacked public consultation and was thus fundamentally anti-democratic, this focus allowed the NPPAC to maintain a respectable distance from the more emotion-laden arguments that were emerging in other organisations and in

31 The hearings took place in Calgary on 19–20 April 1971 (Calgary), 22–23 April (Edmonton), and 26 April (Vancouver).

32 Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National and Historic Parks Branch: Interim Statement on Decisions Relating to Zoning, Roads and Visitor Services Centres Reached as a Result of Public Hearings on Banff, Jasper, Yoho, and Kootenay National Parks, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Banff, AB, 13.112/C16npvi.

public discourse—in particular anti-American sentiments connected to Imperial Oil's American parent company Standard Oil and charges of elitism stemming from the plan to sell condominium units as part of the project. Behind all of this was a strong sense that the NPPAC was at the centre of the campaign. "The basic principle," the group acknowledged, "is to lead in this issue but not in an exclusive way."[33] Its request that April succeeded, and the federal government announced soon after the mountain parks hearings that a public hearing focused exclusively on Village Lake Louise would be held in Calgary in March 1972, before which it would make detailed information on the proposed Visitor Services Centre available to the public.[34]

"For Sale—Our National Parks": Contesting Village Lake Louise[35]

Upon that announcement, both sides moved quickly into campaign mode. On the one side, promoters rallied public support by contacting downhill skiing associations, local businesses, hotels, chambers of commerce, and other institutions connected to tourism and the ski industry. Many of these supporters were already well aware of the issues at stake, and had previously supported the two failed Olympic bids that environmental groups had criticised. Their efforts to bolster support for the project included use of leaflets, briefing templates, and an exhaustive list of rebuttals to employ against the project's detractors. Through that work and in the media, supporters repeatedly framed environmentalists as a radical minority against which voices in favour of the project needed to be heard. They also challenged the parks branch's preservationist mandate by calling attention to the park's tourism-oriented origins, and in the spirit of that original mandate underscored the potential for Village Lake Louise to deliver ski tourism opportunities comparable to those of the United States and Europe. As they did so, promoters pointed specifically to the Bow Valley corridor as an area long developed for tourism and an essential transportation route through the Rockies. Far removed, they insisted, from the wilderness identity celebrated by preservationists, the Bow Valley was an ideal site for

33 Notes on Meeting Re Village Lake Louise, 15 March 1971, TUA, NPPAC fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–009, Box 2, Folder 2.

34 Statement by J. G. Nelson, President, National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada at a Press Conference in Calgary, Alta, 13 April 1971, TUA, NPPAC fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–009, Box 2, Folder 4.

35 The phrase comes from the title of a magazine article by Roger Olmsted/Stephen Herrero/Richard Pharis: For Sale: Our National Parks, unidentified magazine clipping, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, ACC fonds, 13.112/Ol5f/Pam. The same article ran as: Downhill at Lake Louise, in: Sierra Club Bulletin, April 1972, pp. 23–26.

further recreational development. The result was an image of the project's detractors as a small but vocal group of radical, elitist preservationists out of touch with the park's history, ignorant of the project's limited ecological impacts, and unwilling to acknowledge the tremendous recreational and economic benefits it offered.[36]

On the other side, the NPPAC and other environmental organisations found common ground in their opposition to Village Lake Louise. In some cases—the fish and game clubs are an excellent example—political activism had long been part of their operations. For others, Village Lake Louise was transformative, as it brought a political edge to numerous hiking, birdwatching, and naturalists' clubs not otherwise inclined toward advocacy work. This was the case even for some of the nation's larger NGOs, for example the Alpine Club of Canada. Established in 1906, it had addressed conservation issues in the past, but primarily with regard to resource exploitation. Given members' direct interest in recreation, much of the club's energy had long centred on recreational development, and well into the post-war era it remained an advocate of improved access to the mountain parks. But by the 1960s tension over the impacts of recreational infrastructure were surfacing among members, and in light of Village Lake Louise and other parks policy developments the club began incorporating environmental advocacy into its science, exploration, and recreation objectives. Such was the impact of this shift that by 1970 one member examining the political landscape that had taken shape in North America with regard to wilderness preservation and other environmental issues observed that the club "could fight our own Canadian battles and not have Canadians rely on such American organisations as the Sierra Club."[37] As for the NPPAC, it put everything it could into the campaign. By November 1971, the NPPAC's March meeting had morphed into the Village Lake Louise Task Force, under the leadership of task force chair and University of Calgary professor Stephen Herrero.[38] Though still awaiting the official release of plans for Village Lake Louise, it nevertheless set to work, as NPPAC Executive Director Gavin Henderson explained, "to throw a monkey wrench" into the project.[39] With the

36 These sentiments run throughout NPPAC-related materials held at Trent University Archives. See for example Keith Shepherd (Assistant to the General Manager, Village Lake Louise Ltd.): Form Letter for Distribution (Dear Skier), February 1972, TUA, Gavin Henderson Fonds, 93–012, Box 1, Folder 1; W. Struan Robertson: Letter (Dear Osler Bluff Member), 9 February 1972, TUA, Gavin Henderson Fonds, 93–012, Box 1.

37 Annual General Meeting, 3 August 1970, pp. 9–10, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Alpine Club of Canada Fonds, M200, AC 304–8. On a previous period of political activity by the club see PearlAnn Reichwein: "Hands Off Our National Parks". For a history of the club and its links to environmental considerations see PearlAnn Reichwein: Climber's Paradise: Making Canada's Mountain Parks, 1906–1974, Edmonton 2014.

38 National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, Report of the Executive Director, 12 November 1971, pp. 10–12, TUA, Gavin Henderson Fonds, 93–012, Box 1, Folder 6.

39 Letter, Gavin Henderson to Robert Whitterick, 14 April 1972, TUA, NPPAC fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–009, Box 2, Folder 3.

guidance of NPPAC media consultant Walter Gray, it put together a communications kit to organise the campaign and began to work closely with the NPPAC's regional chapters in Edmonton and Calgary/Banff, which brought a younger cohort with considerable energy and its own media savvy to the campaign.[40] Soon the NPPAC's various chapters were peppering media outlets across the country with press releases, editorials, and articles. At the same time, the association set to work behind the scenes to gather support from NGOs in Canada and abroad. As part of this work, it partnered with the Canadian Nature Federation (formerly the Canadian Audubon Society; now Nature Canada), the Algonquin Wildlands League, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Pollution Probe and others to hire the newly established Environmental Law Association to prepare a report on potential legal obstacles to the project and to submit a brief during the public hearings.[41] On the political front, it lobbied politely but intently key federal players, most notably Jean Chretien, then Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, with whom the verdict on Village Lake Louise ultimately rested.

The NPPAC also took a close look at Village Lake Louise's internal dynamics, and identified the potential to undermine one of the project's two supporters in particular. "Working on the sensitivities of Imperial Oil and its public image is good strategy," was how Gray explained this approach, having weighed the company's purely financial stake in the project, its vulnerability to public criticism, and the tarnished environmental record of the oil industry in general.[42] Other organisations took a similar stance, denouncing an oil company's investment in a national park as an ill fit and lamenting the corporation's American identity. Among the supporters to assist the NPPAC on this front was the prominent Canadian nationalist, historian, Queen's University professor, and forest industry expert Arthur Lower. In December 1971, Lower wrote a lengthy letter in his capacity as president of the Bay of Quinte Historical Society to the president of Imperial Oil. Published the following March in a special edition of the NPPAC's *Park News*, it condemned the Village Lake Louise project as "a desecration," "vandalism," and "a very poor piece of public relationship."[43] Many people clearly shared Lower's sentiments. By

40 Letter, Walter Gray to J. Gordon Nelson, 23 November 1971, TUA, NPPAC fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–099, Box 2, Folder 1.

41 Letter, Robin Fraser to the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 12 May 1972, TUA, NPPAC Fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–009, Box 2, Folder 3; Environmental Law Association: Village Lake Louise: The Legality of the Development: Request for Reference of the Scheme to Federal Court of Canada, 1972, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, 13.111 E58 Pam. Additional partners included the Canadian Society of Wildlife and Fisheries Biologists, the Committee for an Independent Canada, the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, the Canadian Environmental Law Research Foundation, the Alberta Federation of Labour, and the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

42 Letter, Walter Gray to J. Gordon Nelson, 23 November 1971, TUA, NPPAC fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–009, Box 2, Folder 1.

43 Arthur R. M. Lower: Letter from Arthur R. M. Lower, p. 14.

early 1972, in what amounted to the edgiest move it made in the campaign, the NPPAC had Imperial Oil customers across Canada cutting up their Esso credit cards and sending the company the pieces, along with letters protesting its involvement in the project.[44]

Crowning it all was the public hearing on 9–11 March 1972. As that date approached, the NPPAC and its various branches prepared a series of briefs and presentations, all the while guiding likeminded individuals and organisations on the content of their submissions. Knowing many participants had little experience in such events, it also advised would-be speakers on their behaviour at the hearing, emphasising the need to stand their ground: "Don't be afraid; Be sincere; you do not have to be an expert; Never apologize for what you have to say. Your opinion is as good as anybody else's. Never concede the validity of the other side's arguments … Your job is to advocate a position, a cause."[45] Proponents acted similarly, encouraging supporters to submit briefs and to turn out for the hearing lest the silent majority lose out to the radical but vocal minority that opposed the project. The event, Herrero records, proved a raucous affair, topped off with "booing, catcalling, and one fist fight."[46]

The NPPAC and other NGOs did not, however, draw the more radical direct action tactics that had become familiar in other contexts in recent years. Apart from some clever media work and the destruction of Esso cards that evidenced the influence of such ideas, the campaign remained a model of conventional social movement strategies in action. In total, the hearing drew nearly 200 speakers and over 2000 briefs, along with related petitions and form letters. Those materials revealed a three to one split between opponents and supporters of the project.[47] On the smaller side were the competitive and club based skiers, along with the tourism industry, oil companies and employees, local and regional business operators and the business community in general. On the larger side were the environmental NGOs and a wide range of individuals, families, school groups, university students and faculty, many of whom recognised the project's merits but favoured the preservation mandate of the Parks branch and the need to protect the region from further development.[48] Among them were leading environmentalists

44 Letter, Gavin Henderson to Robert Whitterick, 14 April 1972, TUA, NPPAC fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–009, Box 2, Folder 3.

45 NPPAC, Edmonton Chapter: Newsletter 6, 19 November 1971, CPAWS National Office Archives, Ottawa, ON.

46 Stephen Herrero: Parks Canada and Public Participation: The Case of Village Lake Louise and Sunshine Village, in: Barry Sadler (ed.): Involvement and Environment: Proceedings of the Canadian Conference on Public Participation, Vol 2., Edmonton 1977, pp. 254–265, p. 259.

47 J. G. Rouse: Numerical Analysis of Written Briefs and Oral Testimony for Public Hearings on Lake Louise Proposals, Ottawa 1972, cited in: Leslie Bella: Parks for Profit, p. 125.

48 Observations based on analysis of the 2000+ briefs submitted for the hearings. See Canada, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National and Historic Parks Branch: Briefs on the Lake Louise Area, Banff National Park, 21 volumes, Library of Parliament, Ottawa, Canada.

in Canada and beyond. Canada's best-known environmentalist at the time, Roderick Haig-Brown, pointed to the proposal as "a burden on normal park facilities and on the terrain that cannot possibly be sustained without major damage in the face of the rapidly increasing demand for park space." Stanford University professor and *Population Bomb* author Paul Ehrlich wrote that he was "amazed that the Parks Branch even considered […] an extensive and inappropriate development of this sort." Canadian environmental writer and documentary film-maker Andy Russell captured succinctly the postmaterial angst that was being expressed through Village Lake Louise with his simple explanation: "We love our Parks to excess and overuse them as a result."[49]

Most striking is the list of Canadian NGOs—more than seventy of them—that opposed the project. Together they covered a wide spectrum. Alongside wilderness protection organisations such as the NPPAC, the Canadian Nature Federation, and the Sierra Club were provincial and national sportsmen's federations; regional and provincial naturalists' societies; mountaineering clubs; local groups of hikers and bird watchers; and others addressing everything from pollution to municipal and community politics. Like the NPPAC, some had long been engaged in advocacy work. Many, however, were first and foremost about other things—hiking, camping, or watching birds—and were drawn into the debate over Village Lake Louise by the threat it posed to the region and to the preservation objectives of the parks system in general. While complaints about the project's scale, elitism, American ownership, and departures from the parks' preservation mandate (discotheques and bars were favourite targets) were commonplace, few had anything bad to say about the development itself. At issue was its location. With its postcard-perfect mountain scenery, Lake Louise had become as emblematic of Canadian national identity as Vimy Ridge, maple syrup, or the RCMP, and the establishment of a large-scale, for profit venture at the heart of the national parks system threatened to undermine the preservationist ethos on which that system had come to be understood. In short, Village Lake Louise quickly became an ideal rallying point for environmentalists across Canada, through which emerged multiple organisations, networks, and strategies.

Beyond Village Lake Louise: Parks, Profit, and Property

While there remains little doubt that the opponents of Village Lake Louise 'won' the public hearing that March, a closer look reveals another layer in the debate. A constant throughout the discussion of parks development, it would prove decisive.

For years, people living in the mountain parks townsites of Banff and Jasper had expressed frustration over the effects of their towns' park status on land tenure, private enterprise, and municipal governance. In particular, constraints on private property,

49 Ibid. See briefs 989 (Haig-Brown), 371 (Ehrlich), and 274 (Russell).

development, and regional politics conflicted with the interests of local business communities and what seemed to them to be a neverending series of missed opportunities. Never far from the surface, that sense of frustration grew as the Parks Branch explored the kind of recreation-based development policies that were being discussed in the context of parks across North America during the 1950s and 1960s. Angered over environmentalists' opposition to such development, a number of residents had by 1968 established the Banff Park Citizens' Association and were campaigning to have the townsite, along with the highway to the east gate and a strip of land along either side of it, removed from Banff National Park and placed under provincial jurisdiction.[50] Village Lake Louise did nothing to quell their concerns. And while opinion in Banff was divided over the proposal, residents nevertheless found common ground in their concern that Village Lake Louise would become a drain on their town's community infrastructure, so much so that the Banff Advisory Council complained directly to Chretien over the proposal's failure to include a hospital, high school, and other public services.[51]

In the meantime, communities just outside the mountain parks outlined their own opposition to the project. For towns such as Golden and Canmore, locating a recreational development of this scale in the park, rather than in a comparable location outside park boundaries, represented yet another series of lost opportunities. To that end, residents, Chambers of Commerce, and businesses from these towns argued that further development should take place in their communities, which posed no threat to the parks' preservation mandate and were not similarly constrained in areas of land tenure and development. Others underscored from a broader economic perspective how situating a large-scale recreational development within a national park negated many of the economic gains that would otherwise accrue via investment in private property and ensuing economic growth. In short, they argued that the parks were bad for business.

Those voices found kin in the Alberta government. Keen to see further economic development linked to the mountain parks, it had long been critical of the federal government's jurisdiction over parks territory and the ways in which the preservation mandate of the Parks Branch stifled development in the region. By the 1960s it was pointing to the mountain parks as an "unequal burden" that the province carried. "ALBERTA HAS TEN TIMES AS MUCH AREA IN NATIONAL PARKS AS ANY OTHER PROVINCE [sic]" argued the province's Minister of Industry and Development in 1966.[52] As the debate over Village Lake Louise unfolded, Alberta's Minister of Federal

50 Banff Park Citizens' Association: Banff Park Town: A blue print for the transfer of Banff Park Town from Federal Authority to the Province of Alberta, Banff, AB 1968, in TUA, NPPAC fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–009, Box 1, Folder 7.

51 Residents Want Parks Policy, in: Calgary Herald, 13 July 1972, p. 24.

52 A. R. Parent to Robert H. Winters, Federal Minister of Trade and Commerce, 25 February 1966, TUA, 99–009, Box 2, Folder 2; J. D. Francis & Associates Ltd. and Nattall & Maloney:

and Intergovernmental Affairs, Don Getty, became a key figure. Given the tourist dollars at stake and his own government's efforts to promote winter tourism in the parks, many observers assumed that he would support the development.

Surprisingly, he did not. Like the pragmatic critics above, Getty recognised that the Lake Louise project would be better for the Alberta economy if it were located somewhere outside the park, where it would generate greater tax revenue as well as local and regional economic development. But Getty was also aware of the strong desire for recreational development within the mountain parks; the discontent being voiced in Banff; and the status of the Bow Valley as a long-developed portion of Banff National Park and the most important east-west transportation corridor through the Canadian Rockies. With these variables in mind, Getty attempted to use the controversy surrounding Village Lake Louise to wrest something even greater from the federal government. In a letter read in the Alberta Legislature at the end of May 1972 and published a week later in the *Globe and Mail*, Getty informed Chretien that the province of Alberta did not support Village Lake Louise, and that as an alternative the federal government should transfer the Bow Valley corridor from the Parks Branch to the province while offering support for the development of provincial parks and recreational infrastructure elsewhere in Alberta.[53] Had Getty been successful, that shift would have been a huge economic win for Alberta, as it would have allowed the project to go ahead fully within the private sector. What is more, it would have led to even greater economic opportunities, as the transfer would have opened up the entire Bow Valley corridor for development.

The Alberta government's role in Village Lake Louise marks a divergence in interpretations of the project's demise. In *Parks for Profit*, Leslie Bella argues that in terms of political outfall Chretien needed Getty's support in order to approve the project, and that his negative response led directly to its rejection.[54] That view contrasts with that of many activists' and media interpretations, in which the force that stopped Village Lake Louise in its tracks was not the world of federal-provincial politics, but the environmental campaign against it.[55] Others, including Paul Kopas and Rodney Touche, point to a

The Detrimental Effects of the National Parks Policy on the Tourist Industry of Alberta, 1966, TUA, NPPAC fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–009, Box 2, Folder 2.

53 Letter, Don Getty to Jean Chretien, 24 May 1972, TUA, NPPAC fonds—Additions, 1951–1977, 99–009, Box 2, Folder 1: Why Alberta Can't Back the Village Lake Louise Plan, in: Globe and Mail, 3 June 1972, p. 7.

54 Leslie Bella: Parks for Profit.

55 Gavin Henderson, for example, was a strong proponent of this view (Letter, Gavin Henderson to Elly de Jongh, 19 June 1975, TUA, Gavin Henderson fonds, 1887–1991, 93–012, Box1, Folder 12), which he also promoted in NPPAC press releases and media reportage. For comparable media commentary see Lake Louise Plan Vetoed, in: Calgary Herald, 12 July 1972, pp. 1–2; Don Thomas: Conservationists "Jubilant" Over Lake Louise Decision, in: Calgary Herald, 13 July 1972, p. 24.

combination of factors, from changing expectations regarding public participation to embarrassment over adverse publicity and the exposure of links between government and corporate interests.[56]

Our interpretation looks specifically to the intersection of the formal political sphere and the broadening patterns of governance that coalesced around Village Lake Louise. As the Minister with whom the decision on Village Lake Louise rested, Chretien was in an awkward position. To date, the parks branch had been focused on further recreational development, and his Ministry had already given way following the 1971 hearings to many of the demands made by environmentalists. What is more, even opponents recognised the project's merits, including its potential to address many of the problems associated with Lake Louise in its current state. Indeed, Henderson himself believed to the last moment that the campaign against the project would fail. Upon assuming his Ministership, however, Chretien had also established an identity as a builder of Canada's national parks. And the NPPAC shaped its relationship with the Minister around that identity. In fact, the NPPAC had been working to establish strong relations with Chretien well before the Village Lake Louise campaign took shape. Following his appointment as Indian and Northern Affairs Minister in 1968, Chretien pledged to revive the federal parks system by establishing nine new national parks. Soon after, NPPAC president Al Frame made a friendly five dollar bet with the new Minister that he wouldn not succeed. Their bet turned into an ideal publicity event highlighting Chretien's identity as a friend of the national parks system early in 1972 when he exceeded his goal by establishing eleven. This was no small feat. As E. J. Hart points out in his biography of James Bernard Harkin, Canada's first parks commissioner, only four new parks were established during the three decades between the end of Harkin's tenure and Chretien's appointment.[57] That February, just three weeks before the Lake Louise hearing was to take place, a NPPAC delegation travelled to Ottawa to present Chretien with a five dollar cheque, set inside a large-format frame and surrounded by photographs of each of the new parks. A week after the public hearing, Henderson followed up in a letter to Chretien that suggested he might leave his "mark in the annals of the conservation movement" and encouraged him to secure that legacy through an appropriate decision on Village Lake Louise.[58] That strategy remained

56 Rodney Touche: The Village Lake Louise Controversy: A Developer's Perspective, in: Barry Sadler (ed.): Involvement and Environment: Proceedings of the Canadian Conference on Public Participation, Vol 2, Edmonton 1977, pp. 274–280.

57 E. J. Hart: J. B. Harkin, pp. 497–498.

58 Letter, Gavin Henderson to Jean Chretien, 16 March 1972, TUA, Gavin Henderson fonds, 1887–1991, 93–012, Box 1, Folder 1.

at the forefront in all of the NPPAC's dealings with Chretien. Though it never let him off the hook over Village Lake Louise, the association was careful to praise the minister throughout the campaign for the many parks-friendly initiatives he pursued.[59]

It would be naïve to suggest that such moves alone were enough to sway Chretien to reject the project. Combined with other tensions, however, the campaign against Village Lake Louise and the care opponents took around decision-makers such as Chretien created an opportunity for the Minister to consider seriously the project's long-term effects. To this end, Getty's public call for the federal government to remove the Bow Valley corridor from the park can be viewed as an indication of what would follow were Village Lake Louise to proceed. For critics, each new development in the mountain parks represented one more argument in favour of developers keen to exploit the region. And Village Lake Louise was the tipping point. Had it proceeded, the project would have amounted to a third townsite within the mountain parks and an even greater number of voices critical of the lease system, the limits on private enterprise, and the challenges of municipal governance. From this angle, one can see how Village Lake Louise played directly into the hands of the Alberta government, the Banff Park Citizens association, developers, hoteliers, airlines, tourist associations, and others keen to tap into the region's tremendous economic potential. As an astute politician with a genuine interest in the future of the national parks and their long-term viability, Chretien reflected in his decision an awareness of the loss such a development would entail. And in framing their opposition as they did, with public praise for Chretien and support for all of his positive initiatives, the NPPAC and other organisations provided an extremely comfortable cushion on which that decision—and the Minister—could rest.

59 That strategy continued after the decision on Village Lake Louise. In October 1972, Chretien became the first recipient of the NPPAC's newly established Harkin Award. Named after Canada's first commissioner of National Parks, James B. Harkin, it recognised the Minister "for unparalleled achievement in expanding Canada's National Parks System and establishing by word and deed that the prime purpose of the National Parks is to preserve our heritage of nature and history for the benefit and enjoyment of this and all future generations." CPAWS, Harkin Award, at: http://cpaws.org/about/harkin-award (accessed 20 September 2016). See also E. J. Hart: J. B. Harkin, pp. 497–498.

Conclusion: "Parks Don't Just Happen"[60]

Chretien's announcement on 12 July 1972 to cancel Village Lake Louise was picked up by newspapers across the country and around the world.[61] The *New York Times* referred to Chretien as "a recognized champion of national parks."[62] Canada's national newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*, ran with the headline "$30 million Banff project turned down by Ottawa."[63] In Calgary, where Chretien made the formal announcement, the *Calgary Herald* confirmed the Ministry's decision through a federal spokesperson before Chretien took the stage, and broke the story on its front page that afternoon.[64] In the days that followed, editorials weighed the decision's merits, and there soon emerged a sense among the project's opponents that their victory represented something more than the success of a single campaign. In retrospect, the demise of Village Lake Louise stands as a key moment in the evolution of environmentalism in Canada, relative to the nationwide civil society networks it fostered, the ongoing importance of conventional campaign strategies in a world witnessing the emergence of a new generation of social movement activism, and its identification of recreational development as an environmental threat on par with resource exploitation. As Henderson later summarised, "The subtle ways in which we pressured the government and fought the developers are a classic example of citizenship conservation action at its best and equal to any of the great struggles that have made history in the United States."[65]

A strong statement, given that the American campaigns on the minds of many environmentalists at the time included the Sierra Club's controversial efforts during the late 1960s to prevent hydroelectric development on the Grand Canyon and the highly successful Earth Day events of 1970.[66] Nevertheless, there is something unique about this

60 This phrase appears in an NPPAC pamphlet from the 1960s. See TUA, Gavin Henderson fonds, 1887–1991, 93–012, Box 1, Folder 6.

61 Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development: Speech Notes for the Honourable Jean Chretien, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Concerning the Village Lake Louise Proposal, Calgary, Alberta, July 12, 1972, in TUA, Gavin Henderson fonds, 1887–1991, 93–012, Box 1, Folder 1.

62 Jay Walz: Big Park Project in Canadian Rockies Rejected, in: New York Times, 16 July 1972, p. 18.

63 Scheme Too Large, Chretien Says: $30 Million Banff Project Turned Down by Ottawa, in: Globe and Mail, 13 July 1972, p. 1.

64 Lake Louise Plan Vetoed, in: Calgary Herald, 12 July 1972, pp. 1–2.

65 Letter, Gavin Henderson to Elly de Jongh, 19 June 1975, TUA, Gavin Henderson fonds, 1887–1991, 93–012, Box 1, Folder 12.

66 On the American context see Samuel P. Hays: Beauty, Health, and Permanence; Turner: The Promise of Wilderness; Adam Rome: The Genius of Earth Day; Andrew Needham: Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest, Princeton 2014.

particular campaign that makes it stand out—something that goes beyond its important role in establishing a nationwide environmental NGO landscape and environmental governance network. To this point, wilderness-based environmental controversies had typically pitted preservation-minded environmentalists against proponents of industrial development, resource extraction, and economic security—in other words, the conventional clash between material and postmaterial values. Here, however, the issue at hand was not industrial activity or the resource sector, but a form of development connected directly to the expression of postmaterial values in the wilderness environment. In this sense, Village Lake Louise highlights an area of environmental conflict of growing importance in the twentieth century, along with a rapidly growing list of state and non-state actors with roles to play in it.

During the decades following the demise of Village Lake Louise, the postmaterial tensions raised in that campaign have continued to intersect in complex ways. As confirmation of its landmark status, one need only observe how practically every ski hill proposal and expansion in North America today is subject to environmental scrutiny, and in many cases protest—as demonstrated in the decades-long contestations over the proposed Jumbo Glacier ski resort in British Columbia's Purcell mountains and the Garibaldi at Squamish resort just north of Vancouver.[67] Given the ongoing campaign on the part of CPAWS and other environmental NGOs over development plans in Canada's mountain parks, including a current proposal to expand skiing capacity at Lake Louise Resort, Village Lake Louise is also a reminder that, in the age of mass recreation, such tensions are never put to rest. Indeed, while development at the base of the ski hill itself is still limited, some of what was avoided at Lake Louise in the early 1970s has nevertheless made its way slowly into the region during the following decades, in the form of smaller-scale hotel, ski hill, and other expansions.

While politicians in Canada and in other nations reliant on the resource sector may still attempt to frame such debates as a choice between the economy and the environment, it is clear that environmental tensions have evolved well beyond that materialist/postmaterialist framework. For the growing number of people in the world who seek the kind of recreational, aesthetic, emotive, and philosophical experiences that have been characterised as postmaterialist—be they linked to skiing in the Rockies, rafting in the Amazon, or wildlife tourism in the Serengeti—the tension between experiencing and protecting the wilderness environment has become increasingly apparent.[68] From this perspective, identifying postmaterialism as the source of environmentalism is problematic not only because environmental values can be found in societies around the world regardless of

67 On the controversy over the proposed Jumbo Resort, see the recent documentary *Jumbo Wild*, Patagonia and Sweetgrass Productions, 2015.

68 On contemporary postmaterial tensions in the context of skiing see Mark C. J. Stoddart: Making Meaning out of Mountains: The Political Ecology of Skiing, Vancouver 2012.

their material or postmaterial status. It is also problematic because it assumes too close a fit between environmental and postmaterial values. In fact, postmaterial societies are rife with tensions when it comes to the environment, not only between competing material and postmaterial considerations, but also between the competing attitudes and practices that flow from postmaterialism itself. In addressing these tensions, the campaign against Village Lake Louise diverges from some of the other landmark protests in Canada and elsewhere that have captured academic attention and that shape public perceptions of environmental conflict and governance today.

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