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ENGL 104-401

12/11/17

### How a Small Change Can Preserve Freedom in America

Freedom can be symbolized in America by the preservation of national parks that have been started by great public figures in the past. The idea of reserving the complete bliss of the natural land that creates the land mass of America has been one of the best ideas this nation has had. The actions of humans to protect the landscape and object, such as animals and buildings created before us, of National Parks is the action of preservation (“Conservation vs. Preservation”). From the great redwood of Yosemite to the grand Tetons of Yellowstone, the ideology of the representation of freedom behind this preservation movement has pushed back urban development and the push for natural resources to be harvested on these lands for the benefit of commercial companies under economic pressure. The imagery that comes from the great national parks that America holds, exemplifies the beauty behind the ideology of these preserved areas. This beauty is the land is its original untouched landscape that came before human settlement and the imagery is the beauty in true and pure nature that one can see from a national park today. The idea of preserving the land so future generations may enjoy the beauty of this untouched land, is a critical piece to what this nation has to offer. Because of efforts to protect the land of national parks, an identity of respect is created through our actions of preservation making national parks one of our greatest national identities.

I identify Yellowstone National park as one of the greatest national parks in America and a natural circumference that represents complete serenity and awestruck beauty because of its great history and present success. To me Yellowstone National Park is an ancient being of

America. It is as if the ancient land, that was once walked on by prehistoric animals and at times covered in sheets of snow and ice inhabited by giant mammals of all sorts, is separated from modern and industrialized times of today. Similarly, Ken Burns reflects on his presence in Yellowstone through his studies as he quotes "In Northwestern Wyoming, we found a kind of second home among the wildlife and wild eruptions of the many stunning other-worldly thermal features, fell silent at an overlook that afforded a view of the inspirational mull-hued canyon of the Yellowstone, and had the sense there that the forces which had created the earth were still operating just below the brittle, sometime hollow-sounding ground." It's a beauty of the past and preservation effort for the future. The vastness and expansiveness of the park expands over the corners of three states; Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming and was established by congress in 1872 under the authority of President Ulysses S. Grant ("Yellowstone National Park"). Yellowstone is a true wonder of nature as it documented as the first national park in the history of national parks, and it is reasonably so due to its complete and spectacular geothermal features such as Old Faithful, numerous thriving ecosystems, and its most abundant subalpine forest which spans across all the parks vastness covering nearly 3,500 square miles. This area holds half of the world's geothermal features, the last untouched and intact ecosystem in the northern hemisphere, one of the largest elevated lakes in the world, the largest and oldest bison herd in the United States ("Yellowstone National Park"). And all this sitting on this nation's largest super volcano, vulcanizing the whole region under tremendous heat and pressure. As lively as these systems of the park are, their age is far from young, but so is the presence of humans to this land.

Today you may think that Yellowstone National Park is being introduced to the presence of people for the first time throughout its existence, however this is far from true. Visitors of the land date back to 11,000 years ago as tribes used the valuable land as hunting grounds because of

the plentiful game it provided (“Yellowstone National Park”). But only since the previous exploration from mountain men during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and modern-day involvement with humans of the park, Yellowstone has faced hardships in its ecosystems of the park. The history of the park, which spans over thousands of years, was endangered within just a few years of mass human involvement. But by our very luck, the modern revolutionized ideas of human involvement in national parks and the efforts to conserve and preserve this land has saved the ecosystems of the park. This was done by the return of a great predator through the understanding and ideals of a great biologist.

Ken Burns tells us that this preservation of the land all started by the extreme efforts of a man named George Melendez Wright. George Melendez Wright was a young biologist who conducted his scientific research and applied his knowledge of biology to national parks around America in in the 1930’s. He was a young man from San Francisco, California and lived with his aunt as he grew up (Burns, “This is America”). She turned the natural world through science into Wright’s greatest fascination. As Wright became interested in park management he gained an assistant position at Yosemite National Park where his future research would begin (Burns, “This is America”).

At this time in the early years of the newly founded national parks, predators were often killed by the park staff in efforts to maintain the population growth of the preyed-on wildlife (Burns, “This is America”). However, they did not know that these actions were negatively impacting the ecosystem of the parks and disrupting the equilibrium of its nature. This is where Wright started with his research. A four-year research project to establish the science and data behind why the ecosystems of national parks need to be untouched. And all this was driven by his strong beliefs in the National Parks main idea called conservation. This scientific study of an