Silhouettes of unidentified individuals and a horse on a crest overlooking Cedar Breaks National Monument, 1935. The Breaks presented a dramatic landscape with towering cliffs and scenic views.
On August 22, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a proclamation creating a national monument at Cedar Breaks, a spectacular fan-shaped basin three miles wide and two thousand feet deep, featuring pink and orange limestone spires, located on southwestern Utah’s Markagunt Plateau. The following July, residents of Iron County, joined by state and national dignitaries, gathered to celebrate and formally dedicate the monument. Approximately three thousand people attended the ceremonies, which included a barbecue, a variety of games, sports, and entertainment, and a formal program of speeches and musical numbers.1

The celebration masked nearly two decades of wrangling between the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service, as well as between the towns of Parowan and Cedar City, over management and form of the proposed monument. The dispute between federal land management agencies was rooted in their legislated purposes. The 1897 Pettigrew Amendment to the Sundry Civil Appropriations Bill, more commonly referred to as the Forest Service Organic Act, became the basis for management of the forest reserves. Originally, it mandated the protection of the timber supply and regulation of the water supply. Subsequently, it was amended to emphasize use. The Forest Service would protect the rights of occupants of forest reserves (renamed national forests in 1907) by protecting and conserving grazing land, contribute to the well-being of the livestock industry, and, ultimately, protect the interests of local settlers against those of outside competition.2 In contrast to the Forest Service Organic Act, which promoted multiple uses of forest land, including those by extractive industries, the 1916 act establishing the National Park...
Service (NPS) dictated a single purpose for the new agency: “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” While the Forest Service belonged to the Department of Agriculture, Congress housed the Park Service in the Department of the Interior.

The historian Hal Rothman has argued that the terms of the conflict between the two federal agencies heavily favored the Park Service. NPS officials chose which parcels of land to fight over, defined the aesthetic value of those parcels, and, ultimately, “orchestrated the conflict that occurred.” However, because only Congress had the authority to create national parks, NPS officials were careful to consider local interests and to choose truly exceptional sites as possible parks so as not to generate hostile opposition.

Even then, bills proposing particular national parks often languished for years in Congress. Happily for them, Park Service personnel found a way around congressional deadlock through the Antiquities Act of 1906, which gave the executive branch unilateral authority to reserve as national monuments public lands that the president of the United States believed contained significant historic, prehistoric, or natural features. Originally intended to preserve archaeological ruins, the act was subsequently used to withdraw a much wider variety of lands from the public domain.

NPS officials facing strong opposition or interminable delays in Congress hoped that, applying the Antiquities Act, the president would create a national monument that could, at a later time, be enlarged and formed into a national park. Two national parks in Utah—Zion and Bryce Canyon—were created in just this fashion. Zion began as Mukuntuweap National Monument in 1909, proclaimed by William Howard Taft, and became a national park in 1919. In 1923 Calvin Coolidge designated Bryce Canyon National Monument; five years later it became a national park.

Rothman, in a 1987 Utah Historical Quarterly article, examined the inter-agency conflict between the Park Service and Forest Service in the creation of Cedar Breaks National Monument. He argued that the terms of the dispute involving Cedar Breaks helped shape the NPS into its modern incarnation. A major step on this road was Executive Order 6166, which became effective on August 10, 1933, twelve days before Cedar Breaks became a national monument. This executive order “reorganized the entire federal bureaucracy and changed the balance of power in the NPS–USFS relationship,” according to Rothman, by transferring fifteen national monuments from Forest Service to Park Service control. Rothman concluded that “on its merits as a scenic or scientific site alone, Cedar Breaks might well have remained an undesigned part of the Dixie National Forest,” but as a pawn in the turf war between two federal agencies, Cedar Breaks became a crucial parcel of land. For Rothman, the outcome of the conflict serves as proof that the National Park Service came to dominate the rivalry.

In contrast to Rothman’s study, this essay focuses not on the wrangling between two agencies of the federal government, but rather frames the creation of Cedar Breaks National Monument in terms of the moral complexity of state conservation, while putting local residents at center stage. Where Rothman’s study offers a top-down institutional perspective, this essay offers a bottom-up view that focuses on the actions of local citizens—residents of Utah’s Iron County—in the creation of Cedar Breaks National Monument.

Early scholars of conservation history viewed the expansion of federal land management agencies into the West as a triumph. In their telling, scientists and other officials hired by the government to carry out conservation are heroes, while the local residents in the West are ignoramuses who destroy natural resources. A later generation of scholars examined state conservation and the later environmental movement much more critically. Concerned with the ways in which federal conservation laws and regulations affected local people, whose livelihoods or subsistence methods often centered on resource use, these scholars emphasized the darker side of preservation as embraced by the Park Service—one in which elite conservationists were, at best, deeply hostile toward rural people, whom they view as “obstacles to the exercise of state control necessary to implement conservation,” and, at worst, imperialistic and racist.
Cedar Breaks National Monument, 1956, published in the Historical Handbook series produced by the National Park Service. The map shows the various stops tourists can take to enjoy views along the Cedar Breaks Rim. Parowan was 13 driving miles from the north rim.

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In contrast, the long road to the creation of Cedar Breaks National Monument illustrates that state conservation was more complex than these two generations of scholars suggest. Conservationists were neither heroes, as the historian Samuel Hays wishes us to believe, nor villains, as the historian Karl Jacoby suggests. Furthermore, state conservation was not always a monolithic force that steamrolled over powerless locals. Instead, conservation consisted of separate government agencies with competing visions that often fought each other more than they did local resource users. For their part, people in the West not only possessed power to influence the policies of large government bureaucracies, but also at times actively courted the extension of whichever state conservation agency best fit their needs or wishes.

In Iron County, during the 1920s and 1930s, there were no violent uprisings over conservation measures, as happened in other regions. Instead, locals sought change (or to prevent change) through letters and petitions to members of their state’s congressional delegation and to government agencies, as well as through meetings and mediation. And in the case cited below, those who fought against the creation of a national park or national monument at Cedar Breaks—the “losers” in the conflict—did not resort to extra-legal means in an attempt to resolve the issues. Indeed, after the creation of Cedar Breaks National Monument and its transfer to the Park Service, members of the livestock industry, who had vociferously opposed the action, actively embraced and celebrated the monument. Had the plans of NPS director Horace Albright for a national park roughly six times the size of the eventual national monument become reality, and in so doing destroyed the livestock industry in just the way the graziers feared, they most likely would not have been so gracious in defeat. But that Albright was thwarted in his ultimate goal and had to settle for a consolation prize illustrates just how much power the locals and their allies possessed. Conservation was negotiation and compromise, not dictation.

Iron County residents involved in the livestock and timber industries during the nineteenth century knew of Cedar Breaks, but its existence was not widely known until the beginning decades of the twentieth century, when its fame began to spread. In 1906, George W. Middleton, a physician and former mayor of Cedar City, relocated to Salt Lake City. He introduced state leaders and Salt Lake residents to the possibilities of a tourism industry in southern Utah focusing on the colorful canyon scenery. Middleton befriended University of Utah geology professor Frederick J. Pack, and the two of them arranged and led small-scale horseback expeditions to Cedar Breaks and Zion Canyon. During the same period, Middleton’s brother-in-law Menzies J. MacFarlane, a prominent Cedar City physician and member of the Commercial Club, also led expeditions to Cedar Breaks and advertised its scenic value. Meanwhile, Randall Jones, secretary of the Cedar City Commercial Club, toured the eastern United States, giving presentations on southern Utah’s spectacular scenery through a lantern slideshow. Other promoters soon joined in. In 1912, Reverend Frederick V. Fisher, a Methodist minister in Ogden, Utah, left his ministry and began traveling the country on the lecture circuit, showing people his photographs of California to interest them in the West’s sce-
nic attractions. In 1915, he brought his lecture back to Utah and was surprised to learn from a University of Utah student that southern Utah had scenery that rivaled California’s. The following year, he journeyed to Zion Canyon and Cedar Breaks and was reportedly overcome with “pious awe” at the canyons and geological formations. From this visit, Fisher created a lantern-slide lecture titled “Utah, the Crown of the Continent” and once again took to the lecture circuit, this time promoting southern Utah instead of California.  

Frederick Pack attended the American Geological Society meeting held in Boston late in 1919 to present a paper titled “The High Plateau Country in Southern Utah.” The presentation included such areas as Zion Canyon (part of the recently created Zion National Park), Bryce Canyon, and Cedar Breaks. After Pack’s return to Salt Lake City, Robert Sterling Yard of the National Parks Association asked Pack to prepare a report on the “scenic wonders of Cedar Breaks” and to send him photographs of the “Breaks” for a pamphlet that he planned to circulate nationally. Yard intended, he said, to push for the creation of another national park in Utah.

In September 1916, tourism booster Frederick Fisher visited recently discovered Flanigan Arch near Cedar Breaks. Within weeks, the Park Service sent the topographical engineer William O. Tufts to investigate Cedar Breaks and determine if it deserved the status of a national monument. After visiting Mukuntuweap National Monument, whose centerpiece was Zion Canyon, nineteen air miles to the south, Tufts concluded not to endorse the monument. “At first sight this bridge seemed impressive, and to a certain extent it is,” he wrote to NPS officials; “but I find that there are natural wonders of so much more remarkable nature in Mukuntuweap, in the same part of Utah, that it would hardly be advisable to divide up the energies of the Department upon objects of second-rate importance.”

In 1920, the Salt Lake Commercial Club began discussing the possibility of making their city attractive as a potential site for large business conventions. After seeing the presentations of Jones and Fisher, Commercial Club members traveled to Cedar City to experience the landscape for themselves. These Salt Lake City businessmen thought that, by encouraging and facilitating tourist traffic to the southern portion of the state, they would provide the capital city with an economic boost. To that end, the Commercial Club sent a delegation to the convention of the National Park-to-Park Highway Association, held in Denver that November, where NPS Director Stephen Mather was the keynote speaker, to request that the planned 5,599-mile roadway spanning twelve states and connecting all of the national parks in the West be rerouted to include Zion National Park, the newest member of the park system. They hoped to accomplish this, in part, through a presentation given there by Commercial Club member and scenic photographer J. E. Broaddus on the beauties of Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Cedar Breaks. Within several days of the close of the convention, the Commercial Club chose as one of its goals for the year 1921 the enlargement of Zion National Park so that it would take in Bryce Canyon and Cedar Breaks.

At some time prior to December 3, 1920—most likely at the Denver convention—Mather had told Salt Lake Commercial Club members that there was a good possibility that a bill providing for exactly that could be passed during the upcoming session of Congress. (One USFS official speculated that the NPS favored combining Zion Park with Cedar Breaks because the former had “proven a failure owing to the excessive heat encountered in the area during tourist season.” Combining Zion Park with additional parcels and building a road to circumvent Zion Canyon, he thought, would resolve the problem.) Since becoming NPS director in 1916, Mather had wished to create a series of national parks in southern Utah linked via highway and railroad to the Grand Canyon and, thus, to the rest of the country. The key to the enlargement of Zion National Park, Mather said, was to assure Congress that high quality tourist accommodations would be built. The NPS director supported such efforts personally, taking $1,000 worth of stock in the hotel then under construction in Cedar City that the Commercial Club hoped would accommodate a large influx of visitors, and subscribing $250 toward improving the road stretching from Fredonia, Arizona, to Zion Canyon. The Board of Governors of the Salt Lake Commercial Club enthusiastically embraced Mather’s
During the first half of 1921, the Salt Lake Commercial Club continued its campaign for a large national park that would include Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Cedar Breaks, only now they added the north rim of the Grand Canyon to their proposal. They pushed for this through contact with members of Utah’s congressional delegation in Washington. Arno B. Cammerer, then acting NPS director, told Commercial Club members that a decision on the consolidation of these four areas had been deferred pending an investigation of each location then underway. In October Mather visited southwestern Utah along with famed writer and conservationist Emerson Hough, two naturalists, and officials from the Union Pacific Railroad. While stopped in Cedar City, Mather told residents that Cedar Breaks should be made a national park and outlined which parcels he thought should constitute the park. Two months later, Mather called a meeting at the State Capitol in Salt Lake City to propose a transfer of 35,000 acres of the Sevier National Forest to the Park Service and the addition of Cedar Breaks to Zion National Park. Convention attendees resolved to replace the name “Zion” with one more suitable for the enlarged park. Governor Charles R. Mabey, “an early advocate of promoting the state’s tourist industry,” was to appoint a committee to determine the boundaries of the new addition, and another committee was tasked with coordinating the expansion effort with Utah’s congressional delegation. This plan, according to the Parowan Times, did not receive “a dissenting voice from any source.”

Notwithstanding the newspaper’s claim, Mather’s proposal appears to have galvanized local opposition. Up to this point, newspapers
reported no hint of opposition to designate Cedar Breaks a national park or combine it with Zion National Park. But the day after the meeting, those residents of Iron County who engaged in stock raising or harvesting wood on the Sevier National Forest were up in arms over the proposal. They argued (before the exact boundaries of the parcel had been set) that the acreage to be withdrawn had between 18 million and 20 million board feet of timber that would be needed for future building in the region, and that 13,000 sheep and several hundred cattle were then grazing on the land. They feared the destruction of local industries and the loss of their livelihood if the proposed park became a reality.22

Though Wilford Day, one of Parowan’s most prominent stockmen, did not initially object to Mather’s plan, in early 1922 he and two other prominent Parowan sheep raisers petitioned the Utah State Woolgrowers’ Association to help in blocking the creation of a national park at Cedar Breaks or, at the very least, in limiting the park’s size.23 Agreeing to help, attendees at the Woolgrowers’ Convention unanimously adopted a resolution “vigorously” opposing the creation of new national parks or the enlargement of those already in existence if doing so took land away from the national forests.24 Utah’s woolgrowers preferred Forest Service management of the lands, which they thought would preserve their grazing rights, over Park Service management, which they feared would eliminate those rights.

A week after the State Woolgrowers’ Association meeting, Parowan’s newspaper, which had previously supported advertising campaigns and road building in an effort to bring tourists—and their money—into the area, became a vocal defender of the livestock growers. The Parowan Times argued that livestock growers in the county were just pulling out of financial conditions that had “been almost disastrous” to many of them. And now, just when the outlook for them was improving, “their business is . . . threatened with complete annihilation by the conversion of their summer range to other uses.” The newspaper estimated that the number of livestock affected by the change ranged from fifteen thousand to thirty thousand, depending on which areas were included. The writer lamented, “That the park is coming seems almost inevitable . . . to attempt to block it is, in the opinion of those who pretend to know, worse than useless.” Thus, Parowanites needed to “use every effort to minimize the area to be included in the proposed park, [and] to get whatever concessions are possible relative to grazing privileges.”25

According to a USFS official, Cedar City residents had anticipated a much smaller park than the one Mather proposed to them during his October visit. Henry Lunt, an LDS church leader in Parowan, informed Acting Assistant District (later changed to “Regional”) Forester R. E. Gery that locals had been trying for years to get access to timber near the eastern edge of Cedar Breaks and “would not tolerate the timber area being included within a national park.” The only timbered land the townspeople expected to have as part of the park was a half-mile-wide strip of land adjoining the sheer drop-off that marked the beginning of the Breaks. Dr. Menzies J. McFarlane, president of the Cedar City Chamber of Commerce, expressed surprise at Mather’s proposal and added that he wanted the Forest Service to retain the land, given the “curtailment of individual privileges in the National Parks.” Lunt and McFarlane’s concern was a valid one for lumber interests, given the fact that timber harvesting was one type of resource usage that conservation agencies had clamped down on elsewhere.26 Gery estimated that the timber inside the proposed boundaries was worth $56,640 and that the park’s creation would block access to 101.3 million feet of timber worth $304,281. Taking this timber off the market, Gery believed, would be a great loss to the people living in the settlements at the base of the Markagunt Plateau and to local timber-related businesses such as sawmills and lumberyards. As for the livestock industry, 620 cattle and 13,500 sheep grazed within the area of the proposed park. Grazing permittees would lose at least $44,800 paid in permit fees, as well as an annual loss of between $5,200 and $6,585 for livestock feed withdrawn from use.27

Applying the criteria established by the Secretary of the Interior for the transfer of Forest Service land to the Park Service—that it be unique, that its paramount use be recreation or enjoyment of landscape features, and that it form a “practical administrative unit” on its own—Gery asserted that Cedar Breaks was not
unique (a bill then pending in Congress would have made Bryce Canyon a national park), that its paramount use was for timber and grazing, and that creating a satisfactory boundary line would be very difficult, given the rough terrain. As for Navajo Lake, part of the area proposed for inclusion in the park, it was “not a particularly attractive body of water,” Gery politely observed.28

Recognizing the boosterism of the Cedar City Commercial Club, and the admission of its secretary that the only economic value of the park to the city was the money it would bring in through advertising, Gery echoed the words in the Interior Secretary’s policy letter: “National Parks should not be created ‘as a result of the desire of some locality to secure Federal appropriations or to obtain the advertising advantages naturally inherent in the term National Park.’” Unable in 1921 to envision the mid-twentieth-century rapid growth of tourism and its vital economic importance for the county, Gery predicted that, long-term, the lumber and livestock industries would be more important economically to the local townspeople than would tourists and their dollars. Gery recommended that, because of the areas’ “high forest values” and “low National Park values,” Director Mather’s proposal should be rejected. But he went even further, suggesting that even the small park envisioned by Cedar City residents not be created. If it were, he said, “every town in the western country will want like consideration and Parkitis will become chronic.”29 Gery’s opposition was echoed by District Forester Chester B. Morse. This opposition, combined with local agitation, squashed the proposal.30

Renewed controversy appeared on the horizon in 1929, shortly after Horace M. Albright succeeded Mather as NPS director. Albright, whom Hal Rothman characterizes as “perhaps
even more aggressive and acquisitive” than Mather, actively sought to “fill out the park system” by transferring management of many of the national monuments to the Park Service. He did this by putting pressure on the Forest Service in several western states. Though Cedar Breaks was further down Albright’s list of priorities than many of the proposed expansion sites, the engineering office of the Forest Service began receiving inquiries about the status of the area, which the Park Service still listed as a “proposed National Park” despite years of inactivity. In turn, the engineering office sought a report from district headquarters in Ogden concerning the possibility of creating a national monument at the Breaks.\textsuperscript{31}

In the autumn of 1930, hosted by long-time local booster Randall L. Jones, Albright and his wife Grace, in company with Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur, his wife Marguerite, and other NPS officials, toured southwestern Utah. Jones drove them through the fall foliage up Cedar Canyon to Cedar Breaks, whose grandeur far exceeded their expectations. Reportedly surprised that the Breaks was not part of the National Park system, Secretary Wilbur said it “was one of the finest things he has ever seen.”\textsuperscript{32} Later, Wilbur said the federal government was willing to add the Breaks to the national park system, as long as the locals wanted it that way.\textsuperscript{33}

The Forest Service, hoping to improve its standing with locals, argued that under its management the Breaks and the surrounding land would be developed as a recreation area and tourist destination, and that paved roads would be rapidly extended throughout the area, offering easier access to a greater portion of the mountainous country. In the summer of 1930, Chief Forester Robert Stuart and Assistant Regional Forester Dana Parkinson examined existing recreational facilities in Dixie National Forest and evaluated possibilities for expanding these in the near future.\textsuperscript{34} Subsequently, the Forest Service made plans to erect a large campground on the land between the Breaks and Brian Head peak. Dixie Forest officials also allocated $7,500 of the $10,000 they were given for road improvements to the construction of a “first class” road around Cedar Breaks.\textsuperscript{35} In addition to pursuing campground and road-building plans, the Forest Service withdrew land, at first a narrow strip and then a larger parcel, around the rim of Cedar Breaks from grazing. Though the second withdrawal affected the sheep-grazing practices of three Parowan residents, as well as that of two “Co-op” herds, the Forest Service happily invited the public to come enjoy the livestock-free land. To encourage greater use of the area, the Forest Service also “pull[ed] down many of its ‘don’t’ signs.” Ultimately, the plan was to offer “all the advantages of a national park,” but with fewer restrictions and no admittance fees.\textsuperscript{36}

In the meantime, Albright had begun pursuing the acquisition of Cedar Breaks in earnest. Largely on the basis of its scenic value, he wanted to add it to either Bryce Canyon or Zion National Parks, keeping it a separate geographic entity but treating the two parcels (Bryce and the Breaks, or Zion and the Breaks) as a single

The Forest Service, hoping to improve its standing with locals, argued that under its management the Breaks and the surrounding land would be developed as a recreation area and tourist destination.
administrative unit. His proposed park contained eighty-three square miles, more than two-thirds of which were national forest land. Its boundary line extended east of the Breaks to the west side of Hancock Peak. Oddly, this proposal did not include Brian Head, a prominent mountain (elevation 11,307 feet) about a mile to the north, from the top of which one could see into Nevada and Arizona. Albright’s plan differed greatly from the one espoused by Cedar City residents. They anticipated a much smaller park, but one that included Brian Head, which would anchor the park on the north. Cedar Breaks would anchor the park on the south, and a mile-wide strip of meadowland would connect the two anchors. Though they had for years supported the creation of a park, initially of mammoth proportions, townspeople were unnerved to learn of Albright’s scheme. Their plan, they claimed, had been to obtain a small park that affected the grazing rights of only Parowan’s sheep growers. Now, however, Albright was proposing a plan that would also withdraw from use a considerable portion of the range used by Cedar City ranchers.37

Longtime park promoter Randall Jones, now a publicity agent of the Union Pacific Railroad system for the southern Utah parks, conveyed the news of Albright’s plan to Iron County residents. He expressed excitement at the renewed prospects for establishing a national park, but, like most Cedar City residents, wanted a smaller one than Albright suggested. Recognizing, however, that the meadowland was prime sheep-grazing country and that primarily Parowan livestock owners would be affected, Jones thought Parowanites ought to be the ones to offer Cedar City’s park plan as a counter-proposal to Albright.38

Responding to Jones, Warner Mitchell of the Parowan Times predicted that Parowanites would not be enthusiastic about the creation of a park at Cedar Breaks if the only thing it meant for them was the loss of grazing rights and privileges. Livestock owners depended on these rights for their very livelihood, he said. Nevertheless, Mitchell thought a national park would not necessarily inflict much damage on graziers. He saw the coming of a large-scale tourism industry to that corner of Utah as inevitable and thought Parowan should work to protect its interests. Because most tourists wishing to access southern Utah’s national parks and the Grand Canyon traveled U.S. Highway 89 along the eastern edge of the Markagunt Plateau, Mitchell feared they would bypass Iron County altogether. Thus, he wrote, “It is obvious that something must be done if we are to hold on to the edge of the mountain a fair share of tourist travel to southern Utah’s wonderland.” The creation of a national park at Cedar Breaks, he thought, was the best way to accomplish that. He urged Parowan residents to aggressively pursue the park.39

As Mitchell predicted, stock growers rose up in opposition to the park proposal. Cattlemen of Cedar City who had grazing permits in Cedar Canyon feared that, once established, the park would be expanded to the point where it infringed on their grazing rights. They appointed Walter K. Granger, stockman and Cedar City mayor, to compose a resolution to that effect. For its part, the Iron County Wool Growers’ Association called for all the sheep raisers in the region to attend a meeting in the Parowan courthouse to discuss the matter. However, nearly all those in attendance at the meeting presided over by Association president Albert E. Adams were Parowanites. These woolgrowers unanimously resolved to “fight” Albright’s plan “to the last ditch.” A park occupying that much land, they feared, “would be fatal to our major industry and would no doubt put our bank and other commercial institutions out of business as well.”40 To the local livestock industry alone, the State Woolgrowers’ Association estimated the annual loss to the lamb and wool crop at $107,085, the value of the affected sheep at $165,000, and the cost of lost grazing privileges at $49,000.41

While the cattle growers of Cedar City and the sheep growers of Parowan were organizing for a fight with the National Park Service, the Cedar City Chamber of Commerce issued a request to the Forest Service that it join with the Park Service in re-examining Cedar Breaks and the surrounding area and work together to determine what portion should be included in a park.42 Subsequently, two Forest Service officials, an NPS official, and two members of the Cedar City Chamber of Commerce’s National Park Committee spent two days hiking around Cedar Breaks and to the top of Brian Head peak together. They were to come up with a new
park proposal, but use as their starting point the original Cedar City plan. The chairman of Cedar’s National Park Committee argued for the inclusion of Brian Head, which had been part of Cedar City’s plan. Interestingly, the NPS representative suggested a smaller park. Brian Head, he said, “stuck out like a sore thumb from the rest of the area.” The others agreed to eliminate that from the proposal and then sketched out a map of their proposed park—one far smaller than that envisioned by Albright. The smaller area they settled on supported only 540 sheep and 50 cattle; only five allotments and twenty-six permittees would be affected by the exclusion of these from the park.43

At the conclusion of the field investigation, the participants met with members of the Cedar City Chamber of Commerce to discuss their findings. A large group of men attended the meeting, including the mayor of Cedar City and State Representative John S. Woodbury. At the outset of the meeting, according to Mitchell who was in attendance, two things were clear: first, the Forest Service and the Park Service had not come to an accord on the matter, and, second, no one in attendance wanted a large park. Zion National Park Superintendent Thomas J. Allen assured the audience that the Park Service did not really want the larger park as shown in the map that Albright had sent, and he was prepared to recommend the much-reduced acreage for the park.44 This is an odd statement on the part of Allen, given the fact that Albright continued to maintain an interest in the eighty-three square-mile-parcel, as subsequent events showed. It appears that NPS officials on the scene held views that differed from Albright’s. Perhaps they were more interested in compromise than was their boss.

Responding both to Allen’s national monument idea and the Cedar Chamber of Commerce’s goals, Parkinson and Forest Supervisor James E. Gurr argued in favor of Forest Service management of the national monument and strongly objected to the transfer of major roadways within the proposal that the Forest Service had either constructed or improved at a cost of nearly half a million dollars. They also suggested that since regular bus service at the railroad terminal in Cedar City already served Zion, Bryce, the Grand Canyon, and Cedar Breaks, the creation of a fourth national park would probably not bring additional business to Cedar City, as its business leaders hoped.47

When attendees asked Mitchell for Parowan’s attitude toward the various proposals, he said that the town “as a unit” was opposed to a park of any size at Cedar Breaks. If the Park Service could guarantee that the creation of a park would not ruin Parowan’s livestock industry, the townspeople probably would not oppose it, but he knew such assurance was not possible. To “destroy” the livestock industry, he said, would mean disaster for the community. Allen then asked Mitchell why Parowan “had gone so far in opposing a park without ever trying to learn the Park Service’s attitude—without getting both sides of the question.” Mayor Granger interjected, explaining that, to Parowan, there was only one side to the issue. Practically the town’s “very existence,” he said, was at stake. He did not blame its residents for their stand.48
Learning of the meeting in Cedar City, Parowan residents asked for a similar meeting, which was held with the Parowan Chamber of Commerce, thirty-five men attending. As might be expected, Parowan provided these men with a rather different audience. Whereas several men in Cedar City, including former Forest Service employee William Mace, pushed strongly for national park status even after Allen had proposed a national monument designation, those in attendance in Parowan—with a few exceptions—voiced opposition to the creation of a national park. The body voted in opposition to it.

Commenting on the vote—and failing to account for the few, including his uncle Walter C. Mitchell, who favored the park but apparently dared not vote against the overwhelming majority—Warner Mitchell observed, “Parowan is probably unique in one particular. There isn’t another city in the world that would unitedly oppose the government’s locating a National Park in their immediate vicinity, we’ll venture.” Displeased with Parowan’s stand against the park, the editor of the *Iron County Record*, Cedar City’s newspaper, offered a retort. The sheep industry, he said, had been promoted and supported to the exclusion of all other industries. Consequently, Iron County’s economic well-being rose and fell with the price of wool and mutton. Believing it potentially fatal to base an entire economy on one industry, he urged people to work toward diversifying the economy. Although he only recommended poultry-raising and farming as alternatives, he argued that, in regions where such “diversification” occurred, people did not talk so much about the Great Depression as they did in Iron County. The editor also expressed con-
cern about overgrazing in the mountains above town and the erosion and flooding that resulted from it. Whether or not there was a demand for it, he thought the park’s creation to be inevitable. Therefore, there was no cause for “any division among the people of the county and right now is a time to look to the future with greater hope for the accomplishment of greater things.”\textsuperscript{55} Clearly, just as state conservation was not monolithic, neither did locals approach the issue as a united front. These two meetings reveal divisions not only between Parowan and Cedar City but also among residents of both cities.

By the end of 1931, most of the inhabitants of Iron County, apparently including members of Cedar City’s Chamber of Commerce and even its three-member National Parks Committee, were in favor of the Forest Service administering the area, rather than the Park Service. The Chamber’s National Parks Committee informed Supervisor Gurr that the Chamber “would not take any further action looking toward the creation of a Park at Cedar Breaks.”\textsuperscript{51}

Through much of the year 1932, regional and local-level Forest Service and Park Service officials debated and re-evaluated which parcels should be included in the planned park at Cedar Breaks. In October, the Park Service asked the Forest Service to conduct yet another joint field investigation. Rather than quibble over which small parcels should or should not be included, as the lower-level government officials had been doing, this team was to examine the eighty-three square miles that Albright still wanted as a national park.\textsuperscript{52} However, with the local support for it all but gone, and local NPS officers more inclined toward national monument status, his proposal seemed less likely to be adopted. Regional Forester Richard Rutledge advocated keeping Cedar Breaks National Monument under Forest Service administration and advised Stuart that “there is no agitation by the local people for a change” in land management agencies.\textsuperscript{53} When Stuart received the report from Rutledge, he asked him, “Should we make a National Monument of the Breaks?” In reply, Rutledge argued that the Forest Service could preserve or create any recreational opportunities that people might want. Therefore, he concluded, “I see no need for changing the status of an area to accomplish this development, nor do I think the public deems it necessary.”\textsuperscript{54}

Albright, undeterred, told Stuart that the Breaks’ geological features were the area’s “dominant value” and that it also had educational and “inspirational” potential “of a high order.” On these grounds, he recommended national park status. Stuart responded by repeating several of the usual arguments against placing the Breaks within a national park. He then suggested that the best course of action would be for the president of the United States to declare Cedar Breaks a national monument under the provisions of the 1906 Antiquities Act. If Albright consented to this, Stuart said he would happily join the NPS director in recommending the action. However, he wished the Forest Service to administer the national monument, pointing out that that agency administered fifteen national monuments then inside national forest boundaries.\textsuperscript{55} Albright replied quickly, expressing great disappointment that Stuart would not join him in recommending that management of Cedar Breaks be transferred to the Park Service. He urged his Forest Service counterpart to submit to the transfer of Cedar Breaks to the NPS “in the interest of harmony and as a measure of cooperation.”\textsuperscript{56}

Two months after this exchange, NPS and USFS officials hammered out several proposals. As Stuart understood it, the Park Service wanted Cedar Breaks because it was “the primary phase of the geological sequence of the region, of which Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon, [and the] Grand Canyon are later phases.” Thus, it was necessary to “round out the cycle of geological action; to complete the picture being presented to the public through the program of the National Park Service.” Furthermore, given the Park Service’s claim that its sole interest was in the geology of Cedar Breaks, it would not in the future try to add a larger section of land to the agreed upon monument, neither would it attempt to control outlying recreational areas or main highways and railroad routes in the vicinity. Lastly, the Park Service promised not to obstruct the locals’ use of timber or other natural resources on surrounding national forests. What Stuart did not realize, however, was that Albright wanted, at some point in the future, to obtain national park status for Cedar Breaks.\textsuperscript{57} Nevertheless, given the assurances of the Park
Service that it had limited designs on Cedar Breaks and would strive to keep any negative impact of the move on local citizens to a minimum, Stuart indicated that the Forest Service would not object to the land transfer.\(^5^8\)

Upon learning that the Forest Service had approved the creation of Cedar Breaks National Monument and the transfer of its administration over to the NPS, Dixie National Forest Supervisor Gurr expressed surprise and asked Rutledge to furnish him with information explaining the factors that caused the Forest Service to reverse its longtime stand on Cedar Breaks. Both federal agencies had kept their negotiations a secret, and Gurr, the highest-ranking Forest Service official in southwestern Utah, feared that local citizens would be very upset with the Forest Service’s reversal. He suggested Rutledge refrain from keeping it secret, since it would materially affect many of the locals. Nevertheless, if the Forest Service wanted the deal to remain secret, he agreed to respect that wish.\(^5^9\)

Within two months of Gurr’s letter, local residents had learned that, in all probability, Cedar Breaks would become a national monument. The Iron County Woolgrowers Association met together once again and “sent in a vigorous protest.” Meanwhile, recognizing the likelihood of the land’s transfer to the NPS, the Forest Service had stopped its development of recreation sites. In July, Assistant NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer, who was slated to replace Albright as director on August 9, visited Utah. He announced at a Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce luncheon that President Franklin D. Roosevelt would proclaim Cedar Breaks a national monument as soon as arrangements between the Forest Service and Park Service were “perfected.” He further predicted (incorrectly) that, during the upcoming session of Congress, an act making Cedar Breaks a national park would be passed.\(^6^0\) Cammerer’s statement is interesting, given the fact that Zion National Park Superintendent Allen had assured Iron County residents two years earlier that the NPS would not pursue national park status for the Breaks. On-scene NPS employees appear to have been more inclined to compromise with Iron County residents than were Park Service administrators based in the nation’s capital.

In August, Forest Service officials petitioned the Department of the Interior to draft a presidential proclamation for Franklin D. Roosevelt’s signature. Later that month, on August 22, Roosevelt signed the proclamation setting aside 7,000 acres (instead of Albright’s hoped-for 40,900 acres, or eighty-three square miles) as a national monument “for the preservation of spectacular cliffs, canyons, and features of scenic, scientific, and educational interest therein.”\(^6^1\) Placed in charge of the new monument was Preston Patraw, then superintendent of Zion National Park. Aware that Parowan was the seat of opposition to an NPS takeover, Patraw conducted a good-will tour, visiting the Parowan Chamber of Commerce. He pleaded for local cooperation with his efforts and pledged to be open to the desires of community members. Chamber president Wilford Day, the prominent sheepman who had presided over the meeting of two years prior when the city unanimously voted against having a park of any kind at the Breaks, assured Patraw that, though many locals opposed a park, now that one (of sorts) had been created, townspeople would “undoubtedly be glad to cooperate with him.”\(^6^2\) But Parowanites went even further than cooperation—they wholeheartedly embraced the new monument. In fact, the idea to hold a “dedicatory celebration” of the monument originated with the people of Parowan, not Cedar City. Members of the Parowan Chamber of Commerce invited Cedar City to join the festivities, and residents of the latter town enthusiastically did so.\(^6^3\)

The long road to the creation of Cedar Breaks National Monument pitted the residents of two towns roughly twenty miles apart against each other. Residents of Parowan, with its heavy (but not sole) reliance upon sheep raising and wool production, feared the repercussions of the creation of a national park or monument and its grazing restrictions upon their major industry and, by extension, the town itself. Furthermore, at least some Parowan residents valued Cedar Breaks as sacred space. In a 1920 discussion between members of the Salt Lake Commercial Club and representatives from Cedar and Parowan, members of the Parowan delegation told those from Cedar City that Cedar Breaks had been incorrectly named. “Those Breaks,” they said, “are and constitute Jehovah’s Celestial Paradise.”\(^6^4\)
In contrast, businessmen of Cedar City saw the Breaks strictly as a potential economic asset. Cedar City was a larger town with a more diversified economy, and its residents hoped the creation of a national park would attract tourists and give the community an economic boost. Parowan’s fears and Cedar City’s hopes only increased with the onset of the Great Depression. In the end, neither town got exactly what it wanted, although Cedar City came close. And, although economic goals separated them, these were not as strong as the religious bonds that connected them. Fellow Mormons bound by a common set of beliefs and belonging to the same ecclesiastical unit of their church—the Parowan Stake—the people joined together to celebrate the outcome.

The same could not necessarily be said of the two government agencies involved. The Forest Service and the National Park Service had been at odds virtually since the latter agency came into existence in 1916. Both were agents of state conservation, and their goals and constituen- cies often overlapped, but they also had distinct differences. Horace Albright later argued that neither he nor Stephen Mather “ever had any idea of challenging the Forest Service for lead- ership of the conservation movement.” Yet, in almost the same breath, he said that the Forest Service “stood for use of anything within their border: water, minerals, forests, and other commercially attractive enterprises. They allowed hunting, dams, summer homes, and unlimited roads for lumbering. Their beliefs contradicted all of ours.” He continued, “I’ll admit that Mather and I gave little thought and had less concern when reaching out for their land because we were so philosophically opposed to them. We genuinely believed we were preserving while they were destroying.”

The Forest Service, dedicated to a utilitarian form of conservation focused on preserving and maintaining a supply of natural resources for the use of future generations, viewed itself differently. As R. E. Gery’s concern about the people of Cedar City retaining their “individual rights” to the resources in the area, and his belief that “in the long run people of Cedar City will be much more satisfied if the area remains under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service” suggest, Forest Service officials saw themselves not only as conservers of resources but also protectors looking out for the best interest of their constituents.
The Park Service’s acquisition of national forest land put the Forest Service on the defensive. In 1921, District Forester Chester B. Morse had worried about the aggressive behavior of the Park Service, particularly as it concerned Cedar Breaks. There was hope for the Forest Service, however. Morse wrote, “the people of American Fork, [Utah] were advised to ask for the creation of a National Park to include Mt. Timpanogos but the movement stopped through the efforts of the Supervisor and the local ranger.”67 As Hal Rothman observes, Forest Service officials saw in the “single-use” national park “an overwhelming threat to their agency.” National parks were “anathema, and anytime they prevented the establishment of one they considered it a triumph.”68 Clearly, state conservation, in the form of multiple agencies, was no monolith.

Established in the mid-nineteenth century, Cedar City was to be the basis of the iron mining enterprise, while Parowan was intended to be a farming community that supplied food to the people of Cedar. The Iron Mission did not work out as planned, and the county’s two major industries soon became livestock raising and timber harvesting. As early as the late 1860s, overgrazing had become severe on the valley floor, and livestock owners gradually began using mountain land for grazing. That same decade, deregulation of natural resources resulted in fierce competition in the timber harvesting business, as large quantities of timber were cut and hauled to the mining communities in what is today southeastern Nevada. During the first few decades after Mormon settlement, cattle had been dominant in the livestock industry, but by 1900 sheep had surpassed cattle in dominance. At that time, livestock raising and farming produced 95 percent of the income in the county. Clearly, the importance of timber harvesting had dropped precipitously. By the time the Sevier Forest Reserve was created in 1905, the mountain ranges were severely overgrazed. Depletion estimates ranged anywhere from 25 to 100 percent, depending on location. Notwithstanding the severe overgrazing, Iron County sheepmen experienced their most productive years between 1910 and 1930, when total herd sizes ranged from 190,000 to 200,000 sheep. In 1930, these sheep produced in excess of one million pounds of wool.69

Given these circumstances, and the onset of the Great Depression, it is no surprise that Parowan, the center of sheep ranching in the county, feared the loss of grazing lands to a national park or monument. Thus, they favored Forest Service management over Park Service control. Many Iron County residents, in fact, recognized that those agencies focusing on material aspects of conservation such as watershed protection and range management generally acted in their best long-term interest. With timber lands cut over and grazing areas denuded of vegetation, locals who wished to sustain the lumber or livestock industries for themselves and for future generations recognized the need for oversight by a federal agency with enough clout to create and enforce changes that would make this possible. Thus, some locals, at least part of the time, were conservationists.

In general, Iron County residents welcomed the arrival of state conservation agencies to their region. Townspeople disagreed over which agency should be in control of a certain parcel of land, based on their own interests, such as promotion of the livestock industry or the creation of a tourist industry. They did not band together to oppose state conservation, as some people elsewhere did. Furthermore, it is clear from the struggle over Cedar Breaks that without substantial support from locals no conservation agency could fully achieve its aims.

Web Extra

At history.utah.gov/uhqextras we reproduce a number of foundational documents and reports regarding creation of Cedar Breaks.
Notes


7 Ibid.

8 As used in this essay, “state conservation” refers collectively to the various federal-level land management agencies and their goals—conserving, preserving, or managing natural resources. Usage of this term is commonplace among environmental historians whose work deals with these agencies. See, for example, Karl Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), and Benjamin Heber Johnson, “Conservation, Subsistence, and Class at the Birth of Superior National Forest,” Environmental History 4 (January 1999): 80–99.


11 Lloyd W. MacFarlane, Dr. Mac: The Man, His Land, and His People (Cedar City: Southern Utah State College Press, 1985), 209–10.

12 Janet Burton Seegmiller, Community Above Self: A History of Iron County (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1998), 399–403; MacFarlane, Dr. Mac, 166–69.


29 Ibid., 8, 13–14.

30 Chester B. Morse, Ogden, Utah, to “The Forester,” Washington, D.C., November 1, 1921; R. E. Gery, to William Mace, January 30, 1923; Richard H. Rutledge to “The Forester,” May 22, 1929. All three letters are in
Dixie National Forest Historical Papers Collection, MSS 4, box 15, fº 897 “Cedar Breaks National Monument,” Special Collections, Gerald R. Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah.


33 “Is It Advisable?” Iron County Record, July 15, 1931.

34 “Dixie Forest Doings,” Iron County Record, July 18, 1930.

35 “Forest Service Would Build Big Camp at Breaks,” Parowan Times, August 12, 1932; “$7,500 to be Spent on Road around Breaks,” Parowan Times, August 19, 1932; Forest Service Takes up Recreation Projects,” Iron County Record, October 20, 1932.

36 “Forest Service Would Build Big Camp at Breaks,” Parowan Times, August 12, 1932.


41 “Woolgrowers Start Opposition to Park,” Parowan Times, August 7, 1931.

42 James E. Gurr to “Regional Forester,” August 24, 1931, in Dixie National Forest Historical Papers Collection.

43 Dana Parkinson, “Memorandum for Regional Forester,” October 14, 1931, in Dixie National Forest Historical Papers Collection; “National Park at Breaks is Being Investigated,” Parowan Times, October 2, 1931.

44 Parkinson, “Memorandum for Regional Forester”; “National Park at Breaks is Being Investigated.”

45 Parkinson, “Memorandum for Regional Forester”; “National Park at Breaks is Being Investigated.”

46 “Cedar City News,” Parowan Times, June 26, 1931; Parkinson, “Memorandum for Regional Forester”; “National Park at Breaks is Being Investigated.”

47 Parkinson, “Memorandum for Regional Forester.”

48 “National Park at Breaks is Being Investigated.”

49 Parkinson, “Memorandum for Regional Forester”; “Parowan Votes Against Park at Cedar Breaks,” Parowan Times, October 9, 1931.

50 “Creating a National Park at Cedar Breaks: An Editorial,” Iron County Record, October 14, 1931; “Parowan Votes Against Park at Cedar Breaks,” Parowan Times, October 9, 1931.


55 Robert Y. Stuart to Horace Albright, February 8, 1933, Dixie National Forest Historical Papers Collection.


57 Stuart to Albright, April 25, 1933; Albright to Stuart, April 29, 1933; both in Dixie National Forest Historical Papers Collection.

58 Edward A. Sherman to Representative Abe Murdock, June 9, 1933, Dixie National Forest Historical Papers Collection.

59 Gurr to Rutledge, May 19, 1933; Parkinson to Rutledge, May 23, 1933; both in USFS Region IV historical archives.


62 “Park Superintendent Seeks Local Cooperation,” Parowan Times, October 20, 1933.

63 “Plans Completed for Dedication of Breaks Monument July 4,” Iron County Record, June 21, 1934.


65 Horace M. Albright and Marian Albright Schenck, Creating the National Park Service: The Missing Years (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 293.

66 R. E. Gery to William M. Mace, November 7, 1921, USFS Region IV historical archives.

67 Chester B. Morse to “The Forester,” November 1, 1921.


69 Seegmiller, Community Above Self, 302–5, 351, 361.