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ABSTRACT

The main argument of this dissertation is that the White Mountain Apache Tribe’s appropriation of ecological restoration played a vital role in reinstituting control over knowledge production and ecocultural resources on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in the second half of the twentieth century. As a corollary, I argue that the shift in knowledge production practices from a paternalistic foundation to a community-based approach resulted in positive consequences for the ecological health of the Apachean landscape and Apache culture. The democratization of science and technology on the reservation, therefore, proved paramount to the reestablishment of a relatively sustainable Apache society.

Beginning with the Indian New Deal, the White Mountain Apache slowly developed the capacity to employ ecological restoration as an eco-political tool to free themselves from a long history of Euro-American cultural oppression and natural resource exploitation. Tribal restoration projects embodied the dual political function of cultural resistance to and cultural exchange with Western-based land management organizations. Apache resistance challenged Euro-American notions of restoration, nature, and sustainability while maintaining cultural identity, reasserting cultural autonomy, and protecting tribal sovereignty. But at the same time, the Apache depended on cultural exchange with federal and state land management agencies to successfully manage their natural resources and build an ecologically knowledgeable tribal workforce.
Initially adopting a utilitarian conservation model of land management, restoration projects aided the creation of a relatively strong tribal economy. In addition, early successes with trout, elk, and forest restoration projects eventually granted the Tribe political leverage when they sought to reassume control over reservation resources from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Building on this foundation, Apache restoration work significantly diverged in character from the typical Euro-American restoration project by the 1990s. While striving toward self-sufficiency, the Tribe hybridized tribal cultural values with Western ecological values in their restoration efforts. These projects evolved the tripartite capacity to heal ecologically degraded reservation lands, to establish a degree of economic freedom from the federal government, and to restore cultural traditions. Having reversed their historical relationship of subjugation with government agencies, the Apache currently have almost full decision-making powers over tribal eco-cultural resources.
# Table of Contents

**List of Figures** viii

**Acknowledgements** ix

**List of Acronyms** xii

**Introduction** 1

The Significance of White Mountain Apache Ecological Restoration 6

Theoretical Considerations: Native American Societal Decline and the Cultural Appropriation of Western Science and Technology 12

Resistance and Exchange: A Dynamic Eco-political Model of Self-Determination 18

**Chapter 1 - Visions of the White Mountain’s Past: Multiple Baselines for Restoration** 29

White Mountain Apache Visions of Restoration: “The Earth is Set Up” 31

Euro-American Visions of Restoration 41

The Indian New Deal and a Vision of Eco-cultural Restoration 51

Conclusion: Restoration and Culture 62

**Chapter 2 - The Political Origins of White Mountain Apache Eco-cultural Restoration: The Indian New Deal** 67

The Foundations of American Indian Self-Determination and Political Autonomy 69

John Collier’s Indian New Deal 72

The Indian New Deal and the White Mountain Apache 81

Paternalism and the White Mountain Apache 89
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3 - The Civilian Conservation Corp – Indian Division: Acquiring Expertise and Knowledge in Western Restoration and Conservation Techniques</th>
<th>107</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of the CCC-ID</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealism versus Reality: Early Apache Conservation Education, 1933 – 1937</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A New Direction in Conservation Education, 1938 – 1942</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: The Lasting Implications of the CCC-ID and Indian New Deal</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4 - The Ironic Foundation of Eco-cultural Restoration: The Williams Creek Fish Hatchery</th>
<th>132</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Path toward an Unlikely Partnership</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping the Fort Apache Landscape as a Euro-American Recreational Playground</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Pathway of Ambivalence toward Eco-cultural Restoration and Modernization</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 5 - Institutionalizing Resistance and Exchange: The White Mountain Recreational Enterprise</th>
<th>169</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Social and Political Context (1945 – 1960)</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building towards a Recreation Development Program</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Birth of an Eco-cultural Enterprise</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Year</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance: The Battle over Hawley Lake</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 6 - The 1960s: Ecological Restoration as a Mediator between Economic Development and Eco-cultural Degradation

221


224

Building Expertise and Government-to-Government Relationships

231

Resistance: Not your Wilderness, But our Wilderness

241

Exchange: Apache Trout Restoration

253

Conclusion

264

### Chapter 7 - Elk Restoration and Management: The Battle to Control Knowledge Production on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation

266


269

Transition in Power on Fort Apache

275

The History of Elk on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation

284

Resistance: The White Mountain Apache Tribe vs. Arizona Game and Fish Department

294

Exchange: Return to a Frontier Hunter’s “Paradise”

315

Conclusion

320

### Chapter 8 - The 1990s: Moving Towards an Epistemological Restoration

323

The Connection between the Philosophy of Ecosystem Management and the Traditional Apache Subsistence System

329

The Endangered Species Act, Sovereignty, and Apache Culture

334
Watershed Restoration: Healing Past Discretions, Building Respect for Apache Knowledge 345

Cultural Restoration: Reconnecting Apaches to the Land 352

Managing Success, Limitations to Progress 356

Conclusion 362

Conclusion - The Ecological and Cultural Significance of White Mountain Apache Restoration 365

The Meaning of Restoration for the White Mountain Apache 366

The Geography of Restoration 371

Challenges to Euro-American Conceptions of Ecological Restoration 380

Bibliography 385
List of Figures

Fig. 1 – Reversing Dependency ................................................................. 14
Fig. 2 – Paternalism and the Apache relationship to Science and Technology ........................................... 24
Fig. 3 – A 1937 Map of Roadless Areas on Fort Apache Indian Reservation .............................................. 59
Fig. 4 – Mount Thomas (Baldy) in 1941 ...................................................... 60
Fig. 5 – CCC-ID work projects in 1936 ...................................................... 112
Fig. 6 – Fort Apache Fire School in 1937 .................................................... 120
Fig. 7 – Williams Creek prior to construction of the hatchery in 1939 ............................................................ 141
Fig. 8 – Rearing ponds at Williams Creek Fish Hatchery in 1941 ................................. 151
Fig. 9 – Learning “genuine conservation” at Williams Creek Fish Hatchery in 1941 ............................ 159
Fig. 10 – Silas Davis working on his fire protractor ....................................... 195
Fig. 11 – Hawley Lake and Smith Park Dam ................................................. 203
Fig. 12 – Map of the Mount Baldy Wilderness Area ......................................... 248
Fig. 13 – Ecological Restoration as a site of resistance and exchange ......................... 328
Fig. 14 – Corduroy Watershed Project in 1956 .............................................. 346
Fig. 15 – Restoration of Soldier Spring ....................................................... 351
Fig. 16 – Emphasis on values associated with ecological restoration over time ...................... 367
Acknowledgments

When I first decided to study of the historical roots of Native American ecological restoration efforts, I had no idea what I was getting into. What started as an interesting topic that would narrow the focus of my dissertation from the impossible task of a complete history of ecological restoration became an eye-opening revelation. Obviously this should be the case for all dissertation projects, but for me, my research operated on a very personal level. Like most Americans, I had a rudimentary understanding of Native American history and political affairs. I certainly held sympathetic feelings for their predicament, but did not have a grasp of the complexity of Native American affairs. That I have gained a new appreciation for what Native Americans have achieved in the last 100 years through my attempt to tell a small part of the White Mountain Apache story would be an understatement. Given the political, legal, ecological, economic, cultural, and social obstacles they have endured, I have gained a deep respect for what American Indians accomplished in modern times. In short, this dissertation project became much bigger than just understanding the meaning of Native American restoration. It became a venue for understanding how a group of people overcame insurmountable odds to begin righting horrid injustices they incurred. Indeed, the White Mountain Apache story goes well beyond ecological restoration. But telling this story through both the metaphor of restoration and the socio-technical material reality of restoration seemed an apt way of describing an extremely complex and empowering story.

Of course I have numerous people I should thank for helping bring this project to fruition. All the people I mention below in their own way gave me support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the emotional, intellectual, and cultural struggle I felt as I pieced together this project. First, I would like to thank Janet Abbate, Shannon Brown, Beverly Bunch-Lyons, Anne Laberge, Ellen Paul, and Lee Zwanzinger for excellent courses that enriched my research on ecological restoration. All of them gave valuable input that enhanced my dissertation research. Anne Laberge way back in 1997 opened my eyes to a whole new way of thinking through her History of Science course. This course eventually led me down the path of entering the STS program in 2003. And if it had not been for Shannon Brown’s History of Technology course, I might not have ever stumbled on to this very rich topic.
I also attended a number of workshops and conferences that influenced the direction of my research. In the early stages of my research, I received many supportive and critical comments from the participants of a graduate student conference on Humanities and Geography at Brown University in the spring of 2006. I am also forever grateful to Marcus Hall for inviting me to participate in the workshop “Restoring or Renaturing? The Presence of the Past in Ecological Restoration” held in Zurich, Switzerland in July of 2006. The participants of this workshop provided a wealth of constructive criticism as I presented a very early version of my ideas on Native American ecological restoration. I also would be remiss if I didn’t thank Bill Jordan and Liam Heneghan of the Institute of Nature and Culture at DePaul University for inviting me to give a presentation in February of 2007. Bill Jordan in particular has helped guide and refine my ideas almost from the beginning. His vast historical insights, experiences, and role in developing the idea of ecological restoration certainly helped me put Native American restoration efforts into context.

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I visited a number of archives throughout my research. The numerous staff members I called on for assistance from the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington DC, the Library of Congress, the Arizona State Archives and Public Library in Phoenix, Arizona, and the Cline Library Archives at Northern Arizona University all were extremely gracious with their time and services. In particular, Cheryl Oakes of the Forest History Society went above and beyond the call of duty, unearthing a number of sources I might have never found
otherwise. All of the people I met at the various archives I visited enhanced my research efforts and made my stays pleasant.

My dissertation committee was extremely supportive as I struggled to refine my dissertation topic and then bring it together. My committee chair, Mark Barrow, Jr., never seemed to waiver in his confidence for me and created an environment of intellectual freedom. Besides doling out invaluable guidance, he gladly worked with me on improving my writing skills. Bruce Hull introduced me to a number of prominent members of the restoration community that proved useful to the project, including Bill Jordan. Bruce also kept me on my toes with his provocative and forthright comments. Eileen Crist’s analytical insights and conceptual suggestions encouraged me to explore beyond the bounds of STS and make this project my own. And Barbara Allen, beyond her intellectual contributions, made it possible for me to come back to school and pursue my PhD. She offered me an assistantship in 2004 and continued to fight for financial support for me for the first three years of my studies.

I received a number of grants that supported my research. A Bell Fellowship gave me the opportunity to explore the archival resources of the Forest History Society. A Graduate Student Assembly dissertation research grant helped pay for one of my excursions to Arizona. And a Phillips Native American Fund research grant from the American Philosophical Society paid for numerous research expenditures and a second stay in Arizona. Finally, the Science and Technology in Society Department at Virginia Tech funded several trips to academic conferences and workshops that enriched my research efforts.

Lastly, I must thank my family. My father and mother, Robert and Pamela Tomblin, have always encouraged and supported my intellectual endeavors. If it weren’t for them, I wouldn’t be the curious person that I am. My wife, Laura Zepp, endured the brunt of my emotional travails throughout my schooling experience. She was there for both the ups and downs, and always had faith that I would finish, even when I doubted myself. I will forever cherish her love and support throughout this experience. And perhaps the biggest catalyst in the whole process was my daughter Evelyn. She came to the game late, but desperately wanted to contribute, as would any one year old that is fascinated with buttons; especially it seems, with computer keyboards. Beyond this contribution, her beautiful, cheerful disposition gave me happiness and courage during the long, arduous writing phase of my dissertation.
### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACIA</td>
<td>Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFC</td>
<td>Arizona Game and Fish Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFD</td>
<td>Arizona Game and Fish Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIA</td>
<td>Bureau of Indian Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Civilian Conservation Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC-ID</td>
<td>Civilian Conservation Corps – Indian Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>Central Classified Files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOI</td>
<td>Department of Interior</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>Endangered Species Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>FATCO</td>
<td>Fort Apache Timber Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAIR</td>
<td>Fort Apache Indian Reservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>FHS</td>
<td>Forest History Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>FWS (USFWS)</td>
<td>United States Fish and Wildlife Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPAIEd</td>
<td>Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>Indian Claims Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRA</td>
<td>Indian Reorganization Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCAI</td>
<td>National Congress of American Indians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>OEO</td>
<td>Office of Economic Opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>RG</td>
<td>Record Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRVWUA</td>
<td>Salt River Valley Water User’s Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>USGS</td>
<td>United States Geological Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMRE</td>
<td>White Mountain Recreational Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMAT</td>
<td>White Mountain Apache Tribe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Salt Banks was real pretty once, but then two whitemen destroyed it. I think it was around 1932 or 1933…It used to be kind of like a porch from the roof and you could see the salts hanging down from up there. They looked like pipes, white pipes hanging down. Those were the salts and water was dripping out of them. The water was kind of milky-looking. It was real salty. We used to stand there and it dropped in our mouth…Like I told you, those two whitemen destroyed the salt cave. They destroyed the porch-looking part. Now it’s all down on the ground. It’s all chopped up. They used powder – dynamite – to destroy it. I don’t know why they did that. I don’t know what they were looking for. Long years ago, people were crazy for gold – maybe that’s what they thought.1

In 2004 Eva Tulene Watt, a White Mountain Apache elder, told this story about the destruction of an Apache eco-cultural resource.2 This story symbolizes the ecological and cultural losses the Apache have endured since their Tribe’s isolation on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in 1870. Salt Banks is both a sacred site - a place to pray to Changing Woman who gave birth to the White Mountain Apache - and a place where tribal members derive sustenance for their daily existence.3 Fate perhaps served almost immediate justice for this atrocity because as the story goes, the two whites who desecrated Salt Banks were struck by lightning. The demise of these two perpetrators, however, failed to protect the Tribe’s cherished lands from interlopers. Because of such mistreatment of their lands, by the 1930s the Apache

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2 I use the term “eco-cultural” resources to refer to what is typically divided into separate categories in Western land management practices: cultural and ecological resources. Although Western academics and land managers recently developed the term eco-cultural to characterize a growing recognition among them that separating natural and cultural resources into separate categories is both socially and physically impractical, the term also fits the way Native American groups in general have historically defined their relationship to nonhuman nature. They do not separate nature and culture. See for example, Dennis Rogers Martinez, “Protected Areas, Indigenous Peoples, and the Western Idea of Nature,” Ecological Restoration 21 (2003): 247-250. More specifically, in contrast to Western science, an abstract separation of nature and culture is impossible for the Western Apache. Keith Basso claims, “All Apache narratives are verbally anchored to points upon the land with precise depictions of specific locations.” Keith Basso, Wisdom Sits in Places (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), p. 87.
began voicing the need to protect the Salt Banks and other tribal resources from outsiders. Eva Watt warned, “Nobody’s supposed to fool with our salt place. It’s not supposed to be touched. That place is sacred. It was used by Indian people long years before us. We still get our salt there. We still pray and bless ourselves when we go down there. From now on, that place must be protected.”

The 1930s constituted a watershed moment in the history of the White Mountain Apache. Prior to the 1930s, the White Mountain Apache suffered extensive damage to grazing lands, timber, and water resources due to federal mismanagement. Even though the Apache recognized that Euro-Americans were destroying their eco-cultural resources long before the destruction of Salt Banks, they had little recourse to do anything about this exploitation. During the 1930s, however, a major shift in federal Indian policy provided the Apache with the political foundation to begin a long journey to protect, restore, and control the Fort Apache Indian Reservation landscape. John Collier’s Indian New Deal became the launching point for this journey. For the first time in American history, the White Mountain Apache, along with other American Indian tribes, received significant federal aid to protect their lands. Unfortunately, despite this federal aid, Euro-American exploitation of Native American resources continued for many years to come. Nonetheless, this time period marked the beginning of widespread efforts to restore the eco-cultural resources of Native American tribes. In addition, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for the first time attempted to train American Indians how to use Western land management techniques. Eventually combining their own local knowledge and management styles with the credibility they earned from mastering Western science, the White Mountain Apache Tribe managed to slowly reinstate political control over their homeland by the 1990s.

This dissertation explores the struggle of the White Mountain Apache Tribe to gain autonomy over the management of their eco-cultural resources through the cultural appropriation of ecological restoration. Early on, some of these restoration programs benefitted the Tribe and some of them

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4 Watt, Don’t Let the Sun Step Over You, p. 174
benefitted outsiders. Eventually, however, the political will of the Apache led to almost complete control of land management decisions on the reservation, thus a restoration program that reflected the cultural and ecological concerns of the Apache people. And in taking care of themselves, they began to benefit others through providing a healthy reservation-wide ecosystem, which constitutes the headwaters of the Salt River, a significant water source for residents of the Salt River Valley and the city of Phoenix.

This story isn’t unique to the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Perhaps one of the best kept secrets in American history is the political resurgence of Native American tribes in the latter half of the twentieth century. Moreover, Native American groups asserting control over natural resource management science and technologies on their reservations plays a pivotal role in this ascension. Unfortunately historians, anthropologists, political scientists, and sociologists are guilty of neglecting the environmental, political, and cultural consequences of marginalized cultures appropriating Western science and technology to ensure the survival of their societies. In the past 20 years, American Indian tribes from coast to coast have embraced ecological restoration as a tool not only to restore damaged ecosystems, but also to reintegrate their cultural traditions into the North American landscape. This movement is significant because Indian country constitutes over 100 million acres of the United States, an area similar in size to


the entire National Park System. Since the inception of the Indian New Deal in 1934, in the lower forty-eight states alone, the American Indian land base increased from 48 million to 60 million acres. Furthermore, American Indian restorationists are challenging Western-based natural resource policies that traditionally have undermined tribal sovereignty and marginalized Native American knowledge about resource management on reservations and adjacent public lands. They also complicate the Euro-American standard of ecological restoration and wilderness management in National Parks and Wilderness Areas - a management regime that emphasizes the importance of maintaining a pre-European settlement landscape, which until recently in popular culture, has been depicted as free of large-scale human intervention and intentional design. In contrast, American Indian restorationists and their allies claim that aboriginal cultures intensively managed the North American landscape prior to European colonization.

The rise of American Indian involvement in land management decisions parallels historical shifts in federal policy from an expert-driven, technocratic approach to more democratic, community-based approaches. In recent years, the implementation of co-management plans by and statements of 

7 Indian country is the legal name that collectively describes reservations, dependent Indian communities, and Indian allotments under federal jurisdiction. The legal definition of Indian lands is commonly derived from the following federal statute: 18 U.S.C. 1151.
agreements between various tribes and federal agencies have become common. Furthermore, many tribes, including the White Mountain Apache, now have their own natural resource bureaucracies. These developments necessitate probing four basic questions. First, how did American Indians use ecological restoration to reestablish their influence over eco-cultural resources in the United States? Second, what social, political, and ecological conditions in the second half of the twentieth century reinvigorated these so-called “vanishing” indigenous cultures? Third, did American Indian restoration efforts differ in character from other cultures that implement restoration projects (e.g., governmental agencies, academics, NGOs, industry, grassroots community-based projects, etc.)? And fourth, as a consequence of cultural differences, did Native American management systems shape Indian country differently than federal agencies? In other words, have historical and cultural context influenced the physical and social outcome of ecological restoration?

A historical case study of the White Mountain Apache Tribe’s struggle to control and restore their eco-cultural resources affords an excellent opportunity to explore these questions. Moreover, historical observation of the White Mountain Apache use of ecological restoration to break the shackles of dependency, to escape paternalistic policies, and to begin restoring their lands, culture, and political sovereignty provides insight into the larger American Indian cultural and political “revolution” of the second half of the twentieth century. Like most Native American groups, the Apache resisted federal policies of cultural assimilation and land dispossession in an attempt to maintain and reclaim their culture and land.\textsuperscript{12} As of 2009, the White Mountain Apache Tribe has achieved a fair amount of autonomy concerning the management of eco-cultural resources on their reservation. However, their

current political success didn’t come easy and remains in tension with a fickle federal government that has a long history of breaking its fiduciary responsibility to American Indian tribes. Understanding this journey, in part, requires an analysis of the interaction between the Apache and land management agencies during the second half of the twentieth century.

In short, the main argument of this dissertation is that the White Mountain Apache cultural appropriation of ecological restoration played a vital role in the Apache reinstituting control over knowledge production and eco-cultural resources on Fort Apache. Assuming control allowed them to direct knowledge production towards the benefit of the Tribe rather than Euro-Americans. As a corollary, I argue that the shift in knowledge production practices from a paternalistic foundation to a community-based approach had positive consequences for the ecological health of the Apachean landscape and Apache culture. To support this argument, this dissertation has three primary goals: 1) to uncover the social, political, epistemological, and ecological factors that facilitate and constrain the restoration of eco-cultural resources on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation; 2) to demonstrate the political, philosophical, social, and technical innovations of White Mountain Apache restoration work; and 3) to describe the significant role that culture plays in the physical and social product of ecological restoration projects.

The Significance of White Mountain Apache Ecological Restoration

The Ndee (the People) or the White Mountain Apache is one of several bands (San Carlos, Cibecue, Northern Tonto, and Southern Tonto) that belong to the Western Apache group. Both Cibecue and

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13 For stylistic reasons, I intermittently shorten the Tribe’s full name, White Mountain Apache, to Apache. In these cases I am only talking about the Native Americans who reside on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. The White Mountain Apache are one distinct band of Apache among the Western Apache and the Eastern Apache, which include the Chiricahua, Mescalero, Lipan, and Kiowa-Apache people. For background on the Western Apache groups see, Keith Basso, “Western Apache,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: Southwest, Vol.*
White Mountain Apache live on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. For the purposes of creating a sovereign identity, they have chosen to collectively call themselves the White Mountain Apache Tribe, although locally tribal members still distinguish between the two bands. Unlike so many other Native American groups, the federal government allowed the Apache to remain on their homeland, the White Mountains of east-central Arizona.

According to Ronnie Lupe, the current Tribal Chairman, “The White Mountain Apache Tribe is fortunate to have a land base that is rich in natural beauty and bounty.” In order to survive as a culture, the Tribe depends greatly on this good fortune – the extensive natural resource base of the reservation. The reservation population has almost quadrupled since the 1930s from approximately 3,000 members to just fewer than 12,000 members as of the 2000 census. This population growth, along with the Tribe’s desire to remain a sovereign nation, furthers their dependence on the reservation ecosystem’s goods and services. Currently timber, cattle, hunting, fishing, ecotourism, a ski resort, and a casino support their economy. Lupe believes “[o]ur resources provide us with the potential and opportunity for sustainable development for future generations of Apaches.” He also realizes that in order for this goal to succeed, the Apache people have to adapt to a changing world, combining Western science and technology with Apache traditions. Because of the environmental, economic, and political demands of maintaining tribal sovereignty and sustaining reservation resources, ecological restoration has become an increasingly important tool in the Tribe’s quest for cultural survival.

Documenting the White Mountain Apache’s evolving relationship with ecological restoration is important for three basic reasons. First, among American Indians, they have been at the forefront of a nationwide struggle to control natural resource management within Indian country. They pioneered cooperative agreements with state and federal land management agencies other than the BIA. They also developed the first comprehensive natural resource management program independent of the BIA. In 1952 the Apache established the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise (WMRE) to manage, restore, and develop the reservation’s recreational potential and to train tribal members in natural resource management techniques. In addition, well before the inception of the Endangered Species Act, the WMRE attempted to protect the Apache trout from extinction. As the Tribe’s natural resource management capacity grew, they were among the leaders in the fight for the right to manage and restore reservation resources for the benefit of Indian people. From these battles with federal and state land management agencies emerged an internationally recognized trophy elk management program and a nationally recognized endangered species management program. In general, other Native American groups have modeled their restoration and management strategies after the success of the White Mountain Apache.

Second, ever since the Indian New Deal, the White Mountain Apache have had a continuous, visible history of political engagement with state and federal land management agencies. Furthermore, the Fort Apache Indian Reservation became a “laboratory” for cutting-edge experimental restoration work: prescribed burns, endangered species protection, and watershed management. These restorative experiments in conjunction with long-term, continuous Apache involvement in natural resource politics provide a unique opportunity to trace the evolution of ecological restoration on an Indian reservation. As a consequence of the White Mountain Apache’s active, continuous participation in restoration and management efforts since the Indian New Deal, we can observe several social, political, cultural, and
ecological phenomena: 1) the political revitalization of the Apache people in connection with the democratization of science and technology; 2) the Apache’s accumulation of political capital through the gradual cultural appropriation of ecological restoration; 3) a transition in knowledge production systems from a paternalistic model to a community-based model; 4) the evolution of restoration during the Indian New Deal from a single species/purpose (e.g., range, timber, game) approach to a more integrative ecosystem approach; 5) the incremental layering of social values onto ecological restoration over time; and 6) the changing impact of ecological restoration on a landscape as the values associated with this work shifts from one culture’s perspective to another.

Finally, the political, scientific, and technological feats of the White Mountain Apache represent a prominent counter-example to the notion of the “vanishing Indian.” The Apache story directly speaks to existential questions that plague Native American societies in contemporary times. For example, what does it mean to be an American Indian in modern society? In the eyes of non-Indians, why does the adoption of modern science and technology threaten American Indian cultural identity? Oren Lyon, a late twentieth-century Onondaga leader, once rhetorically pondered these questions: “So, what are we? Are we traditionalists or are we assimilated? If you [Euro-Americans] can get away from your categories and definitions, you will perceive us as a living and continuing society.” With this proposal, Lyon sought to break rigid, static cultural classifications that deny Native Americans modernity. Whether Native Americans live up to the ideals of the “ecological Indian,” have assimilated into the mainstream of Western society, or remain traditionalists is a moot point. These categories obscure the reality of Native American life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. American Indian cultures

continue to persist in modern society, adopting Western science and technologies to actively manage the eco-cultural resources of Indian country.

Yet stale conceptions of American Indian culture persist. According to the standards of late nineteenth-century anthropologists, a native group remained a distinct culture only if they managed the impossible task of keeping their “primitive” traditions pure. Any introduction of Western technology tainted this purity. Euro-American anthropologists based these comparisons on the false perception that Western society had attained a higher level of civilization than Native American societies.\(^{19}\) Furthermore, they believed technology carried Western society to the pinnacle of civilization. Therefore, through manifest destiny, Western society represented the forefront of technological progress.\(^{20}\) This misguided reasoning influenced the architects of nineteenth-century federal assimilation programs. They believed that introducing agricultural technologies into native societies would civilize American Indians, thus mainstreaming them into American society. In the long-run the assimilationist philosophy failed as Native Americans reacted to this program in unpredictable ways. Some groups rejected agrarian technologies outright, others adapted them to enhance their own agricultural technologies, and other groups simply failed. However, residual elements of this philosophy continued to guide Euro-American perceptions of Native American uses of Western technology deep into the twentieth century.\(^{21}\)

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The assimilationist philosophy and technological determinism deny Native American societies historical agency to determine their fate. In the quest to restore political sovereignty and maintain cultural identity, twentieth-century Native American groups battled misconceived Western social constructions of their people that either doomed them to cultural extinction (assimilated Indian) or froze their identities in idealistic perpetuity (traditionalist, ecological Indian). Instead, Native American societies, like the White Mountain Apache, understood that cultural survival required the adoption of Western science and technology. However, while Euro-American anthropologists, politicians, missionaries, and educators saw these adoptions as stepping stones towards assimilation, some Native Americans viewed these introductions as an opportunity to reassert tribal sovereignty, thus maintain cultural identity.\(^{22}\)

For the Apache in particular, the appropriation of science and technology didn’t necessarily compromise their existence as a unique culture. In fact, from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, the Apache adoption of Spanish and Euro-American technologies allowed their culture to persist. As the Apache adjusted to the presence of these new cultures, they absorbed new technologies such as the domesticated horse, but sustained their identity.\(^{23}\) Adaptation remained a characteristic of Apache culture throughout the twentieth century. In the second half of that century, as the Apache modernized reservation life, some cultural elements from the past persisted and others faded away. They even used Western science and technology to restore lost cultural elements. In short, the White Mountain Apache story of cultural appropriation of ecological restoration defies the notion of the vanishing Indian. The history of the Apache people demonstrates that culture shapes science and

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\(^{22}\) For a number of Native American testimonies on this distinction see Kenneth R. Philp, ed., *Indian Self-Rule: First-hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Chicago, IL: Howe Brothers, 1986). Vine Deloria also articulates this point in *Custer Died for Your Sins*.

technology just as much as science and technology shapes culture. The environmental and cultural implications of this reciprocal process are explored further in the next section of this chapter.

**Theoretical Considerations: Native American Societal Decline and the Cultural Appropriation of Western Science and Technology**

Most histories of Native Americans describe the decline of their societies.²⁴ For example, Richard White in *The Roots of Dependency* employs a variation of dependency theory to explain the cultural and political downturn of the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos. In his own words:

> The collapse of their subsistence systems and their integration into world markets brought increasing reliance on the capitalist core, lack of economic choice, and profound political and social changes within their societies…At its most extreme, the process rendered the Indians utterly superfluous – a population without control over resources, sustained in its poverty by payments controlled by the larger society, and subject to increasing pressure to lose their group identity and disappear.²⁵

White criticizes past historians for over-determining dependency theory with the capitalist economic system, rendering Native Americans passive agents in their decline. Instead he argues that cultural and political factors have been equal partners with economic and environmental factors in transforming Native American societies to dependent nations. This long and convoluted pathway entailed much resistance to and exchange with the capitalist system before almost complete subjugation occurred.

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Throughout this historical process, culture and politics shared a reciprocal relationship with economic systems and the environment. Initially Native Americans controlled exchanges with Euro-Americans. But gradually, various cultural, political, environmental, and economic factors led to a loss of control over their destiny, leading to the eventual dependence on the federal government for almost their entire livelihood. However, this subjugation was never complete. My story, which picks up where White’s left off, demonstrates that the same reciprocal relationship that brought about the demise of Native American groups planted the seeds for a political and cultural resurgence. Eventually many American Indian nations began combining elements from both Native American and Western traditions to reimagine not only their eco-cultural landscapes but also their political and economic systems (Fig. 1).

As White thoroughly demonstrates, cultural resistance to and exchange with Western traditions has long been part of American Indian history. James Merrell’s study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century mid-Atlantic Indian tribe’s responses to the arrival of Europeans and Africans expands on this theme. Merrell’s study provides an excellent example of Native American social and political flexibility to reimagine their societies in the wake of ecological change and cultural disruption. He illustrates that the cultural appropriation and adaptation of Western technology proved key to the long-term survival and reivention of American Indian cultures. Merrell asserts that just as Europeans and Africans experienced a “new world” upon arrival in North America, so too did American Indians. They found themselves in a drastically different cultural and ecological milieu from pre-European colonization conditions. As European colonizers moved inland, disrupting native political and social systems, American Indians had to adapt. Population decimation due to pathogens introduced by Europeans; integration into the world market through exchange of technology, cultural artifacts, and raw materials; and encroachment on tribal territories failed to annihilate mid-Atlantic Indian culture. Instead, a number of groups, including the Eno, Santee, Saponi, Catawba, responded in culturally and politically innovative ways. Most groups
Cultural change is a product of Cyclical time interacting with linear time. Aspirations to return to an ideal past or maintain a status quo interact with agents of change (cultural, biotic, and abiotic)

Fluctuations over linear time represent cycles of cultural resistance, restoration (renewal), and adaptation (includes cultural appropriation of Western traditions and technology) interacting with outside influences of oppression and exploitation.

Fig. 1 – Reversing Dependency
in that region became part of what was known as the Catawba Nation. As a matter of survival, remnant factions of old societies fused together to form a new society in a “new world.” This new society drew cultural and political elements from the traditional remnants of the numerous fragmented mid-Atlantic groups, Europeans, and Africans.  

The Catawba Nation’s ability to understand and manipulate the colonial political and economic system proved very useful in their struggle to survive. Key to this survival was their legal acquisition of a portion of their traditional land base, which in turn allowed them to hold at bay the land claims of settlers. This land base also served as a source of commodity exchange, renting their surplus land to European farmers for cash, livestock, and manufactured goods. Although there was a certain level of conformity associated with these actions, members of the Catawba Nation also carefully preserved some of their cultural traditions. They resisted Christianization and held intact the cultural infrastructure that maintained traditional customs, religious practices, and trade skills from one generation to the next. Outwardly, the Catawba Nation embraced certain forms of exchange, borrowing some European political and cultural traditions in order to survive. But internally, they worked to restore and maintain some of their traditions. The new society selectively embodied both past and present conditions in order to create possibilities for the future. 

Arguably the Catawba Nation story repeated itself again in the twentieth century with the evolution of eco-cultural resource management on American Indian reservations. In response to lingering cultural assimilation and land dispossession policies, American Indians, through various forms of resistance and a rejuvenating push from the Indian New Deal, have attempted to restore their cultures and land. In essence, cultural resistance to and exchange with Western society has enabled many American Indian

27 Ibid.
tribes to persist. And these same socio-political characteristics spawned the twentieth-century Native American political resurgence.

Cultural resistance to and exchange with Western traditions, therefore, has been part of American Indian history since first contact with Euro-Americans. As Europeans moved inland, spread disease, introduced new technologies and Christianity, waged wars, and disrupted native political and social systems, Native Americans had to adapt. As a matter of survival, these societies adopted cultural, political, and technological elements from both the traditional remnants of numerous fragmented tribes and European colonizers. This story of cultural survival, hybridization, and coexisting worlds remained alive into the twentieth century with the evolution of eco-cultural resource management on American Indian reservations. Since 1934, with the implementation of Indian New Deal policies, many Native American groups have gradually obtained greater political autonomy, reclaiming control over eco-cultural resources on their lands. Associated with this political resurgence were a growing number of ecological restoration projects on reservations. These projects helped buttress the foundation of this political movement. However, the need to resist some policies and technologies of the federal government failed to dissipate after the onset of the Indian New Deal.

Resistance remained in both subtle and overt forms among tribal members and in tribal governments. The fact that the federal government railroaded Native American groups into becoming dependent communities meant that tribal governments for the foreseeable future would have to interact with the BIA and other governmental agencies. Most tribal leaders eventually recognized the untenability of a complete return to the past. Modernization with an eye towards reintegrating lost traditions became the most efficacious path to restoring a sovereign identity. However, this meant carefully reestablishing government-to-government relationships with state and federal agencies – instituting a process of cultural, technological, and scientific exchange between tribal governments and
non-Indian governments that would move tribes towards self-governance rather than dependence. As American Indians began to restore eco-cultural resources, they contended with the same predicament that David Lowenthal eloquently points out about all political and ecological restorations: inherent in the process is a negotiation with both “times arrow” and “times cycles.”

To create a sustainable future, American Indians employed ecological restoration not only to reconstruct the past, but they also adjusted its product in accordance with contemporary political and social requirements.

Fidelity to the past is an important part of American Indian restoration projects, but within certain physical and historical constraints. A survey of current American Indian eco-cultural resource management strategies reveals no plans to take their societies back to 1492. Nonetheless, it is not uncommon to find tribes co-managing projects with federal agencies and environmental NGOs that have the goal of returning ecosystems to a semblance of pre-European contact conditions. However, their reasons for participating usually have a different cultural basis than Western restorationists. For instance, many tribes, including the White Mountain Apache, are currently involved in the restoration of large vertebrates such as wolves, bald eagles, and bison. These animals are important characters in tribal legends, serve spiritual and ceremonial roles, or provide essential dietary sources. Most American Indian restoration projects, however, focus on the restoration of disrupted ecosystem processes, water quality, hazardous waste contamination, and species important to the production of cultural artifacts (e.g., medicinal plants, plant fibers for basket making, and timber).

Through a variety of restorative approaches and even wilderness preservation, American Indians on a regional and continental scale are collectively restoring Indian country. This growing movement is

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adapting ecological restoration for the local needs of each tribe.\textsuperscript{30} The cultural appropriation of restoration is one of the many ways that American Indians are coping with rapid social change, while attempting to restore a semblance of cultural and ecological stability on their lands.\textsuperscript{31}

**Resistance and Exchange: A Dynamic Eco-political Model of Self-Determination**

I draw on STS theory to develop a model of eco-political change that aptly characterizes the White Mountain Apache struggle to regain control over their homeland. In this quest, the Apache had to regulate, traverse, defend, and establish four types of boundaries: political, cultural, epistemological, and geographic. In an 1870 Executive Order, President Ulysses S. Grant dictated to the Apache the Fort Apache Indian Reservation’s political boundary. Ever since, the Tribe has had to police this boundary from the intrusion of outside interests that wished to exploit Apache resources. On the cultural front, in the early twentieth century the Apache defended against the onslaught of federal assimilation policies. From the Indian New Deal on, as modernization programs infiltrated the reservation, the Tribe’s defensive posture switched to one of regulation and social negotiation with introduced science and technologies. Epistemologically, the cultural survival of the Apache in the wake of rapid modernization depended on first acquiring Western knowledge and technical skills, and then modifying them to benefit the Apache people. The acquisition process required building the capability to cross epistemological boundaries and translate Western knowledge into a form that assisted the Tribe’s quest to control their resources. Ultimately, this meant controlling Western knowledge production within reservation boundaries, then, in turn integrating it with Apache epistemological traditions.


Finally, the geographic boundaries of mountains, rivers, and watersheds played a significant role in the Tribe’s cultural and political revitalization. When President Grant confined the White Mountain Apache to a reservation, they retained a sizable chunk of their homeland. From a recreational, timber, and hydrological standpoint, the Fort Apache landscape came to represent some of the most desirable land in Arizona. For example, the reservation is a watershed for the Salt River, a source of water for Phoenix. As the Arizona population grew, Euro-Americans increasingly demanded the diversion and extraction of water from the reservation to grow crops, run businesses, water lawns, support factories, and so on. Because of this growing demand, the Apache had to establish legal boundaries to protect the ecosystem services of the reservation’s geography.

Apache ecological restoration efforts eventually figured into the maintenance of all four boundary types. Because political, cultural, epistemological, and geographic boundaries are inherently fluid and porous, ecological restoration became a venue for mediation between the White Mountain Apache and a whole host of non-Indian interests (federal and state land management agencies, environmentalists, academics, and industry) – a site of perpetual resistance and exchange. In combination with the tenets of environmental history, STS theory can help frame this mediation process by providing conceptual frameworks for a dynamic eco-political model of self-determination.

First, I turn Thomas Gieryn’s notion of boundary work into a tool of liberation. Gieryn originally applied the concept of boundary work as a model to explain the self-preservation techniques of scientists. As science grew in stature, scientists developed “an ideological style” that demarcated science as superior to other forms of knowledge production. By employing this political tool, scientists put themselves in a position of power that engenders a sense of authority for facilitating the procurement of resources. Scientists, however, imbue the act of boundary work with ambiguity. This flexibility allows scientists to define the domain of science for whatever political battle they are fighting. Towards that
end, Gieryn identified three basic areas of political discourse: expansion of authority and expertise into other professional domains, monopolization of resources, and autonomy from responsibility for the unintended consequences of their research.  

The boundary work concept has become a very useful tool in the STS research for understanding the dynamics of scientific communities in six basic ways: 1) interactions between science and society (e.g., who gets to do science); 2) power relations that inform the disciplinary formation process (e.g., restoration ecology, wildlife management, forestry); 3) defining what is “normal” or “pathological” (e.g., baselines for restoration, sustained yield, healthy wildlife populations, the existence of a species, ecological integrity, etc.); 4) delineations of practice that occur within a discipline such as “basic” and “applied” research; 5) the establishment of hierarchies based on prestige and cultural authority within a discipline; and 6) the establishment of hierarchies among disciplines (e.g., biology vs. physics). The first three conceptualizations of boundary work are particularly relevant to this study. In addition, I expand the application of this concept to the political struggle of a disenfranchised group, the White Mountain Apache.

Typically scholars apply this concept to describe the political maneuvers of scientists defending their disciplinary turf, acquiring resources, or attempting to create a new discipline. While scientists generally have the advantage of employing boundary work from a privileged position, other groups seeking to enroll the benefits of science typically don’t – the very reason being that scientists employ boundary work to protect their domain. Health activists, environmental justice groups, and grassroots restorationists all attempt to procure credibility for their knowledge production practices with little or no

training in Western science. Native Americans also struggle to legitimize the use of Western science and traditional knowledge production practices. Non-Western cultures in particular have difficulty succeeding in this goal, especially since Western society, in a broad act of boundary work, unjustly discredited indigenous knowledge production systems and grossly underestimated the intellectual capabilities of these cultures. In this study, I reframe the boundary work concept as a liberatory tool for marginalized cultures. As the White Mountain Apache worked to regain control over their eco-cultural resources, they also strove to control knowledge production on the reservation. The Tribe first employed boundary work to define how land management agencies implemented Western science and technology on the reservation. Later, boundary work evolved as a tool to reestablish the legitimacy of Apache knowledge.

To aid their quest, the Apache adapted ecological restoration as a political vehicle for boundary work. Ecological restoration became what Susan Star and James Greissmer call a boundary object. The boundary object concept is an analytical tool that elucidates the transactions and translations that take place across different cultural boundaries. Boundary objects are capable of being both abstract and concrete, consisting of techniques, devices, actions, organisms, landscapes, and ideas that link different cultures together. The boundary object concept is useful for demonstrating how interacting cultures (e.g., scientific disciplines, social movements, land management agencies, local communities adopting environmental technologies, etc.) co-evolve over time through the exchange of knowledge, artifacts, and

techniques. In general, a boundary object helps define what is unique to each culture and what is shared among cultures. Boundary objects such as ecological restoration “are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual site use.” For example, the White Mountain Apache and the land management agencies they interacted with loosely agreed on the purpose of ecological restoration. Such a common ground potentially allowed different cultures to transcend social and political barriers by facilitating communication on a global level, while maintaining local goals and cultural integrity. In other words, each culture could both maintain their own integrity while capitalizing on other cultures useful knowledge.

However, when an unequal power distribution exists between cultures, a boundary object can become a tool for boundary work. In this circumstance, the boundary object, when controlled by the disenfranchised, transforms into a site for building political capital, acquiring expertise, developing technical skills, and demonstrating the legitimacy of local knowledge production. For instance, initially federal land management agencies held a paternalistic relationship with the White Mountain Apache, thus control over knowledge production in restoration projects. The BIA dictated to the Apache the goals of restoration work. At first, the Apache had no recourse to challenge BIA plans. Despite this predicament, over a sixty year period ecological restoration slowly became a boundary object and a site of boundary work. Operating through ecological restoration, the Tribe acquired the technical expertise to understand the environmental and cultural consequences of BIA restoration work. In addition, they developed the skills to conduct restoration projects that benefitted the Apache community. This long and arduous journey eventually led to the Tribe regaining almost complete control of reservation resources and the revitalization of Apache knowledge and traditions.

37 Ibid, p. 393.
In essence, the boundary object of ecological restoration represents historical locations of technical and scientific interchange between Western-based land management agencies and the White Mountain Apache. Within this conceptual framework, ecological restoration becomes a focal point for identifying possible routes to more democratic uses of science and technology. Since this study focuses on the Apache appropriation of ecological restoration, it is imperative to document the evolution of knowledge production practices on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Whoever controls knowledge production also controls the fate of eco-cultural resources. For most of the twentieth century, the BIA controlled knowledge production on Fort Apache. They embarked upon a large number of paternalistic land management projects that had varying impacts on the eco-cultural landscape of the reservation.

Paternalistic programs often create distrustful relationships with science and technology for program recipients. In the White Mountain Apache case, the BIA and their benefactors - the timber industry and cattle ranchers - introduced science and technology designed to exploit natural resources for the benefit of outside interests (Fig. 2). From approximately the early 1900s, when relatively large numbers of Euro-Americans began moving into the Southwest, until the early 1970s, timber extraction, grazing, fish and wildlife recreation, and water development commenced as projects that sent most economic benefits off-reservation. For their troubles, especially in the first half of the twentieth century, the Apache received low wages and low skill jobs, if any at all; programs of forced assimilation that resulted in severe cultural disruption; and overexploitation of natural resources that only minimally benefitted the

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1. Timber exploitation (Sustained Yield)
2. Water Development (Divert Off-reservation)
3. Ranching (Grazing)
4. Fisheries and Wildlife (Recreation)

Fig. 2 – The White Mountain Apache relationship with science and technology through the first 100 years of reservation life. The Apache regained limited control of resource management prior to the 1970s, but for the most part they remained subject to federal paternalism until the 1970s.
Fort Apache community. As a consequence, federal paternalistic science and technology policies created a lasting aura of distrust among the White Mountain Apache.

In order to liberate themselves from the hegemonic bonds of paternalistic, top-down knowledge production, the Apache politicized science and technology. Sandra Harding’s notion of “strong objectivity” provides an epistemological framework for describing the White Mountain Apache quest to control knowledge production on the reservation.39 Harding characterizes knowledge generation from a paternalistic, universal standpoint as “weak objectivity.” In contrast, she advocates strong objectivity, an approach that is inclusive of multiple cultural perspectives, which limits the ideological bias of a singular, universalist perspective. Generating knowledge from a single standpoint often results in blind spots that obscure important local environmental and cultural information vital to the successful management of eco-cultural resources.40 This happens because all knowledge production, whether it is from the universal or local standpoint is value laden. These values act as filters that bias knowledge production in favor of the practicing culture. Because of this, knowledge produced from a single standpoint often results in the undemocratic imposition of untested, culturally insensitive, universal knowledge onto marginalized groups and non-human nature. In effect, these communities become the experimental laboratories of top-down, expert-driven knowledge producers.41

39 Sandra Harding, Is Science Multicultural?
On Fort Apache during the 1950s and 1960s, the BIA conducted a number of forest and watershed restoration experiments that yielded marginal results and in some cases further degraded the reservation landscape. In addition, non-Indians received most of the economic benefits from this work. In contrast, after the White Mountain Apache appropriated Western technology and learned the language of Western science, they changed this exploitative pattern while creating a more inclusive, eco-culturally sensitive form of land management. Furthermore, combining Apache local knowledge with Western (universal) knowledge avoided some of the pitfalls of a top-down knowledge production system. The epistemological restoration of Apache knowledge involved integrating Apache stories, legends, moral frameworks, natural histories, philosophical dispositions towards the land, and local ecological knowledge with Western science.\(^{42}\) In short, the Apache’s intimate local knowledge of their homeland helped fill gaps in Western knowledge. Moreover, Apache knowledge redirected the application of science and technology towards the local ecological, economic, and cultural concerns of the reservation community. In essence, within the context of the twentieth century, neither form of knowledge alone could save the Apache homeland. However, together Apache knowledge and Western knowledge paved the way towards the cultural and political revitalization of the White Mountain Apache Tribe.

The White Mountain Apache’s context-specific, historical appropriation of ecological restoration is an instructive example of how a local community can positively react and adapt to the introduction of environmental technologies. Capitalizing on the interpretive flexibility of ecological restoration, the Apache molded ecological restoration to address the needs of the Apache people. This intervention broadened the beneficiaries of restorative technologies to include not only non-Indians, but also the Apache people and non-human nature. The political actions of the White Mountain Apache embodied

\(^{42}\) I derived my descriptions of Apache knowledge mainly from historical documents. However, for a specific case study that describes how Apache stories provide sources of ecological, moral, historical, and cultural knowledge see, Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*. For a general description of Native American knowledge systems see, Clara Sue Kidwell, “Native American Systems of Knowledge,” in *A Companion to American Indian History*, Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 87-102.
what Feenberg calls the democratic rationalization of science and technology.\textsuperscript{43} In other words, the White Mountain Apache story provides hope that marginalized cultures can create avenues of communication with the dominant society that potentially develop unifying goals, while simultaneously addressing the local socio-economic needs and maintaining eco-cultural integrity of oppressed peoples and their lands.

This study provides an excellent opportunity to combine the concepts of boundary work, boundary object, democratic rationalization, and strong objectivity into a single dynamic model of eco-political self-determination and liberation – in short, resistance and exchange. The rhetorical device of resistance and exchange serves as conceptual shorthand for the theoretical framework developed above. In essence, the White Mountain Apache employed resistance and exchange to police the political, cultural, epistemological, and geographic boundaries between the Apache and other cultures. Apache resistance and exchange also forged a pathway towards scientific and technological empowerment, which led to freedom from federally mandated technocratic oppression and Euro-American industrial exploitation.

More specifically, the White Mountain Apache cultural appropriation of ecological restoration embodied the dual political function of cultural resistance to and cultural exchange with Western-based land management organizations. On the one hand, Apache resistance to the foibles of Western society delineated legal and cultural differences, reasserted cultural identity, reestablished cultural autonomy, and helped maintain tribal sovereignty. This process also entailed challenging bi-polar Euro-American restoration goals, which either focused on rehabilitating economically important species or returning segments of North America to a wilderness condition. On the other hand, the White Mountain Apache’s unfortunate legacy of dependency necessitated exchange with the federal government. The Apache depended on cultural exchange with federal land management agencies to successfully manage their eco-cultural resources. Exchange also facilitated the development of a labor force conversant with

\textsuperscript{43} Feenberg, \textit{Questioning Technology}. 
Western science and technology, which was important for communication across cultural boundaries. The physical and social results of exchange formed eco-cultural hybridizations of science, technology, and landscapes. The sites of these hybridizations reveal a framework of fruitful interchange between an indigenous culture and Western society. Discerning how the Apache and governmental land management agencies mediated competing goals and struck an agreeable balance of power through cultural exchange is a key component of this study.44

The next chapter outlines the eco-cultural implications of Apache resistance to and exchange with Western society for the outcome of ecological restoration projects on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Because resistance and exchange is an interactive process, its product involves the mediation of several visions of nature. In order to conduct restoration work, restorationists have to decide on a historical and ecological basis for the project. Determining this baseline depends on the cultural perspective of the restorationists. Historically, along with the White Mountain Apache, a number of naturalists, ecologists, land managers, bureaucrats, politicians, and businessmen also projected their visions of nature on the Fort Apache landscape. These competing visions played a significant role in shaping the evolution of ecological restoration on the reservation.

Chapter 1

Visions of the White Mountain’s Past: Multiple Baselines for Restoration

Ecological restoration is a historical practice. Culture in conjunction with history plays a determining role in the outcome of restoration work. Many restoration ecologists concede that deciding which aspects of ecosystems to restore is “fundamentally normative rather than scientific.”\(^1\) The contingent, dynamic nature of ecosystems engenders a wide range of interpretations among practitioners. In theory multiple steady-states are possible in any given ecosystem: Pleistocene communities, “wilderness,” colonial agricultural landscapes, Progressive Era managed forests, pre-Columbian Native American managed lands, and so on. As a consequence, social values influence which historical reference condition restorationists choose to guide their work. Furthermore, restorationists may choose not to completely emulate a reference condition; instead, they might limit their efforts to specific species, functions, processes, or services.\(^2\)

Although ecologists and land managers only recently abandoned the Clementsian ideal of an equilibrium climax community for multi-linear, hierarchical models of ecosystem dynamics, they have always made choices about reference baselines for restoration projects.\(^3\) Both models allow for choice. For the better part of the twentieth century, land managers used the Clementsian model to guide their work, the theory that after disturbance, biotic communities naturally return to a pre-determined state of

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equilibrium. This model offered a predictable guideline from which land managers could formulate management plans. Theoretically, land managers could intervene to interrupt the linear path towards equilibrium, maintaining ecosystems or a single species at any stage of succession. In the first seventy years of the twentieth century, most land managers attempted to “restore” plant communities to their most economically productive successional stage.⁴

Regardless of the guiding paradigm, land managers have always made choices about which historical reference point and specific aspects of ecosystems they attempted to restore. This is a consequence of the fact that the goals of institutions practicing restoration vary, depending upon their values and beliefs about nature. The types of goals that typically drive restoration projects include economic, aesthetic, ecological, recreational, biodiversity, scientific investigation, wilderness protection, educational, spirituality, and community (man as part of nature). Therefore, multiple values and beliefs about nature interact with the knowledge that one can “shape” ecosystems into any number of potential “states.” Add into the mix the fact that non-human nature plays a role in shaping itself, and what emerges is a highly complex historical process driven by a diversity of actors. Such a complex historical process played out on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

This chapter introduces the value systems of the primary restorative agents who influenced the Apachean landscape during the twentieth century: the White Mountain Apache, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Arizona Game and Fish Commission (AGFC). Before outlining the value systems that were in place during the Indian New Deal, I first explore the historical origins of the values that motivated these agents of change. First, I consider White Mountain Apache pre-reservation perspectives on and visions of the White Mountains.

They arrived in the region in the sixteenth century, replacing the Mogollon and Anasazi cultures that vanished two to three hundred years earlier. However, we should note that the Apache believe their ancestors originated in the White Mountains, a belief that prominently figures into their vision of restoration. Second, I document the views of the early Euro-American visitors to the White Mountains. By the mid-nineteenth century, explorers, military officials, and naturalists began projecting their visions of nature onto the Apachean landscape. Later, early twentieth century land managers and bureaucrats imposed their rigid constructions of nature. Third, I describe how these past perspectives began to coalesce into competing visions of restoration during the Indian New Deal – the period of first serious introduction of Western restorative technologies into the region. Finally, I set the stage for the seventy-year political battle that ensued, culminating with the Apache controlling almost all restoration work on the reservation.

**White Mountain Apache Visions of Restoration: “The Earth is Set Up”**

The Apache believe they originated from their homeland in the White Mountains. According to the Apache creation story, “The Earth is Set Up,” initially four people worked together to make the earth. The first attempt failed, as the earth buckled under the strength of the wind. The four admitted they had underestimated the complexity of creating a stable existence. With the next attempt, they stretched the earth in the four cardinal directions, fashioning each side into the shape of a foot. To provide further support, they placed a stalk of obsidian thorn-covered wild cane in each corner of the earth. Each cane was a different color: black in the east, blue in the south, yellow in the west, and white in the north.

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Once in place, Black Wind Old Man and Black Water Old Man – personifications of the wind and water - threw themselves against the earth, causing forceful winds and powerful thunder. This time the earth withstood the test.

Even though the earth stabilized, the four people noticed another problem: “My friends, what’s the matter with this earth? It is cold and freezing. We better give it some hair.” To warm the earth, they planted trees, grasses, and bushes. After creating a milder climate, they decided the earth remained weak, requiring bones for further support. To rectify this situation, they built mountains. Once they completed this task, they realized that the earth needed a way to breath. So they sequestered the services of Black Thunder, who “whipped the earth with lightning,” provoking water to emerge from the ground. Ever since then, all water moved from east to west. Finally, they experimented with placing the sun and the moon in the sky. Their first placement of the sun was too close, resulting in the “people crawling around, because it was too hot.” Several attempts later, they found the optimal position. In order to strike the right balance between night and day, the positioning of the moon also required several trials. Once the four people correctly positioned the sun and moon, the earth was ready to support thriving communities of life.6

This creation story reveals several characteristics about White Mountain Apache relationships with nature. First, the Apache were actively involved in the creation of their homeland, unlike many Western creation stories where a supreme being is responsible. The Apache believe manipulating the land is necessary for survival. Moreover, culture and nature are inseparable. People and non-human nature depend on an intimate relationship for existence. Second, creating the Apache world entailed a learning process. Their ancestors accumulated knowledge about creating the earth as they went along. In many ways, the Apache creation of their homeland is analogous to trial and error experiments. For instance,

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6 This is a paraphrase of the Apache legend, “The Earth is Set Up.” Palmor Valor, an Apache elder, told this legend to Grenville Goodwin in the early 1930s. Grenville Goodwin, Myths and Tales of the White Mountain Apache (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1994), pp. 1-2.
when they realized the sun was too close to the earth, they adapted, repositioning it until they found the appropriate distance. In subsequent legends, as the earth matured, people learned survival skills from their animal brethren, setting in motion a reciprocal relationship between the Apache and non-human nature. The Apache became stewards of non-human nature, and non-human nature showed the Apache how to live. Third, the Apache relied heavily on non-Apache forces – Black Thunder, Black Water Old Man – to complete the earth. In other words, they live in an interdependent world, full of interacting beings that played important roles in sustaining the homeland.

The Apache believe all living and non-living entities in nature have qualities of life. They live in an animate world. The earth, sky, wind, and sun are alive. The earth is a female, with her head lying to the east and her feet towards the west. The trees are her hair, the mountains are her bones, and the sky, sun, moon, and stars stabilize her existence. Water flows from her head in the east to the west, providing the “lifeblood” of all organisms. The most significant origin of this water, the sacred Mount Baldy (also known as the White Mountain or Mount Thomas), represents the highpoint in their homeland at 11,496 feet above sea level. Water itself embodies life, as it permeates all beings and brings them sustenance. For this reason, springs are considered sacred, a source of vitality.7

The four cardinal directions, represented by the four great winds, are vital to all Apache rituals and ceremonies. The Apache assign a color to each direction: east is black, south is blue, west is yellow, and north is white. They associate all living and non-living entities with a direction and a gender. Entities associated with the east and west are male, and entities associated with the north and south are female. Plants are people, divided into related groups. Each species of mammals, bird, insect, and reptile represents a different “tribe” with different languages and customs. The nature of these customs is laid out in detail in Apache legends, often guiding the Apache on how to live in the world. For example,

animals taught the Apache how to hunt, farm, acquire fire, and find medicinal plants. In addition, many plants and animals contain power that the Apache acquire through ceremonies. These powers embody a form of knowledge that enhances a person’s chance of success in their daily activities. For instance, in order to kill a deer, one acquired “deer power,” which lends the hunter special insight into deer behavior. “Bat power” allows Apaches to avoid death during battle, “root power” helps heal the sick, and “horse power” bestows the practitioner with the ability to tame wild horses. Other powers guide the Apache in their endeavors to find food, farm, and use fire to manage the land. Deriving power from non-human entities provides the Apache with knowledge about living in an unpredictable, variable environment. In sum, the Apache have a long history of knowledge exchange with non-human nature.\(^8\)

The White Mountain Apache base this reciprocal process on the belief that there is no separation between the natural and supernatural world. Mystical beings, spiritual powers, and ghosts interact and live with the tangible elements of nature. In other words, the supernatural is just as real to the Apache as water, deer, and mountains. According to Keith Basso, supernatural forces “are integral components of [Apache society], and they are approached and dealt with accordingly.”\(^9\) The traditional Apache knowledge system organizes nature into three classes: \textit{hinda}, \textit{desta}, and \textit{godiyo}. \textit{Hinda} includes all entities that move under their own volition, such as humans, mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, fish, plants, and in modern times, motorized vehicles. \textit{Desta} constitutes all entities that require outside forces for movement, such as geographic features and material culture. \textit{Godiyo} are “holy” entities – ceremonies, ritual paraphernalia, celestial bodies, wind, rain, lightning, myths, mythological beings, ghosts, and power derived from plants and animals.\(^{10}\) This classification system is integral to how the Apache relate to non-human nature.

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\(^8\) Ibid, p. 25.  
\(^{10}\) Ibid.
A seemingly unified entity, such as a bear, may hold the source for more than one entity. For instance, “bear power,” “root power,” and “elk power” are classified as godiyo, but are derived from entities classified under hinda, plants and animals. Water (desta) creates rivers, erodes mountains, and makes material culture possible. This interdependence makes the Apache homeland sacred, subject to respect and rituals that honor its existence. The Apache have also imbued the land with stories where desta, hinda, and godiyo interact to provide moral frameworks, historical knowledge of the landscape, and emotional support for their people.\textsuperscript{11} Intact, this knowledge system is a guide for living with the land and amicably coexisting within the Apache community. All entities – living, non-living, and supernatural – form an animated, interdependent community. Disrupted, the health of the land and the Apache people are in jeopardy; restoring harmony becomes a priority. When the United States government confined the White Mountain Apache to the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, they initiated the development of a rift between the Apache people and non-human nature.

The pre-reservation range of the White Mountain and Cibecue Apache (the two bands of Apache confined to Fort Apache) included the White Mountains to the east into the lowland deserts to the west. The Fort Apache Indian Reservation, a fragment of the Apache’s former range, contains four of the five life-zones they exploited during pre-reservation times: upper Sonoran desert, piñon-juniper woodlands, ponderosa pine forest, and spruce-fir forest. The federal government excluded the lowland Sonoran desert zone, excising many Apache winter camp sites. The elevation on the reservation ranges from approximately 2,500 feet above sea level to 11,496 feet at its highest point, Mount Baldy. Prior to confinement on the reservation, the Apache saw their homeland as a diverse set of resources from which they derived a living, created a culture, and formed spiritual bonds with sacred sites.

\textsuperscript{11} Keith Basso, \textit{Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache} (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).
The White Mountain Apache, living in an unpredictable and ecologically heterogeneous landscape, relied on a flexible style of semi-nomadic subsistence that entailed five general modes of food acquisition: hunting, wild plant collection, farming, trading, and raiding. Subsistence activities revolved around seasonal cycles. In the spring, as early as March, Apache migrated from their winter camps in the lowlands to find wild foods and reestablish farm sites within the piñon-juniper life-zone. Farm sites served as a hub for all subsistence activities from spring through late fall. The Apache cleared fields in March and by May planted crops of corn, beans, and pumpkins. Families living at the same farm site cooperated in building an irrigation system. After they planted the crops, groups of men and women left for wild plant gathering expeditions ranging in time from a few days to several weeks. These groups traversed the lowland deserts and piñon-juniper woodlands searching for mescal, saguaro, prickly-pear cactus, sourberry, acorns, mesquite beans, yucca fruits, piñon nuts, and juniper berries. These wild foods provided sustenance until crops from the farms matured in the fall. The Apache hunted year around, but the period of most intense effort occurred between November and early spring, when food garnered from farming and wild plant collection was less available. The Apache preferred deer, but they also hunted elk, antelope, bear, rabbits, turkey, and a variety of small game. In order to ensure a regular source of food during the winter, the Apache supplemented hunts with raids on nearby Spanish settlements and Navajo villages to capture livestock and other available food products.12

Guided by spiritual relationships with non-human nature, the Apache actively managed their homeland. A description of Apache irrigation systems and fire applications serve as useful examples of the constructive ways the Apache manipulated the landscape. When families resettled farm sites in the spring, they began building an irrigation system to divert water from streams into their fields. This system first required digging shallow ditches from the stream to the field. Once dug, they built a dam.

The whole process usually required two weeks of labor. From his boyhood memories prior to living on the reservation, John Rope, a former Apache scout, described how his people built these systems:

The men and women worked together, digging with sharp pointed sticks. The women carried the loose dirt off in baskets. After the ditch was finished, they started to make a dam to turn the water into it. They first set up a series of four poles tripod-like, across the creek in a line. These poles were driven into the creek bed in a square if about three feet, and their tops brought together and tied… [W]hen it was done they laid bear grass lengthwise along the upper side of the tripods from one to another. Over the bear grass they packed the dry inner bark of cedar and cottonwood… Around the tripods and between them they put piles of rock to hold them steady. Now, on the upper side right along where the bear grass had been put, they built a wall of flat red stones all along till it was as high as the posts… Between this wall and the bear grass was a space which they filled in with gravel and dirt, which the women dug out and brought in their baskets.  

These intricate works were quite extensive socio-technical systems. Several families lived at a farm site. Within a farm site, respective families had four to six fields of three-fourths of an acre each. However, half of these fields remained fallow each year, so as to not overtax the soil. Nevertheless, building and maintaining an irrigation system required intense labor. As a consequence, all families living at a farm site helped construct the irrigation system. Later, when residents left the farm site to gather wild foods, a few women and most elders stayed behind to tend the fields and irrigation system.  

One tool employed to maintain farm sites was fire.

The Apache, however, deployed fire in many contexts besides farming. Historically, the creation of large conflagrations during warfare and raids received the most attention from Spanish explorers, the

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14 Buskirk, The Western Apache, pp. 23-26, 41-46.
15 The extent that the White Mountain Apache used fire is unclear. Early Spanish explorers, U.S. military expeditions, and Euro-American settlers generally attributed Apache use of fire to warfare and raids. This bias resulted from their immediate concern with the danger Apache raids and warfare presented to settling Arizona. Unfortunately, anthropologists such as Grenville Goodwin and Pliny Goddard neglected this area of inquiry as well – they simply didn’t ask about fire use. Therefore, descriptions of the application of fire other than warfare and raids are rare. Nonetheless, enough descriptions exist to compile a list of the ways the Apache employed fire to manage their homeland. For similar problems with the Chiricahua Apache, see J. Mark Kaib, “Fire History in Riparian Canyon Pine-Oak Forests and the Intervening Desert Grasslands of the Southwest Borderlands: A Dendroecological, Historical, and Cultural Inquiry” (Master’s Thesis: University of Arizona, 1999). For general debates about the extent that Native American fire influenced the southwestern landscape see, Thomas R. Vale,
U.S. military, anthropologists, and settlers. However, receiving less attention from these early observers was the Apache’s precise, careful application of fire to manage the Apachean landscape. The Apache also employed fire for hunting, clearing fields, maintaining irrigation ditches, improving forage, extracting honey from beehives, managing crops, making fertilizer, and enhancing the quality of culturally important plants. More specifically, as a technique for modifying wild plants for cultural purposes, the Apache set gentle fires around willow and sumac trees to coax young shoots, which the Apache preferred for basket making. In terms of hunting, the Apache used fire to smoke wild turkey from their roosts and trap rabbits. Catching rabbits involved hunters creating a fire circle, sometimes as large as a mile in diameter, with a small unlit gap. The fire funneled rabbits through the gap so hunters could easily kill them with a club.\(^{16}\) The Apache also used fire to improve forage for deer, elk, antelope, and their horses. Despite the federal fire suppression policies of the twentieth century, this practice persisted among Apache cowboys to improve forage for their cattle. However, BIA foresters discouraged this practice, especially after World War II.\(^{17}\) Although they had a reputation for carelessness, growing evidence suggests that the Apache mastered techniques for preventing and directing fire, especially near settlements. They cleared flammable plant materials from the vicinity of farm sites and even conducted controlled burns to reduce potential fuel sources. Apparently the Apache were cognizant of the dangers that uncontrolled blazes might present in arid surroundings.\(^{18}\) Despite

\(^{16}\) Buskirk, *The Western Apache*, pp. 135, 165-166.


\(^{18}\) Historians such as Steven Pyne and geographers such as Conrad Bahre promoted the idea that the Apache were careless with fire. Most of their documentation came from the biased eye-witness accounts of settlers, military expeditions, and Spanish explorers. Steven Pyne, *Fire in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 515-529; Conrad J. Bahre, “Wildfire in Southeastern Arizona between 1859 and 1890,” *Desert Plants* 7 (1985): 190-194. For a typical nineteenth century account, see S.J. Holsinger, “The Boundary Line between the Desert and the Forest,” *Forestry and Irrigation* 8 (1902): 21-27. For more on this bias in the historical literature,
their careful and precise deployment of fire, the military, and later the BIA, curtailed most Apache uses of fire once they were confined to Fort Apache.

In general, reservation life restricted many aspects of the pre-reservation Apache subsistence system. The Apache became subject to assimilation policies, as the BIA encouraged sedentary farming. However, the attempt to convert the Apache into yeoman farmers failed. Based on the structure of their traditional subsistence system, the Apache knew all along that a complete reliance on an agrarian lifestyle wouldn’t succeed. If their significantly larger pre-reservation territory compelled the Apache to adopt a variety of food procurement strategies, the reservation certainly provided insufficient arable land to support the entire Apache population year around without supplementation. Furthermore, the Apache refused to give up many traditional customs. For instance, out of necessity the Apache continued to hunt and gather wild foods to supplement farming. However, over the years, wildlife and plant populations began to suffer because the BIA confined Apache hunting and gathering activities to the reservation, thus forcing many Apache onto government rations. In the early 1900s, as an alternative to farming, the BIA introduced cattle to the reservation, but ranching only accommodated a limited number of Apache. The BIA leased most Fort Apache rangeland to non-Indians until the 1940s.19

White Mountain Apache frustration with BIA policies led to three nativistic religious movements between 1870 and 1933. These movements contained elements of a religious and political restoration, with the leaders inspiring people to return to pre-reservation days. The first occurred in 1883 and sought the return of important dead Apache military leaders “for a joint uprising with the Chiricahua against the

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Army.” The Army squelched this movement with the infamous “Cibecue Massacre.” The second movement emerged in 1903, provoking considerably less anxiety from Americans. In fact, the goal of the movement was quite inclusive. The leaders wanted to create “a new world for the good people of all the nations of the earth,” including white people. This movement eventually faded away as the leaders’ attempts to persuade people that the “new world” was obtainable ran into widespread skepticism. Silas John, a charismatic Apache medicine man, established the third movement in 1924. He aimed to restore Apache society to the days before Euro-American intervention, thus eliminating the influence of modernity. However, John’s movement subsided once he landed in jail for killing his wife.

White Mountain Apache participation in these movements embodied their desire to restore their pre-reservation life-ways. After confinement to the reservation, the Apache continued to resist Western influence. Up until the Indian New Deal, BIA policies altered the Apache subsistence system, but leveled only a subtle impact on their religion, customs, and social organization. However, the Apache realized something dreadful was happening to their homeland. Euro-American technology and customs began degrading their lands. The BIA leased land to Euro-American ranchers, sold Apache timber without their consent, and introduced farming technologies that taxed the soil. Just off the reservation, the state of Arizona opened a fish hatchery that introduced non-native game fish into the region. These new technologies caused extensive overgrazing, deforestation, soil erosion, and a decline in biodiversity. Because of this degradation, many Apache yearned for the past. Palmer Valor, born in the 1830s, clearly expressed this desire in 1932. His memory of the pre-reservation days documents some of the aesthetic, cultural, and ecological changes Euro-American technologies wrought on the Apache homeland:

Then the earth was like new, and there were lots of animals and plants. There were four kinds of grass we used to live off that were growing all over this country then. There was red grass, yellow grass, blue grass, and white grass. When the wind blew through these grasses as it is

blowing now, the air smelled sweet. Now it is different…. In those days, there were no White people in the country…. All the country here belonged to us alone. All the mountains here had names and now they have none. In those days there were lots of us and the trails around through these mountains were well traveled, like roads. Now they are all faded out and hard to see.  

The replacement of Apache place-names with Euro-American place-names symbolized Apache loss of control over their eco-cultural resources and their cultural destiny. At the dawn of the Indian New Deal, the Apache sought the return of values they associated with social prosperity and political freedom: a spiritual relationship with non-human nature, a sense of community with nonhuman nature, a flexible subsistence system, and an adaptive view of land management. Remnants of these values would eventually serve political efforts to regain control of their destiny. However, life for the White Mountain Apache as they once knew it had ended. The Indian New Deal ushered in an unprecedented introduction of modern technology to the Apache people. If the Apache could adapt, as they had done in the past, this new technology offered a new, uncharted path towards cultural survival. But this meant reconstituting a relationship with a society that held visions of nature that conflicted with Apache values.

These foreign values began to impose a significant influence on the White Mountain landscape just before the establishment of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. During this period, Euro-American explorers, naturalists, and land managers began projecting their own visions of nature onto the Apachean landscape. The next section describes a handful of Euro-American perspectives on the Apache homeland that emerged between 1850 and 1933.

**Euro-American Visions of Restoration**

In contrast to the Apache, Euro-Americans had a different cultural perspective of the White Mountains. From the first Spanish explorers to the practitioners of modern land management practices the values associated with the resources of the White Mountains evolved considerably. In 1540 en route

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to Zuni, Francisco Vasquez Coronado, the first European explorer to traverse the White Mountains, found the region “worser way of mountains and bade passages, then we had passed already.”

Apparently, the White Mountains constituted some of the roughest territory Coronado had explored to date. Finding the White Mountains undesirable, he recommended to Spanish royalty that the region held little value. After Coronado’s visit, the rugged terrain of the Apache homeland afforded the them relative isolation from European influences until the mid-nineteenth century when U.S. military forays into the region escalated.

A naturalist accompanied each of the Army’s early expeditions into the White Mountains. In contrast to Coronado, their opinions of the mountains were unanimously quite positive from an aesthetic standpoint. In 1858 Lt. Edward Beale reported, “We came to glorious forest of lofty pines through which we have traveled ten miles. The country was beautifully undulating, and although we usually associate the idea of bareness with the pine regions, it was not so in this instance; every foot being covered with the finest grasses, and beautiful broad grassy vales extending in every direction. The forest was perfectly open and unencumbered with brush wood, so that the traveling was excellent.”

In 1873 Lt. George Wheeler of the renowned Wheeler Expeditions was the first Euro-American to reach the summit of Mount Baldy. On his descent, he made one the few positive observations of Native American fire use of the time, attributing the good condition of forage grasses to their practices. He noted, “For a little less than 2 miles the grass is of the old crop, then begins the new and juicy growth of the year subsequent to the burning over by fire set by Indians.”

All the expeditions between 1850 and 1880 reported excellent grazing, plentiful game, abundant fish, and valuable timber, enticing Euro-American

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24 Ibid., 130. Cooper cites the naturalists of all the major expeditions into this region. They all had high praises for the aesthetic qualities of the White Mountains.
settlers to exploit the abundant natural resources of the region. These early descriptions eventually became the basis of the modern ideal for an ecologically sound southwestern ponderosa pine ecosystem—a fire adapted community with wide open spaces and a lush undergrowth of grass among large, high-crowned pines. However, the “original” condition of this ecosystem would soon degrade in the wake of ranching, hunting, fishing, logging, and eventually federal fire suppression policies.

Edward Nelson, a zoologist and eventual Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey (1916-1927), saw the first evidence of this decline in the 1880s. After several arduous collecting expeditions in the wilds of Alaska, he contracted tuberculosis. In 1881 Nelson and his mother left for the White Mountains to recover in isolation. Initially they lived in a tent, with his mother providing care. Drawn to the wilderness setting of the White Mountains, eventually he and his brother established a ranch near Springerville, a town just northeast of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. In periods of relatively good health, Nelson toured the White Mountains, hunting, collecting, and describing specimens for the Smithsonian Institution. Nelson documented a precipitous decline in large game from when he arrived in 1881 to when he left in 1888. This decline coincided with the arrival of cattle ranchers and sheep herders. Later, in 1902 when the extinction of the prized Merriam’s elk became imminent, he proposed converting portions of the Black Mesa Forest Reserve (the precursor to the national forests adjacent to northern and eastern borders of Fort Apache) into a game preserve. His proposal also included the

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27 For example, the Ecological Restoration Institute of Northern Arizona University is an aggressive advocate of returning southwestern ponderosa pine ecosystems to their nineteenth-century structure. See Peter Friederici, ed., Ecological Restoration of Southwestern Ponderosa Pine Forests (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2003).
eastern mountainous portions of Fort Apache, which contained “some of the finest game country” in the White Mountains.\textsuperscript{30}

Noticeable ecological degradation of the region’s watersheds weren’t far behind the decline in wildlife. Overgrazing and its negative consequence, erosion, reached a crisis condition in the White Mountains by the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{31} Comparatively speaking, the ranges on Fort Apache remained in good condition. A representative of the Salt River Valley Water Supply Protective Association, a group that would eventually attempt to restrict Apache water development in the second half of the twentieth century, noted, “The White Mountain Indian Reserve [Fort Apache] was visited and the parks in it showed no deep cuts or channels to carry the rain water away in torrents.”\textsuperscript{32} However, the relatively good grazing conditions on Fort Apache would soon take a turn for the worse. In 1900 the BIA had just issued the first grazing leases to Euro-American ranchers and sheep herders.\textsuperscript{33} In the mean time, the declining conditions of the range in the Black Mesa Forest Preserve drew the attention of Gifford Pinchot.

In May of 1900, Pinchot left Phoenix for the Black Mesa Forest Preserve. En route, he passed through Fort Apache under military escort, fearing attack from the Apache. During his visit, he scaled Mount Baldy where he witnessed an Apache “setting the woods on fire.” He surmised the man was hunting deer “because the hunter has a better chance under cover of the smoke.” However, he revealed his prejudice against fire, concluding, “It was primeval, but not according to the rules.”\textsuperscript{34} Once in the forest preserve, Pinchot witnessed extensive evidence of overgrazing, especially from sheep. He noticed

\textsuperscript{31} Cooper, “Changes in Vegetation,” p. 135.
\textsuperscript{32} Sam F. Webb, \textit{Report to the Salt River Valley Water Supply Protective Assn} (Miscellaneous Collections, University of Arizona, 1900).
that sheep had “bitten off” most pine seedlings, leaving nothing but stems. Much of the soil was bare, eroding into streams “where it does not belong, and so to the sea, silting up reservoirs on the way.” So for Pinchot, sheep jeopardized the health of the ponderosa pine forest. They not only reduced tree reproduction, but also destroyed ground cover that prevents erosion. This led to wide-scale watershed degradation, threatening the water supply for downstream users. Furthermore, Indian and natural fire wasted valuable timber. In essence, the inefficiency of man and nature proved detrimental to the future productivity of the Black Mesa Forest Preserve. Pinchot’s vision of nature involved reducing natural and man-made “waste” - in this case, fire, overgrazing, and erosion. His suggested tools of restoration included grazing control, sustained-yield timber management, and fire suppression. Properly applied, these tools would create highly productive forests that “safeguard the headwaters of most Western rivers.”

Within the forestry traditions of the time, J.P. Kinney, Chief of the BIA’s Forestry Branch (1914-1933), attempted to carry out sustained-yield management of Indian timber lands. However, with less financial resources and fewer trained personnel than the Forest Service, he had limited success implementing this ideal. Furthermore, the Commissioner’s of Indian Affairs in the early 1900s focused their concerns on assimilation and allotment policies. Allotment in particular created difficulties for Kinney’s comprehensive management plans. With much of Indian country broken into private plots, Kinney found coordinating the numerous Native American and Euro-American interests difficult.

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 181.
Nonetheless, he tried to introduce sustained-yield management to reservations, and because Fort Apache remained unallotted, the White Mountain Apache homeland became a focal point of his efforts.

Even on Fort Apache, local bureaucrats presented obstacles to Kinney’s goal. In a 1923 report, Kinney observed that sheep destroyed all but a few pine seedlings in the reservation’s forests. He found very few trees “less than 22 to 26 years of age,” and since sheep began grazing on the reservation in 1900, they had “killed nearly every tree that had not reached a height of two feet.”  

On top of this damage, in 1922 sheep devoured one of “the best seed years the Arizona yellow [ponderosa] pine has had in a quarter century.” As a consequence, he predicted that in the coming years a severe decline in merchantable timber would occur. He advised Charles Davis, the Superintendent of Fort Apache, that grazing fees collected from Euro-American sheep herders amounted to relatively less profit for the White Mountain Apache than timber sales. Kinney encountered great trouble convincing Davis to restrict the number of livestock, with Davis essentially refusing to alter grazing policy. The mismanagement of these lands would continue until the 1930s, when New Deal policies curtailed the activities of non-Indian ranchers and sheep herders on the reservation. Reflecting on the source of this mismanagement, Kinney blamed Commissioner Cato Sells (1913-1921): “With no background of forest and range conservation and with a decided interest, as a former banker, in the profit angle of business, Commissioner Sells was easily influenced by those who placed the emphasis upon current income.”

Nelson, Pinchot, and Kinney’s views of nature derived from the Progressive Era ideology that valued economy, efficiency, paternalism, and control. They all sought to discipline people and nature, whether through classifying nature, protecting game, efficiently managing forests and range, or

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40 Ibid., p. 257.
spreading the utilitarian conservation philosophy.\textsuperscript{43} Moreover, they all served as high-level, scientific bureaucrats who held technocratic worldviews. In other words, they believed that only scientific elite could effectively manage resources for the greatest good of all; thus they created a political relationship with nature and people in direct contrast to that of the Apache - a political relationship that sterilized spiritual, cultural, and emotional connections with nature. Furthermore, this “objective” arrangement funneled all nature through a sieve that divided the world into that which was useful and that which was waste (fire, predators, disease, dead trees, etc.), privileging economic value over aesthetic, spiritual, democratic, and communal values. Rather than adapting to the complexity of nature, Pinchot, Kinney, and Nelson all sought to simplify ecosystems, converting them into machines of economic efficiency.\textsuperscript{44}

Aldo Leopold’s presence in the White Mountains represented the projection of a different set of values onto nature. Leopold’s first stop after Yale Forestry School was the White Mountains. He arrived in Springerville in July of 1909. His brief two-year stay and a subsequent trip in 1921 sparked Leopold’s evolution of thought on conservation. Fresh from forestry school, he was a disciple of Pinchot’s utilitarian conservation philosophy: predators, fire, insect infestations all represented inefficient waste of natural resources.\textsuperscript{45} However, Leopold’s journey into the White Mountains inspired a different view of nature. What initially impressed him was that “the White Mountain was a horseman’s world.”\textsuperscript{46} Travel otherwise proved impossible. This impression eventually contributed to Leopold’s wilderness ideal. By


the 1920s, Leopold began lamenting the affect the automobile had on the American landscape. His rugged, backwoods experience in the White Mountains triggered a long philosophical journey, concluding with the notion that the federal government should spare some of America’s wild lands from “Henry Ford’s revolution.” Leopold believed that wilderness offered a refuge from civilization, a place where people could test their character and recharge individual creativity. Recreation from the safety of an automobile or with the conveniences of the modern world at hand was all well in good, “but too much safety seems to yield only danger in the long run. Perhaps this is behind Thoreau’s dictum: In wildness is the salvation of the world.”

The aesthetic qualities of the White Mountains also spiritually affected Leopold. For instance, in describing his experience with the four seasons of the region, summer “invited you to get down and roll in its new grass and flowers… Every living thing sang, chirped, and burgeoned. Massive pines and firs, storm-tossed these many months, soaked up the sun in towering dignity.” His experiences along the Blue River, just east of the White Mountains, inspired his famous essay, “Thinking Like a Mountain.” After shooting a wolf and watching the “fierce green fire dying in her eyes,” Leopold began to question whether federal predator eradication policies benefitted nonhuman nature and humans. These early contemplations gave rise to his later views on biodiversity, community, democracy, and land management.

As he continued to explore the Southwest, Leopold’s views on predator control, the role of fire in ecosystems, and sustained-yield management evolved. His arrival in the White Mountains in 1909 gave him a relatively long-range perspective on the effects that utilitarian conservation techniques had on the Arizona landscape. He witnessed the degradation of forests and range due to fire suppression policies

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48 Ibid., p. 125.
49 Ibid., p. 130. For more on the origin of this essay, see Meine, Aldo Leopold, pp. 458-459.
and the deer irruptions that menaced the plants communities of the Kaibab Plateau. He eventually concluded that the decline of southwestern ecosystems resulted from human removal of integral components of biotic communities. All living and non-living entities played a role in maintaining the integrity of those communities.

Leopold’s experiences in the Southwest became fundamental to the formulation of his “land ethic,” an idea that would increasingly gain capital among ecologists, land managers, and environmentalists during the second half of the twentieth century. Of primary interest, the “land ethic” broadened the notion of community to include both humans and non-humans. However, Leopold understood well the multiple values that people project onto nonhuman nature. He also understood that these conflicting values made achieving a consensus on how to conserve, preserve, and restore natural resources a difficult proposition. Indeed, Leopold proclaimed that if we as a society were going to do anything about our environmental predicament, the average person had to become an ecological citizen. In effect, enlarging “the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land” This sense of community introduced the idea of participatory democracy to land management agencies. For Leopold, human political diversity and biodiversity had to coexist. If humans, no matter the cultural, political, or philosophical persuasion, failed to see their rightful position amongst the plants and animals of the world, there was no hope for solving the looming environmental crisis.

Like Nelson, Pinchot, and Kinney, Leopold’s political relationship with nature contrasts with Apache visions of nature. Nonetheless, some similarities occur, and in many ways, Leopold’s ideals proved more compatible with the Apache relationship with nature. Leopold’s idea of community is


51 Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*, p. 204.

somewhat congruent with Apache spiritual bonds with non-human nature and their belief that humans are a part of nature. Furthermore, Leopold’s “land ethic” recognizes the dynamic, unpredictable qualities of ecosystems that encouraged the value of adaptability in Apache culture. In the “land ethic,” he called for human technological aspirations to fall more in line with the rhythms of nature; instead of pursuing technocratic control, create adaptive technologies that work with nature. However, the values of biodiversity, wilderness, aesthetics, recreation, and participatory democracy were foreign to the White Mountain Apache in the 1930s. Nonetheless, they would eventually adopt versions of these ideas for their political cause.

In sum, Euro-Americans brought a diversity of values to the table during the Indian New Deal. To varying degrees, many of these values influenced the nature of ecological restoration on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Interaction between Apache values and Euro-American values intensified after 1933. The Western values of economy, recreation, paternalism, democracy, biodiversity, ecology, wilderness, and aesthetics intermingled with Apache visions of the past. Some of these values fit well with the Apache notions of spirituality, communalism, subsistence, and adaptability. Others conflicted with these values. Together they formed multiple baselines for restoration.

Prior to 1933, and to a certain extent thereafter, Euro-American values dominated those of the Apache. However, the Indian New Deal laid the foundation for a more even playing field between Euro-Americans and the Apache. Instead of domination, Apache values slowly gained acceptance, then legitimacy as paternalism gave way to the democratization of science and technology. This arduous journey turned the Fort Apache Indian Reservation into a long-term eco-political experiment involving a struggle over competing visions of restoration. John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933-

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53 Many contemporary land managers claim that Aldo Leopold is the father of ecosystem/adaptive management. For more on this topic, see Bryan G. Norton, *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 65-77.
1945, and his allies set this experiment in motion. The next section explores the values that lay the foundations for Collier’s eco-cultural restoration experiment.

**The Indian New Deal and a Vision of Eco-cultural Restoration**

The Indian New Deal coincided with the broader New Deal programs of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration. A large number of federal agencies coordinated rebuilding the country’s economic base, including protection, restoration, and improvement of degraded farm land, forests, and watersheds. In response to the degradation of these resources, Roosevelt created the Natural Resource Board to develop a comprehensive restoration plan.\(^{54}\) As a result, the New Deal era had an air of ecological and social restoration to it. The 1930s saw an increase in restoration rhetoric among the conservation elite such as Aldo Leopold, Hugh Bennett, Jay “Ding” Darling, and Benton MacKaye. Furthermore, Roosevelt initiated the annual North American Wildlife and Resources Conference, with its first proceedings titled *Wildlife Restoration and Conservation*. This conference offered a new venue for sorting out conservation problems and restorative solutions. In addition, Congress enacted a number of legislative bills associated with natural resource restoration, including the Wildlife Restoration Act.\(^{55}\)

Some Euro-American ecologists, politicians, and bureaucrats also included the revitalization of Native American cultures in their visions of restoration. Aldo Leopold’s experimental vision for restoration at the University of Wisconsin Arboretum in the early 1930s serves as a prime example. Leopold aspired to transform abandoned farmland back into “a sample of what Dane County looked like


when our ancestors arrived here.” Considered one of the first attempts to restore an ecosystem to its pre-European contact condition, this project also held symbolic meaning to some Native Americans.

In 1934 the organizers of the arboretum’s dedication invited Chief Albert Yellow Thunder, a Winnebago, to give a speech. Yellow Thunder’s oration included a number of messages that embodied both resistance to and exchange with Western ideals. Lamenting a sense of loss, he opened the speech comparing the decline of his people to the degradation of the Wisconsin forests: “My people are like the trees – a dying race, leaving behind them as their only monument the natural forests and streams of America.” However, his people had not vanished, as many Euro-Americans had come to believe. Perhaps his presence at the dedication even invoked romantic notions of pre-European landscapes full of thriving Native American societies. But Yellow Thunder wanted his audience to know that his people had not vanished, claiming that “my people are being recreated in this project. It makes me think of many winters ago in my home in the wilderness near Wausau. Years ago I left home to mingle with civilization. I went back last year. The beauty of my wilderness home was gone. Nothing remained but burn-tover [sic] land. I am glad to see the ‘white Indian’ reviving the natural instinct.”

Yellow Thunder recognized that the salvation of his people lay at the intersection of Western and Native American traditions. According to him, Western technologies potentially afforded the opportunity to build a positive relationship with non-human nature and Native American societies,

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56 Leopold’s quote taken from Nancy D. Sasche, A Thousand Ages (Madison, WI: Regents of the University of Wisconsin, 1965), p. 28.
especially if Euro-Americans revived “the natural instinct” – the reestablishment of a reciprocal and cooperative relationship between man and nature.\textsuperscript{59} But at the same time, he chastised Western traditions as the source of environmental degradation: “The progress of education is not civilization, because to me civilization must be a constructive, conserving, beneficial thing. Too often it has become barbaric and a great destructive force.” However, Yellow Thunder hoped this wasn’t true for all Western science and technology. He surmised that ecological restoration had the potential to “be a constructive, conserving, beneficial thing” and reverse the destructive tendencies of Western civilization, including the atrocities perpetrated on his people.\textsuperscript{60}

John Collier, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs under Roosevelt, conceived the Indian New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corp – Indian Division (CCC-ID) to carry out just such a vision. Restoration efforts during the Indian New Deal went beyond the Euro-American goals of ecological, economic, and social restoration. Projects on Indian reservations contained the seeds for political, religious, and cultural restoration of Native American nations. Indeed, the goal of Collier’s Indian New Deal sought to reform past federal policies that dispossessed Native American’s of their lands and disrupted their cultural traditions. Collier envisioned the Indian New Deal largely as an eco-cultural restoration of the Indian people, with the techniques of ecological restoration serving as a time machine: “So Time, in the strange way Time has, can move in different directions, the defeated can become the victors, the dead can live again, and through creative things that truly can be done, the Indian may once more embrace the whole land, and may spiritually reclaim it, from sea to sea.”\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} My goal here is not to determine whether or not Native Americans had “cooperative” relationships with non-human nature. I am trying to convey how Leopold’s restoration project inspired Yellow Thunder. For Yellow Thunder, Leopold’s project inspired a past, perhaps idealistic, when humans and non-humans got along. Indeed, Aldo Leopold’s land ethic embodies this relationship with nature. Furthermore, most Native American legends describe times when humans and non-human animals lived together and communicated with each other.

\textsuperscript{60} “Dedication Speakers,” p. 12.

Collier’s restoration policy involved three basic goals: First, “the conservation of the biological Indian and of Indian cultures, each with its special genius;” second, the conservation of the Indian’s natural resources, mainly “the pitiful remnant of what had once been their vast land;” and third, the reestablishment of self-governing Indian nations. In essence, the broad infrastructure of his restorative goals were eco-cultural, addressing the “world that is not man – the forests, the living soil, the waters, and the creature life of the million species – [and a] world that is man – his cultures, institutions, value systems, and hopes.” Collier designed the CCC-ID to implement this vision of restoration. He also felt this program should provide training for Native Americans in Western conservation and restoration techniques, with the hope that Native Americans could eventually manage reservation resources for themselves. The basis of this program lay with the fact that natural resources constituted the primary source of income for most American Indian groups. Indian self-management of these resources was integral to economic stability, thus the ability to self-govern. However, achieving this goal meant combining a multitude of values from Western and Native American societies.

Walter Woehlke, Collier’s close colleague and one of the architects of the Indian New Deal, illustrated this vision well. In an article titled “Let’s Give it Back to the Indians,” Woehlke declared, “It is a sensible act to turn over to him [Native Americans] the job of restoring the natural conditions on large areas of land. It will take time and cost money to make good the damage done through a century of ruthless exploitation, but the money will go to Indian wage earners engaged in the restoration work. And when the work is completed, the land will be in such shape that it can support the Indian population permanently.” Framing his argument with a romantic description of North America prior to Euro-American arrival, he described “a continent flowing with milk and honey.” Majestic forests covered “billions of acres” and prairie grasses that “reached to the stirrups” expanded across the horizon.

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62 Collier, *From Every Zenith*, p. 236.
63 Ibid.
Invoking the image of the “ecological Indian,” he claimed that for thousands of years Native Americans “possessed this continental area and made a living on it without disturbing the fine balance between the constructive and destructive forces of nature.”\(^{65}\) Instead, the fall of nature in the subsequent years solely rested on the shoulders of European “vim, vigor, boundless energy and equally boundless stupidity.”\(^{66}\) Everything from the destruction of the bison, deforestation, to the erosion of top soil into the oceans was a consequence of European greed and ignorance. For Woehlke and Collier, Native American societies embodied an idealistic return to better days.\(^{67}\) Giving their land back, with a little guidance, meant progress.

However, restoration for Collier and Woehlke had multiple baselines. They believed a complete return to the past was impractical, if not impossible. They pulled from the past and the present to formulate their goals, combining the land management philosophies of utilitarian conservation and wilderness preservation with what they believed were the cultural concerns of Native Americans. In essence, their vision of restoration was far from a recreation of Indian lands and societies as they appeared prior to European colonization. For them, the problem wasn’t land use, but improper land use. Western technology figured prominently in their plans. For example, when referring to government programs that promoted farming in the arid West, Woehlke insisted, “[I]t is perfectly reasonable to restore the grass cover on these areas, to reclothe them with brush and timber where possible and to practice stock raising in those districts in which the cover can be restored. As a rule these lands became

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\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 13.
\(^{66}\) Ibid.
\(^{67}\) Historians of the Indian New Deal have often rightly accused Collier and his allies of holding a romantically idealistic view of Native American societies. However, he also had a more complex conceptualization of Native American relationships with non-human nature than he is often given credit for. Collier didn’t see Indians as living in harmony with nature. He believed that Native American rituals rather than some modern notion of ecology guided an Indian conservationist ethic. See for example, “One aspect of Hopi morality is expressed in the Hopi hunting and gathering customs and rites. These rites involve propitiating the particular kind of game animal and entreating the ‘animal people’ not to become angry but to forgive the hunters who take their lives, inasmuch as the hunters kill only because of their great need.” Collier, From Every Zenith, p. 266.
‘sub-marginal’ when they were put to an unsuitable use.” In addition, they promoted game conservation, instituting not only programs to restore popular Euro-American game, but also game typically associated with American Indian hunting practices. In some cases, game conservation included endangered species such as bison. Perhaps one of Collier’s boldest policy innovations combined historically incompatible land management philosophies: wilderness preservation and utilitarian conservation.

Collier was a staunch wilderness advocate, aware of the potential for establishing roadless areas on Indian reservations. Because of the remoteness of many reservations, much of Indian country remained relatively free of modern technological influences. In fact the Fort Apache Indian Reservation had a primal appeal to Collier. On a visit in August of 1934 to inspect CCC-ID work, he took time to admire the “beautiful pine woods.” While eating lunch with Apache enrollees at a CCC-ID camp, he observed “a spring that is too idyllic. It bubbles up in a bower of wild flowers. It runs away through rich grass in a winding rill, diamond clear and silent. It is too perfect, like an over-ardent painting of still life.” Later during that same visit, looking from Maverick Lookout, an eighty foot fire tower, he exclaimed, “Here we have a view – and what a Paradise this Apache land is!”

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70 Collier wasn’t alone in this experiment. In the late 1920s the Forest Service began experimenting with wilderness preservation and expanding its recreational programs to counter the Park Service’s aggressive land grabs. Prior to this, recreation and preservation were the domains of the Park Service, whereas utilitarian conservation constituted the dominant philosophy of the Forest Service. See Hal K. Rothman, “‘A Regular Ding-Dong Fight’: Agency Culture and Evolution in the NPS-USFS Dispute, 1916-1937,” Western Historical Quarterly 20 (May, 1989): 141-161.
72 Ibid., p. 41.
In part to carry out a wilderness preservation policy, Collier appointed Robert Marshall, the much-lauded wilderness advocate and co-founder of the Wilderness Society, Director of the BIA Division of Forestry in 1933. Marshall maintained this post until 1937, when he took a position in the Forest Service that he felt would better advance his push for wilderness preservation.\textsuperscript{73} With John Collier sympathetic to his wilderness ideals, Marshall used his appointment to survey expansive tracts of potential wilderness designations out West – often by foot. The aesthetic qualities of the White Mountains became subject to Robert Marshall’s roadless area program. He visited Fort Apache in September of 1936, hiking 70 miles across the reservation, setting his personal record for hiking distance covered in a day. Marshall surveyed 22 miles of the reservation with Fred Moffat, the Forest Supervisor for Fort Apache, and the other 48 miles on his own.\textsuperscript{74} His musings about this journey exemplified what he thought important in the wilderness experience:

Nothing could possibly ever be more glorious. We looked out through the yellow pines over great valleys seeming to stretch infinitely towards the starts, and the horizon, and all bathed in the most nebulous, silvery moonlight. The moon was so bright that the pine trees cast black patterns across our path. The wind blew wildly through the trees giving the feeling that no civilization ever existed in the Apache Mountains.\textsuperscript{75}

Marshall also took advantage of his post to keep an eye on potential roadless areas. He often intervened in CCC-ID work that might affect these areas. In 1935, for instance, he directed changes to truck trail work on Fort Apache that seemed “like an unnecessary development which breaks up the most important wild area yet remaining on the reservation… [M]ost of the timber which this truck trail taps is not merchantable timber anyway and it can certainly be protected without this mechanical


\textsuperscript{74} Krahe, \textit{Last Refuge}, p. 75.

\textsuperscript{75} Robert Marshall to John Collier, October 7, 1936 as quoted in Krahe, \textit{Last Refuge}, p. 75.
development.” In fact, Marshall, along with other wilderness advocates, remained highly critical of CCC truck trail projects through the duration of the program. They saw these projects as “the most prevalent destruction of wilderness,” quickly diminishing the acreage of the last remaining roadless tracts in the United States.

Eventually as a consequence of his efforts, in 1937 the Department of Interior issued Secretarial Order 486 establishing 16 roadless areas ranging from 6,000 to 1.59 million acres on various reservations in the lower forty-eight states. The Order designated two on Fort Apache: Mount Thomas (Mount Baldy) and Black River. Mount Thomas Roadless Area encompassed 130,000 acres of the reservation and Black River Roadless area included 325,000 acres of both the Fort Apache Indian Reservation and the southerly adjacent San Carlos Apache Reservation (Figs. 3 and 4).

The Wilderness Society, established by Marshall and other like-minded individuals such as Aldo Leopold, Robert Sterling Yard, Benton MacKaye, Ernest Oberholtzer, and John C. Merriam in 1935, heavily influenced the policy set forth in Secretarial Order 486. This policy essentially imported the values and goals of this society to Indian country. The Order outlined the threat to American wilderness from increased “mechanization,” especially automobiles. Non-human nature, which up until the early twentieth century, had only been subject to “direct manpower” with the “forces of nature…now dominated by machinery.” The Order also presumptively addressed the concerns of Native Americans who “almost everywhere they go …encounter the competition and disturbances of the white race.”

76 Robert Marshall, “Changes Urged in Fort Apache ECW Program,” June 8, 1935, NA FAIR, CCC-ID Files, Box #96.
78 Secretarial Order 486, NA General Services, File #40999-37, Dec. 308, Box #863, CCF 07-39. The Ft. Apache roadless area map is from the same file. For a more extensive discussion of this subject see Krahe, Last Refuge.
79 Sutter, Driven Wild.
80 Secretarial Order 486.
81 Ibid.
Fig. 3 – A 1937 Map of Roadless Areas on Fort Apache Indian Reservation (Courtesy of the National Archives).
Fig. 4 – Mount Thomas in 1941. This area is also known as the White Mountain to the Apache and eventually became the Mount Baldy Wilderness Area in 1966 (Courtesy of the National Archives).
Marshall believed protecting wilderness on reservations also meant maintaining a refuge for Native Americans from Western society. In a limited way, embedded in Collier and Marshall’s roadless area policy was a cultural gesture to Native Americans. However, to the eventual detriment of this policy, they imposed this idealistic vision on Native Americans without their consent.

Collier, Marshal, and Woehlke believed they knew the “proper use” of Indian country, which included multiple baselines for eco-cultural restoration: Native American self-governance, Native American culture, range management, farming, game protection, sustained-yield timber management, recreation mediated through an aggressive conservation program, and wilderness preservation. Guided by the unique political circumstances of Native Americans, their vision integrated a variety of historical landscapes with present concerns to create a viable future for Native Americans. Drawing on idealistic notions of Native American history, the ethos of utilitarian conservation, and the philosophy of wilderness preservation, Collier saw potential in the Indian New Deal for the eco-cultural restoration of Native American societies. In an unprecedented experiment, Collier combined land management philosophies, bureaucratic styles, and political theory that historically were at odds with each other. He brought together the values of economy, recreation, participatory democracy, wilderness, and eco-cultural diversity under a single umbrella. Unfortunately, he and his colleagues guided the Indian New Deal from a paternalistic point of view; thus, Native American self-governance during this period proved mostly an illusion. Nevertheless, Collier’s program laid the political infrastructure for the eventual political, cultural, and ecological restoration of Native American societies, but it would take over sixty tumultuous years for this goal to come to fruition.
Conclusion: Restoration and Culture

Very few historians have explicitly dealt with the practice of ecological restoration. When they do, however, they leave unpacked the cultural aspects of this practice. They portray restoration as a monolithic idea.\textsuperscript{82} Ecological restoration as a practice in no way consists of a unified vision from a single institutional standpoint. Deconstructed, this practice is actually constitutive of a heterogeneous apparatus of multiple discourses concerning how humans should relate to nonhuman nature and human living environments. In recent historical works, William Jordan and Marcus Hall begin untangling the complex cultural conceptions of ecological restoration.\textsuperscript{83} In describing how the idea of restoration evolved in the distinct contexts of Europe and North America, Hall provides us with three models of restoration. For Europe, “maintenance gardening” – fixing environmental \textit{degeneration} due to natural forces - characterized early restoration. For North America, “reparative gardening” – fixing environmental \textit{degradation} caused by human activities - characterized early restoration. In North America, where wilderness rapidly declined in the late nineteenth century, land managers began incorporating the Clementsian concept of a climax community into their attempts to restore pre-settlement wilderness landscapes. Hall calls this new innovation “reparative naturalizing” or “rewilding.”\textsuperscript{84} He concludes that by the late twentieth century most European and North American restorationists converged upon the idea of “rewilding” as a model of restoration.

An earlier version of Hall’s classification system appeared in an article published with Jordan. The scheme is exactly the same except in this version, Jordan distinguishes “reparative naturalizing” from

\textsuperscript{84} Hall, \textit{Earth Repair}.
what he calls “holistic restoration.” Although the goal of restoring pre-European settlement landscapes is often a common goal of these two types of restoration, in contrast, holistic restorationists additionally adopt “a studied disregard for human interests in choosing models and defining goals for their projects.” Hall and Jordan’s four models of restoration are very useful for highlighting general historical trends in how different cultures have broadly defined restoration. However, this general theoretical framework tends to oversimplify the culturally diverse reasons why people attempt to restore nature. Different cultures further interpret maintenance gardening, reparative gardening, rewilding, and holistic restoration in context-specific ways. Furthermore, Hall and Jordan’s models fail to recognize the interactive relationship among these cultures of restoration. As these cultures intermingle, they continuously reshape the nature of restoration work.

Another way to understand the practice of ecological restoration is to highlight the diversity of institutional contexts where power/knowledge relations of restorative cultures interact with each other and nonhuman nature. Historically, a whole host of institutions, communities, and grassroots organizations practiced or promoted ecological restoration. Each institution, community, or grassroots organization that employed restoration evolved a distinct set of cultural traits. In other words, social, political, and environmental context created unique cultures of restoration. For instance, several different grassroots cultures practiced and continue to practice restoration: holistic restorationists, eco-cultural restorationists, environmental justice groups, therapeutic nihilists, and indigenous peoples. From a disciplinary standpoint, landscape ecology, conservation biology, and restoration ecology have

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embraced restorative techniques to achieve their goals. Most governmental land management agencies (i.e., Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, Army Corp of Engineers, and so on), each bringing a unique institutional culture to the fore, has sponsored or administered restoration projects. The list isn’t complete without mentioning the burgeoning restoration industry and the large number of environmental NGOs (i.e., Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited) that support restoration projects.\textsuperscript{88} All these cultures have either directly or indirectly interacted with each other to form a heterogeneous network of epistemic cultures - each characterized by context-specific values and goals.\textsuperscript{89} However, these restorative cultures shouldn’t be regarded as internally homogenous. And because they interact, they share a number of common traits. Most importantly for this study, several of these institutional types are inevitably found interacting or collaborating within a single landscape, with that landscape further constraining and defining the nature of ecological restoration.

The Fort Apache Indian Reservation is no different. The primary agencies of change were the Apache, BIA, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Arizona Game and Fish Commission (AGFC). The restorative values of these historical actors initially intersected during the Indian New Deal. Over time, the restorative visions of the BIA, the FWS, and the AGFC co-evolved, significantly shaping the eco-cultural landscape of the reservation. Under John Collier, the BIA experimented with a mixture of values imported from utilitarian conservation, wilderness preservation, and an idealized history of Native American societies: economical, recreational, ecological, educational, aesthetic, cultural, and communal (man part of nature). However, this ideal vision gave way to mostly economic concerns. Subsequent BIA administrations narrowed Collier’s complex vision to recreational and


economic values. Later in the 1960s and 1970s, the American Indian self determination movement, environmentalists, and the FWS forced the BIA once again to expand their notion of restoration. In the 1930s the FWS dabbled in biodiversity restoration, but primarily focused on economic and recreational goals. However, in the 1960s the FWS’s role on the reservation dramatically changed, balancing their emphasis on recreation with biodiversity issues. The AGFC experienced a comparable philosophical evolution to the FWS, although recreation remained a primary emphasis.

The Apache, on the other hand, came into the Indian New Deal in a disadvantaged position, with their knowledge production system and cultural practices unjustly discredited. Initially they desired an eco-cultural restoration to pre-reservation life ways. However, tribal leaders quickly realized the untenability of a complete return to the past. Eco-cultural restoration eventually became a vehicle for recovering some lost traditions but also a vehicle for fitting these traditions into a new framework that would compete with Western society. For any chance at asserting the values they cherished (community, adaptability, spirituality, flexible subsistence), the Apache had to force a change in the knowledge production system on the reservation from paternalism to democratic participation. Over a sixty year period they largely succeeded at this task. However, adopting modern technologies involved trade-offs.

As Apaches regained control over their eco-cultural resources, they integrated the past with the present and Apache traditions with Western traditions to revitalize the historically mismanaged landscape of the reservation. The tension between recovering ancestral Apache ways and modernizing the reservation was inherent in the Apache’s appropriation and adaptation of ecological restoration as a technology of survival. This process resulted in a great deal of tension both internally within the Tribe and externally in the Tribe’s dealings with the dominant society. Nonetheless, once the Apache began playing a more active role in restoration work, Apache cultural and political values began influencing
the nature of restoration. This drove restoration away from a single species, market driven model to a more community-based, adaptive model of restoration.

In sum, from the Indian New Deal on, multiple visions of restoration collided, affecting the outcome of restoration projects and the evolution of natural resource management on the reservation. The vision that eventually emerges is a product of the political struggle for control of knowledge production and resource management decisions on Fort Apache. As a consequence, the political manner in which the BIA, FWS, AGFC, and the Apache produced knowledge - paternalistic or democratic - had an immense impact on how the practice of ecological restoration impacted the Apachean landscape in the second half of the twentieth century. This struggle in effect blurred the boundaries among the competing ideals of restoration. Initially aspects of Euro-American visions dominated. Later, as the White Mountain Apache took control of resources, a hybridization of Euro-American and Apache visions emerged. In general, this political journey reconfigured Apache relationships with land management agencies, setting in motion a process of resistance and exchange that eventually resulted in Apache autonomy. The next chapter argues that the Indian New Deal provided an uncomfortable political foundation for this emerging relationship.
Chapter 2

The Political Origins of White Mountain Apache Eco-cultural Restoration:
The Indian New Deal

All of the shamans were holding a council at the Sun’s house. They were all there. When they were through holding the council, they got a paper from above. On it were written words, just like a letter. The shamans wanted to read the letter and know what it said. One of them said he would try. They had a chair there and they told him to sit in it and take the paper. The shaman sat down and took the paper. He looked it all over, but could not read it. Then another shaman sat down and tried, but without success. One after another they sat in the chair and tried to read the paper, but could not. Finally Coyote, who was a shaman, was the only one left. They said, “You ought to be able to read this paper, Coyote.” Coyote sat down in the chair and took the paper. He looked at it a while and then started to read it. He rested his head on one hand and held the paper before him with the other hand. Coyote read the paper right off without trouble. He knew how.¹

In this Apache story, Coyote imitates the “self-important Euro-American official at his desk,” providing his White Mountain Apache brethren with comic relief.² This imitation symbolized Apache misgivings about Euro-American society. In particular the Apache tribunal over the way Euro-American’s conveyed knowledge, which arrived in the form of written word from a place far removed from Apache living circumstances. Since the Apache practiced an oral-based knowledge system, the letter represented an alien form of knowledge production. Even if the letter’s content was clear, it would mean nothing to the Apache. Knowledge from Washington, D.C. had no bearing on Apache needs. Ever since they began reservation life, the Apache struggled with foreign Euro-American ideals structured to further Euro-American interests at the cost of Apache eco-cultural degradation.

On a broader level, this story represents tension between the Apache and modernity. This story would continue to hold meaning as the Apache experienced the modernization programs of the Indian New Deal. Although with the intention of encouraging self-governance, John Collier imposed a

² Goodwin, Myths and Tales of the White Mountain Apache, p. xvii.
Western-style democratic government on the White Mountain Apache. This alien form of government was analogous to the letter in the story, the Apache initially failed to understand it. They would struggle with its application for decades, but eventually would learn how to wield its power to the Tribe’s benefit.

The Apache struggle with understanding this new governmental structure played a significant role in their twentieth century quest to control reservation resources. Western-style self-governance provided a foundation from which the Tribe could begin to culturally appropriate Western science and technology. In essence, before examining the nature of White Mountain Apache ecological restoration, we need to understand the knowledge production structure from which it was born. Although the Apache adopted a constitution under the Indian Reorganization Act, the BIA would remain in control of Apache affairs for several decades to come. The BIA, therefore, defined the nature of early ecological restoration efforts. Nonetheless, with a mandate to self-govern, the Apache almost imperceptibly began to redefine restoration. This process at first emerged with the Apache’s struggle to comprehend Western democracy, modern science and technology, and governmental bureaucracy. They learned early that controlling their own government meant controlling knowledge production on the reservation. However, they also realized they first had to understand both Western knowledge and government before attempting to control them. The Indian New Deal precariously provided that first step.

With the institution of modern government came immediate friction between the BIA and the Apache. The modernization programs of the Indian New Deal would further disrupt Apache culture, but elements of it ironically became a vehicle for cultural survival. In this chapter, I argue this new arrangement reconfigured the Apache relationships with the federal government, setting in motion an eco-political process of resistance and exchange that would eventually result in Apache autonomy.
Resistance to and exchange with Indian New Deal programs would gain its impetus from the paternalistic policies of the BIA.

This chapter, therefore, details the White Mountain Apache’s initial struggles towards self-governance. I examine their effort to grapple its implications and define its structure. For the most part, the Apache failed to fully grasp Western-style democracy during the Indian New Deal. Nonetheless, this struggle represented a new beginning, creating a political foundation from which the Apache eventually appropriated ecological restoration to control eco-cultural resources on the reservation. Furthermore, I explore the Apache’s response to the paternalistic policies of the BIA. Throughout the Indian New Deal, the BIA regulated knowledge production in two ways: administratively and through education. This chapter covers the administrative side of this oversight. Chapter three explores the educational aspect of the Indian New Deal.

The Foundations of American Indian Self-Determination and Political Autonomy

The relationship between the federal government and American Indian nations is based on four key doctrines: inherent tribal sovereignty, reserved tribal rights, the federal trust responsibility, and the plenary power of Congress. These doctrines originated with treaties signed between American Indians and the United States as well as Supreme Court decisions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Later, after the end of the treaty era in 1871, the federal government extended these same rights to reservations created by executive order. When American Indians signed these treaties, the federal government guaranteed that tribes could retain their identity as sovereign nations. In exchange for ceded lands, the United States granted many tribes reservations where they had reserved rights – rights not relinquished within treaties. Furthermore, as a result of these treaties, the federal government established

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a trust responsibility to protect reservation lands, the right to self-governance, and the sovereignty of American Indian nations. In the early 1830s the Supreme Court affirmed these first three doctrines in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* and *Worcester v. Georgia*. However, the plenary power of Congress limits the political autonomy of tribes. Under the commerce clause of the Constitution, Congress has authority over government-to-government relationships with American Indian nations. As a consequence, Congress has often invoked its plenary power to hinder the political autonomy of tribes, but in some cases, Congress used its power to protect tribal rights from encroaching state governments.

Since the end of the treaty era in 1871, the federal government has inconsistently abided by these doctrines. The enactment of the General Allotment Act of 1887 signaled the beginning of a forty-year period during which the federal government sought to destroy tribal sovereignty and assimilate Indians into Euro-American society. The purpose of the Act was to break up reservation lands held in common by American Indians. Furthermore, the architects of this law believed that farming would instill the American ethos of individualism and mainstream Indians into Euro-American society, thus relinquishing the federal government from its trust responsibilities. Each tribal member received a 160-acre parcel of tribal land to which the federal government held the deed of ownership. Remaining Indian land became “surplus,” disposed of as the Department of Interior saw fit. Congress reasoned that once Indians became Christian farmers they would no longer need their hunting grounds and sacred sites. As a consequence of this policy, Euro-American farmers and ranchers bought a significant portion of the surplus lands, reconfiguring Indian reservations into a checkerboard of Indian and non-Indian lands.

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6 Ibid.
the wake of the General Allotment Act, American Indians lost approximately two-thirds of the land-base
that had been guaranteed to them in treaties.

Prior to the 1930s, tribes reacted to federal assimilation and allotment policies in various ways. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century’s, American Indians, in sporadic spurts of resistance, attempted to restore control over their cultures and their land. Some tribes ignored restrictions on hunting and fishing. Others refused to participate in education programs designed to “Americanize” Indians. While others created religious movements that sought ways to spiritually transcend the white man’s oppression. For Indian advocates such as John Collier, these political actions signaled the failure of past federal Indian policies. With the publication of the Merriam Report in 1928, the federal government officially recognized the declining social and ecological conditions of Indian reservations. This publication ushered in a new era of reform. However, John Collier believed the report failed to sufficiently address the roots of the “Indian problem.” For Collier, the solution lay with ending forced assimilation and allotment, two policies the report’s analysis neglected. In an effort to improve the Indian predicament, Collier, with the support of Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior from 1933-1946, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, pushed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 through Congress, which became the legislative buttress for the Indian New Deal. This radical change in federal policy

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provided a framework from which American Indians could begin to restore political autonomy and reclaim control over eco-cultural resources on their lands.

**John Collier’s Indian New Deal**

The Indian New Deal proved a very ambitious and short-lived policy. World War II’s funding requirements side-tracked Collier’s vision, and after the war, a conservative Congress looking to undo New Deal-era policies ultimately undermined it. Furthermore, as a consequence of the BIA’s past neglect of trust responsibilities, many tribes never fully trusted the intentions of this policy. And although one of its main provisions encouraged tribes to write their own constitutions, strive towards self-governance, and pursue economic development in such a way that wouldn’t disrupt cultural traditions, the Indian New Deal still tended towards paternalistic oversight of American Indian affairs. Finally, Collier’s policies sometimes unintentionally facilitated the continued Euro-American industrial exploitation of reservation lands.13

Nonetheless, on top of self-determination, Collier sought to revitalize Indian cultures. In early drafts of the IRA, he proposed educational programs for “the study of Indian civilization, including Indian arts, crafts, skills, and traditions.”14 However, conservative members of Congress and some assimilated Indians objected to this language. They claimed the legislation promoted returning Indian societies to pre-contact times. To accommodate the conservatives, Collier deleted all references to the study of Indian civilization in subsequent drafts, relegating educational funds to vocational training. Regardless, Collier still made the “study of Indian civilization” part of the BIA’s education policy, seeking funds elsewhere for programs that promoted the restoration of American Indian culture. He believed Native American cultural revitalization was essential to successfully implementing economic development.


programs on reservation. According to Collier, cultural traditions provided tribes with a cohesive moral and social framework that would allow them to make decisions that were in the best interest of the group. Restoring traditional culture countered the earlier assimilation policies that emphasized American individualism – a foreign and troubling idea to most Native Americans. However, the assumption that all Native Americans would embrace a return to communalism became the undoing of some of Collier’s policies. Despite earlier concessions, many assimilated American Indians continued to resist Collier’s cultural restoration policy. They went as far as to join ranks with conservative Congressmen to undermine tribal organization of governments, which they viewed as a foundation for reconstituting traditionalism.\textsuperscript{15} Collier also underestimated the extent that modernization would further influence tribal social organization, despite efforts to encourage past cultural traditions. Because of the political maneuvering of anti-Collier factions, Collier’s misconceptions about changing Native American social structure, and the cultural influences of modern technology, the cultural restoration work of the Indian New Deal fell short of the intended goals.

More successful than the cultural aspects of the Indian New Deal were several provisions in the IRA that set the stage for the restoration of tribal natural resources. To that end, the Act repealed the Dawes Allotment Act, thus ending the flow of the Indian land base to Euro-American buyers. In addition to ending allotment, the Act authorized “restoring to tribal ownership the remaining surplus lands of any Indian reservation.”\textsuperscript{16} Beyond solidifying tribal ownership of land, the Act also authorized funds for the improvement and development of reservation natural resources. Section 466 of the act mandated the BIA to develop sustained-yield management strategies and restore ecologically degraded range and forest. Even though in many cases the policies of the BIA’s Branch of Forestry led to continued deterioration of reservation lands, this division began to employ American Indians and established a

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Indian Reorganization Act, 25 U.S.C 461 \textit{et seq}. 

modicum of regulatory control over tribal resources where previously there had been none. Moreover, the IRA in combination with Civilian Conservation Corp – Indian Division (CCC-ID) programs saw a dramatic increase in federal funds devoted to natural resource restoration and management. Some of these funds supported studies that developed new ecological restoration techniques (e.g., erosion control, juniper eradication, range improvement) that American Indian restorationists still use today.  

Most importantly, the Indian New Deal began a trend whereby the BIA slowly relinquished its power over tribal resources.

Historians have subjected John Collier’s Indian New Deal to much criticism. Namely, they have asked to what extent his programs had lasting benefits for Native Americans. Assessments range from the positive to the highly negative. Perhaps one of the most devastating critiques comes from Lawrence Kelly. He argues that Collier’s program didn’t reach a large number of Indians. For example, only 174 of 252 eligible tribes voted for IRA. Even a smaller percentage accepted constitutions (92) and even fewer created business charters (71). 

Tribes that declined to organize governments under the IRA risked not receiving funds legislatively appropriated for economic development. Many historians, Kelly included, maintain that this stipulation amounted to BIA coercion, an attempt to leverage tribes into organizing under the IRA. However, many tribes that voted against the IRA already had constitutions, declining organization on that premise, and still received economic development funds. Kelly, writing in the 1970s, claims that the Indian New Deal was generally more of a failure than recognized by earlier historians. His argument, although containing some merit, is a bit extreme and obscures the large benefits afforded by the Indian New Deal. On many reservations, including Fort Apache, the Indian New Deal had positive effects, especially in terms of conservation of eco-cultural resources. The CCC-

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ID and the implementation of tribal self-government planted the seed for many Native American nations’ journey towards political autonomy.

Kelly failed to consider the lasting effects of tribal organization. His assertions that the immediate beneficial impacts of organization were few and that tribal governments often became facilitators for BIA programs have some merit. However, Kelly’s work, perhaps suffering from lack of distance from the subject, missed the opportunity to analyze the long-term effects of tribal organization. Tribal governments matured slowly, each proceeding at a different pace. Many tribes later sought and successfully fulfilled business charters, a mechanism for establishing tribally-owned enterprises. The IRA created this avenue of economic development. And although some tribal governments are still struggling, many others have clearly benefitted from tribal organization. For many Indian nations, the obvious gains from the Indian New Deal only became evident decades later, when tribal governments learned how to exploit the political system of the federal government.

Apologists for the Indian New Deal claim that this initiative never had a fair chance. Congressional opponents continuously looked for ways to undermine Collier’s programs by cutting funding for programs, not appropriating mandated funds, and attempting to repeal provisions in the IRA. Furthermore, many conservative Congressional members believed several aspects of Collier’s program encouraged un-American behavior. They even accused him of spreading communism among Native Americans. These accusations were in large part a reaction to Colliers attempt to restore communal ownership of lands to tribes on allotted reservations. As a remedy to the cultural disruption wrought by allotment policies, Collier wanted to consolidate allotted lands, return these lands to tribal ownership, and encourage the development of tribal resources through collective action. To carry out this plan, he directed reservation superintendents to establish cattle associations, create tribal enterprises (essentially

viewed as “state” owned by opponents), and build a sense of community through ventures such as the CCC-ID.

Because of this antagonism, Collier and his allies realized that they had a limited time frame in which they could have an impact. A new administration was always just four years down the road. Knowing this caused Collier to hurriedly implement many of his initiatives. In particular, he rushed tribal organization. Collier wanted to ensure that tribes established permanent tribal governments before a more conservative administration had a say in the matter. As a consequence, in instances where tribes voted to accept the IRA, the BIA created more or less standard constitutions modeled after the U.S. Constitution and hastily held elections for tribal councils. In part because of the hurried nature of tribal organization, many tribes resisted the process. In addition, tribes distrusted the idea based on past experiences with the BIA. They feared that a BIA-established tribal government would become a vehicle for rubber stamping previously conceived BIA programs. In other instances, older tribal leaders distrusted tribal organization because they failed to understand how the new government would work. As they saw it, the structures of the new governments were incongruent with their traditional political systems. On a very basic level, many Native Americans questioned why their traditional governments required replacement in the first place. They questioned the efficacy of giving further authority to the Secretary of Interior, who lived far removed from their circumstances. Adding to BIA frustration with the organization process, assimilated Indians and Euro-Americans living near reservations generated a great deal of misinformation concerning the acceptance of the IRA. Fearing economic losses, whites and

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20 The IRA gave the Secretary of Interior final approval on all tribal council decisions. This was a primary reason for several tribes rejecting organization under IRA. Oren Lyons of the Iroquois Nation lucidly explained the reasoning behind rejecting IRA on those grounds: “Questions have been raised about the wisdom of putting the IRA and traditional systems together…The IRA – your ultimate source of authority – is [the Secretary of Interior] at this point. He has a lot of authority over what happens on Indian land. That authority was vested in him through the IRA. And whoever it is, whoever it comes to be, one of the reasons why the Onondaga nation rejected IRA is simply we did not want to vest authority in somebody living some ten states away or in the federal government.” Quote from Lyon, Indian Self-Rule, p. 100. See also Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1984), p. 232.
assimilated mixed bloods informed tribal members considering organization that IRA would force them back into their old ways. To what extent such misinformation campaigns had on the number of tribes accepting the IRA is unknown, but proponents of the Indian New Deal felt these campaigns clearly had an impact. They spent immense amounts of time and energy countering these false claims.  

These standardized forms of government had lasting implications for the future of many tribes. Early on, tribal councils, as many tribal members feared, were pretty much puppet governments, facilitating the initiation of many New Deal programs without extensive consultation with the larger reservation population. Later, tribal councils learned how to obtain what they needed, and on many reservations became increasingly autonomous from the BIA. These were more entrepreneurial tribes that successfully established and maintained their own eco-cultural resource management programs and industries. The White Mountain Apache are one of these tribes. However, many tribes continued to flounder under their new governments due to a cultural mismatch between their prescribed constitutions and their traditional political structures.

On top of a recalcitrant Congress and resistance from Native Americans, Collier’s program had philosophical shortcomings as well. Collier and his allies, although well-meaning, had a very idealistic understanding of Native American societies that wasn’t necessarily in touch with the realities of reservation life.

The Indian is not a ‘rugged individualist’; he functions best as an integrated member of a group, clan or tribe. Identification of his individuality with clan or tribe is with him a spiritual necessity. If the satisfaction of this compelling sentiment is denied him – as it was for a half a century or

more – the Indian does not … merge into white group life. Through a modernized form of Indian tribal organization, adapted to the needs of the various tribes… it is possible to make use of this proverbial latent civic force.\textsuperscript{25}

According to Collier, this “latent civic force” had a binding spiritual character that was absent in the dominant society. All tribes had rituals, symbols, and ceremonies that acted as a cohesive force that maintained cultural traditions. He believed a revival of these traditions was possible despite years of assimilation policies and environmental degradation of their homelands. This idealistic view of Native American societies was the foundation for Collier’s tribal reorganization program, which led to many misconceptions and overgeneralizations about the needs of American Indians.\textsuperscript{26}

Nonetheless, the thrust of the Indian New Deal focused on modernization, not revitalizing past traditions. Collier realized that for American Indians to persist as cultures, some degree of modernization had to occur. However, he severely opposed the old method of forced assimilation. Rather, “[a]ssimilation, not into our culture but into modern life, and preservation and intensification of heritage are not hostile choices, excluding one another, but are independent through and through. It is the continuing social organism, thousands of years old and still consciously and unconsciously imbued with and consecrated to its ancient past, which must be helped to incorporate the new technologies. It is the ancient tribal, village, communal organization which must conquer the modern world.”\textsuperscript{27} Collier believed that Western technology guided by indigenous life ways improved how Euro-American society applied technology. So in essence, he attempted to institute programs that brought together the best of both worlds, hybridizing modernity with traditional Native American culture. Although his programs fell short of this goal, late twentieth-century tribal governments, including the White Mountain Apache, put these same goals to the test with much greater success.

\textsuperscript{25} Commissioner of Indian Affairs, \textit{Annual Report, 1934-35}, p. 114, RG 75, Records of John Collier.

\textsuperscript{26} Taylor, \textit{The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism}, p. 40.

Collier requested that BIA officials on the ground abide by this social philosophy. Perhaps the most important aspect of Collier’s hybridization experiment was the establishment of “autonomous” tribal governments. The BIA attempted to design tribal governments in a context-specific manner, reflecting the varied traditional tribal socio-political structures in existence. In practice, this plan faltered, perhaps in part because of the perceived urgency of completing the task.\(^{28}\) Ultimately, however, the lack of BIA expertise on tribal political systems, the inability of the BIA to accommodate the diversity of traditional governments, and the unwillingness of assimilationist-minded superintendents to integrate Indian culture into governments, created a situation where facilitation of Indian New Deal programs rather than cultural congruence guided the design of tribal governments. Collier also established the American Indian Arts and Craft Board in 1935 in an attempt to revive traditional arts to “increase income to the Indian from the sale of his arts and crafts.”\(^{29}\) On a limited basis, the BIA implemented a number of cultural restoration projects ranging from reestablishing ceremonial dances, to rehabilitating shrines, to rebuilding ancient ruins.\(^{30}\)

Most Indian New Deal programs, however, remained decidedly Western. For instance, development and restoration of eco-cultural resources proceeded exclusively through Western land management practices, ignoring or discounting most indigenous knowledge. Practical education in various Western trades, including natural resource management, became a focal point of the Indian New Deal. Despite Collier’s good intentions, the Indian New Deal led to some highly paternalistic policies with unintended negative consequences, the most famous of which was the stock reduction program on the Navajo Reservation. According to Bureau of Reclamation officials, overgrazing on the Navajo Reservation was causing extensive erosion of soils into the Colorado River, which in turn greatly increased sedimentation

\(^{29}\) Collier, *From Every Zenith*, p. 194.
behind the Hoover Dam. In order to mitigate this threat to the Hoover Dam and restore ranges on the reservation, the BIA reduced domestic livestock herds against the will of the Navajo. In the end, the program failed to restore reservation ranges, consequently increasing Navajo dependence on the federal government. This is perhaps the most extreme example of paternalism during the Indian New Deal. Most reservations never experienced such drastic policies. The Navajo situation remained unique in that the BIA tied it to a national natural resource “emergency.”  

In reality, the impact that IRA had on American Indian nations varied considerably. But according to many Native Americans, the major problem with IRA lay with the authority it gave to the Department of Interior over tribal governments. The Secretary of Interior had final approval concerning most tribal council decisions; therefore the promise of self-governance rang hollow.  

As a consequence, the BIA still maintained tight control over the governance of all tribal financial matters and economic resources. Given past Native American mishaps with modern finances during the allotment era, Collier and most reservation superintendents lacked confidence that tribal councils could effectively manage their financial affairs. Although the ultimate goal of the Indian New Deal sought tribal self-sufficiency in all matters, Collier and many of his superintendents were slow to relinquish control. From their perspective, leaving inexperienced tribal councils in complete control jeopardized the overarching goal of restoring an economic base. This meant the BIA would continue to administer natural resource development on Indian reservations for the foreseeable future.

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Overall, the Indian New Deal proved a mixed blessing for Native Americans. On the one hand, these programs attempted to revitalize Native American traditions, ended allotment, established tribal governments with limited powers, introduced modern natural resource management technologies to reservations, and increased the Native American skill-base in Western trades. On the other hand, Indian New Deal programs unintentionally facilitated the exploitation of tribal lands, haphazardly imposed Western-style governments onto American Indian nations, and continued the legacy of paternalism. Despite this, good would emerge from the Indian New Deal. The rest of this chapter outlines the general administrative effect the Indian New Deal had on the White Mountain Apache.

The Indian New Deal and the White Mountain Apache

_Evolution in White Mountain Apache Political Organization, Pre-reservation to 1933_ - Prior to confinement on the reservation, the Western Apache political system was organized around bands and local groups within bands. The White Mountain Apache and the Cibecue Apache constituted two of several bands that inhabited east-central Arizona. These bands defended territories, protecting vital eco-cultural resources from other Western Apache bands or non-Apaches. Each band consisted of several semi-nomadic local groups that functioned as self-sufficient political units. Coordination among local groups rarely occurred, but they respected each other’s settlement boundaries. At most, local groups held loosely protected hunting areas that covered a 3-8 mile radius surrounding farm settlements; however, outside these localities Apache considered all the land within the band’s territory common property. 35 Local groups selected a local chief who organized group activities such as hunting forays, gathering expeditions, raiding and war parties, and ritual ceremonies. In general, individuals became

local chiefs because of their overall knowledge about community survival and their ability to resolve disputes within the settlement.  

Once isolated on the reservation in 1870, band territories dissolved and the local group level of organization became less important. Sedentary family clusters replaced the local group as the coherent political unit. Family clusters represented a sedentary remnant of the mobile local group that characterized Western Apache life before the reservation days. Family clusters that lived in proximity to each other worked together to support themselves. When hard times fell on one or several families, the better off would supply those with what they needed to survive. Politics, however, remained local. Members of a family cluster still “elected” local chiefs to organize group activities, especially farming and ceremonial practices. Prior to 1927, the Apache rarely organized politically beyond the family cluster; however, this would change with the arrival of Superintendent William Donner in 1927.  

On November 1, 1927 Donner replaced Charles Davis as the reservation superintendent. He brought with him a mix of old notions of assimilation with a new measure of political reform in line with Hoover administration Indian policy and the Merriam Report. Donner whole heartedly believed the ultimate goal of the BIA was to facilitate the assimilation of Indians into American society; however, he disagreed with past approaches. Donner felt that insufficient time, money, and emphasis had been placed on converting Apaches into farmers and ranchers. His vision of transforming the Apache involved a major transformation of the Apachean landscape. Donner recommended removal of all commercial timber from the reservation, believing railroad costs would “make it impossible to log at a profit” otherwise:

It would be decidedly poor business judgment to put all of the earnings derived from logging operations back into maintenance and protection of a forest for a prospective income one

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hundred years from now for the benefit of the Indians. The phrase ‘benefit for Indians’ should be
eliminated and ‘benefit for posterity’ substituted. I am convinced that the Apache problem will
be a problem for the next 20 or 25 years, but I am not convinced that it will be a problem 100
years from now. Rather am I convinced that there will be no Ft. Apache Reservation by the time
the second growth comes on, but that it will be a National Forest in which the Apache, if there be
any remaining, will have no more interest than any of our other citizens. I say by all means let us
protect the timber; let us build sufficient roads and trails to give it proper protection, but in doing
so let us be broad enough to forget about the Apache and his remote future asset.\(^{38}\)

Removing all the merchantable timber would have the added benefit of increasing the amount of grazing
and arable land on the reservation; thus clearing the Apache path towards assimilation.\(^{39}\)

In order to enact his assimilationist agenda, in 1927 Donner organized an informal tribal
government. For the first time in history, the Apache would operate politically on the tribal level. In
contrast to past assimilation policies, Donner believed the first step towards “progress” entailed forming
a representative body that would facilitate implementing economic development policies on the
reservation. This new government also functioned as vehicle for communicating with a large number of
isolated family groups. To improve communication and build cohesion among tribal members, Donner
selected a representative from several localities that roughly coordinated with the population centers of
family clusters. This pre-IRA Tribal Council consisted of approximately eleven at large members and
one Head Chief of Council, Baha Alchesay.\(^{40}\)

By 1933, Donner’s vision ran head long into Indian New Deal policies, tempering his aggressive
plan to transform the Apache along with the reservation landscape. From the outset, Donner fought
aspects of the Indian New Deal that he believed compromised Apache assimilation. For instance,
Donner initially felt Apache participation in CCC-ID conservation programs would disrupt the

\(^{38}\) William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 21, 1932, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 339, File

\(^{39}\) On Donner’s aggressive timber policies see CCF 40-56, Dec. 339, File #32406-41, Box #25 and File #1050-56,
Box #26.

\(^{40}\) This number fluctuated considerably as the Council evolved. I counted eleven at large members plus Chief
Baha Alchesay in a 1934 council meeting. Council of Fort Apache Indians at White River, Arizona,” March 5,
1934, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 3339, File #18-34, Box #63.
assimilation process, drawing Apache away from their farms and ranches. Eventually though, Donner’s administration of the Apache evolved with the Indian New Deal, but his policy decisions never totally aligned with this program. Even though Donner’s views often conflicted with Collier’s, he remained the superintendent of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation until 1946.

**White Mountain Apache Political Organization under IRA** - On Fort Apache, from 1933 to 1938, BIA personnel aggressively lobbied tribal members to organize a government under IRA. As a result, pre-IRA Tribal Councils embodied a measure of resistance to Indian New Deal policies; however, they also realized that modernity resided at their doorstep, requiring preparation of future generations for the encroaching dominant society. This ambivalence manifested itself in a five-year deliberation before the Tribe organized under IRA in 1938. While the Apache struggled with adopting a Western-style government, Indian New Deal programs still came on line, heightening anxiety on the reservation. For the first time, this program exposed the Apache, on a large scale, to elements of modernity. For example, at a 1934 tribal council meeting concerning the sale of the Maverick timber unit to the Cady Lumber Company, many tribal members expressed concern about the BIA’s intentions concerning the Indian New Deal. The deliberations of this meeting also illustrate the tension between those reluctant to change and those willing to embrace the Indian New Deal.

Adopting a constitutional government concerned the Council for several reasons. First, they admittedly didn’t understand the operations of an-IRA organized government.\(^{41}\) Past negative experiences with U.S. Indian policy gave tribal leaders good reason to distrust any new policies they failed to comprehend. Nonetheless, Chief Wallace Altaha of the Cedar Creek District cautiously embraced the potential benefits of self-governance: “This is the first time the Apache have been given

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the opportunity to have things done the way they want them…This is the first time it [timber contracts and other uses of their land] has been brought out like this. Before we never knew what was going on. It was between the Superintendent and the Indian Office. We want everything brought up before the Indians, then we can make our decisions on it.”

But reinforcing the reasons for distrust, John Ethelbah of Carrizo cautioned William Donner, “It would be very mean of our agent to use this money [from the timber contract] for work on the roads and bridges, or the ditches. It would be better for him to give the money to fellows that need it, the fellows that do not have any money coming from anywhere and let them use it.”

Second, they worried that accepting IRA would facilitate the exploitation of their resources. This meeting represented one of the first times the BIA consulted the Tribe on Euro-American use of tribal natural resources. The Tribal Council had previously taken this opportunity to reject a Maverick Unit timber contract. This rejection symbolized the tribal leaders’ fears of continued exploitation of reservation resources. John Taylay, Chief of the Cibecue District expressed this concern on behalf of the entire Tribal Council: “It is the wish of the chiefs that we do not want anyone else [after Cady Lumber Co.] to come on our reservation to buy or lease anything. They have spoiled much of our grazing land and much of our timber already. We should make it so they should never bother us about our reservation.”

Despite this ambivalence, younger, “educated” tribal members who spoke English persuaded the Council to accept the contract because of the desperate economic conditions on the reservation. As an enticement, the BIA proposed that tribal members would receive per capita payments for the money the Tribe received for timber. Younger tribal members would later influence the Tribe’s adoption of a government under IRA.

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42 “Council of Fort Apache Indians at White River, Arizona,” March 5, 1934.
43 Ibid.
Baha Alchesay, the Head Chief, recognized the need to resist certain elements of Western civilization, mainly the ecological degradation of the Apache homeland associated with Western technology. But he also recognized cultural survival necessitated exchange with Euro-Americans:

I want to hold the White Mountain timber and sell only the Maverick Lake timber. Cutting on this White Mountain might cause the river to dry up. This is the only mountain we get water from. From the water that we get from the White Mountain, even the white people down below grow things with water from this river. They come up here with vegetables and fruit. These vegetables and fruit come from soil irrigated with water from the White Mountain. We feel that those people are our friends and we do not want them to lose water from the White Mountain. Many people have benefitted from that mountain so we do not want to lose the water from this mountain.45

With this statement, Baha demonstrated political savvy. Beyond an emphasis on the drawbacks of degrading the White Mountain watershed for his people, Baha also extended the analysis to Euro-American circumstances. Baha cleverly attempted to appeal to the potential negative consequences of over-logging to Superintendent Donner’s own culture. The survival of both Euro-American and Indian cultures in the Salt River Valley depended on proper protection of the reservation watershed. In essence, he wanted Donner to understand the practical limits of resource exploitation.

John Ethelbah reminded Donner that maintaining tribal sovereignty was tied to protecting the White Mountain: “Nobody wants to let the White Mountain go, and it is my wish too that they fence our White Mountain in and not let any timber go. Any white man outside here that sees that land wishes he could use it and we never want them to have it. We feel that that land has been put aside and reserved for our cattle and no one else should claim that land or lease that land.”46 Historical experience with outside interests played a strong role in White Mountain Apache resistance to economic development of reservation resources. Past encroachment engendered a fear that accepting the terms of one timber

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
contract would eventually lead down the slippery slope of complete domination of their land, a fate the Apache had heretofore escaped due to their relative isolation. Leasing too much land to Whites meant losing what control they had over their homeland, thus their identity as a sovereign nation.

The legal details of the IRA failed to relieve these anxieties. One of the Apache’s strongest objections to organization stemmed from the fact that section 466 of IRA delegated final authority to the Secretary of Interior. Donner reported to Collier that the Apache felt this authority “is taking the management [of forests and range] entirely out of their hands.” In essence, the Apache believed IRA gave too much power to the Department of the Interior. In Collier’s response to this situation, he explained that in terms of natural resource management, the Apache had to abide by the same rules as Euro-Americans. Mismanagement of the land “may have such a disastrous effect on people living far away in place in time, [sic] that is now generally recognized that the Government must have some voice in the management of private resources.” Because of the potentially devastating effects of poor management, the government maintains the “final voice in conservation matters.” As a consolation, Collier assured the Apache that the BIA would “respect the ideas of the Indian,” but that they wouldn’t relinquish final authority. With such reasoning, the Apache continued to question whether accepting IRA granted them the right to self-govern. But in the final analysis, the Apache saw no appealing alternative – any promising path forward seemed to involve some level of acquiescence to Euro-American society. Unfortunately, despite the rhetoric of political autonomy, the paternalism of utilitarian conservation still loomed.

Ultimately, the BIA maintained their paternalistic oversight through the structure of governments organized under IRA. This happened for three reasons. First, a representative government was

47 William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 5, 1934, RG 75 FAIR, Tribal Organization, E-1012, File #9580, Box #12.
48 John Collier to William Donner, February 13, 1935, RG 75 FAIR, Tribal Organization, E-1012, File #9580, Box #12.
incongruent with past governing practices of the Apache. The Apache’s unfamiliarity with Western-style governments and management techniques required that they blindly trust BIA proposals, efficiently running a government would require years of education. Second, the Apache had limited financial resources from which to operate a government. Because of this, they would remain dependent on the whims of BIA policy for years to come. They realized that to support a government bureaucracy they needed a stable economic infrastructure. Finally, authority over natural resource management lay with the Department of Interior. The Secretary of Interior could reject any Apache proposal.

The BIA attempted to create a legitimate government, but accommodating the intricacies of traditional Apache political system proved cumbersome. Morris Opler of the Office of Indian Affairs Applied Anthropology Unit suggested in a 1936 report that the elective body of the Tribal Council should consist of 32 members: “To many this will seem somewhat large and unwieldy. There are special conditions which justify such a sizable body however. In the first place the reservation is large and some of its inhabitants live at great distance from the agency… [T]he reservation does have these many separate and distinct residential districts and a fairly large population. It would be difficult to faithfully represent all the people and all the autonomous districts by a small group.” Although Opler admitted that a smaller tribal council was more efficient concerning matters that needed tribal approval, he believed that the Apache would view such a council as illegitimate. In addition, tribal members would interpret all council decisions as “a rubber stamp to serve official purposes,” decreasing the likelihood that the Apache would embrace BIA programs, policies, and advice.

Blatantly disregarding Opler’s recommendations, BIA officials created a much more “tenable” tribal council of 9 elected officials and one at large seat filled by Chief Baha until his death. They cited

49 Basso, *The Cibecue Apache*.
50 In general see RG 75 FAIR, Tribal Organization, E-1012, File #9580, Box #12.
52 Ibid. p. 18.
difficulty in achieving approval for BIA initiatives with such a large and cumbersome governmental structure. This move was largely congruent with the pre-IRA council Donner established. Eventually, the White Mountain Apache voted to accept a constitution in August of 1938. The change of heart came at the behest of younger tribal members more educated in Western ways. The younger generation convinced the elders that to survive as a culture and transcend their impoverished condition, the Tribe had to develop tribally-owned businesses. In essence, they believed that organizing under IRA facilitated economic development that would benefit the Tribe.\textsuperscript{53} Despite this, many tribal members remained ambivalent and worried that the Tribal Council would become a vehicle for rubber stamping the desires of the BIA – to a certain extent this was the case at first. Nonetheless, even with the smaller tribal council, council members resisted approving BIA programs. And when the Council approved proposals, they half-heartedly and reluctantly did so. As the next section depicts, BIA paternalism reigned during the Indian New Deal. The paternalistic philosophy affected three major areas of Apache life in relation to natural resource management: decision-making power of the tribal government, dismissal of historic and local knowledge, and land use.

**Paternalism and the White Mountain Apache**

**Decision-making Power** - BIA officials forced the Tribal Council’s hand on most issues concerning eco-cultural resources on the reservation. Council meetings often became forums of frustration and confusion for the Apache. For instance, a young Lester Oliver, at the time the tribal treasurer and later to become an influential tribal chairman, vehemently opposed the BIA’s control over tribal funds. William Donner, Superintendent of the Fort Apache Agency, claimed that Oliver couldn’t adequately fulfill this

\textsuperscript{53} RG 75 FAIR, Tribal Organization, E-1012, File #9580, Box #12.
role “because of his status and limited education.” Such suppositions about Apache governing abilities were common during the Indian New Deal. And they had a great deal of influence on the decision-making powers of the tribal government. The following scene that played out at a Tribal Council meeting in May of 1937 vividly captures the tortured logic of BIA administration of Apache affairs.

William Donner called this meeting to discuss the inclusion of the Horse Mesa timber unit in an already approved sale of the Smith Park timber unit. From the outset, council members expressed misgivings over how the timber cut in this additional area would affect their cattle. Chief Baha and other council members were reluctant to approve this additional sale. Baha’s people grazed their cattle at Horse Mesa. Furthermore, they had already made a concession to tolerate cutting activity in another area where their horses foraged, the Smith Park unit. Now the superintendent wanted more trees.

At the behest of the Southwest Lumber Mills, Inc., Superintendent Donner claimed that the Smith Park unit wasn’t sufficient in size to yield a profitable cut. To sell the idea to the Council, Donner suggested that removing “the big timber [would] help the range.” Currently the canopy of the large trees shaded out grass. However, Chief Baha contested this idea, deflecting the conversation back to his primary concern, the safety of his people’s cattle: “Although there are lots of trees there is plenty of grass in the shade. It will be pretty hard to keep our cattle right together. They will stray away on account of the cutting.” Donner subsequently side-stepped this bit of local knowledge, pursuing his agenda of securing the Tribe’s approval of the sale. He responded by claiming, “The cattle are up there only about four months of the year. In September or October they will come back again. These people will cut there all winter. If there are any cattle killed they will pay for them and they have to keep the

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54 William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 5, 1940, RG 75 FAIR, Records of the CCC-ID, Dec. 932, File #77733-39, Box #97.
55 “Minutes of the Council Called for Approval of the Horse Mesa Timber Unit,” May 19, 1937, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 339, File # 10157-36, Box #63.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
fences up.” The conversation continued through several more frustrating iterations, with neither Baha nor Donner acknowledging the other’s concerns. Beyond the lack of communication, what was remarkable about this exchange was Donner’s complete dismissal of local knowledge. The validity of Baha’s claim was irrelevant to Donner. Baha’s knowledge about his territory contradicted the BIA’s mission to sell timber for the “benefit of the Apache.” Ignoring or neglecting the potential benefits of Apache local knowledge became intertwined with truncating Apache decision-making power; thus hindering the Tribe’s quest to control their eco-cultural resources.

For all practical purposes, curtailment of Apache decision-making power still left the Tribe dependent on the whims of off-reservation interests. The BIA believed that leasing timber land on Fort Apache was one of the best ways to help alleviate the poor economic conditions on the reservation. Because of this belief, Donner proceeded with a single-minded approach to securing approval from the Tribe for sales. This blinded Donner to potentially legitimate concerns of the Tribe. With great hubris, he assumed he had all the angles covered. However, his approach helped nurture a climate of distrust between the Apache people and the BIA. To Donner’s frustration, Chief Baha wasn’t comfortable with the structure of the new tribal government. He felt that his people were being rushed into important decisions, leaving inadequate time for proper consultation. The following exchange concerning the sale of the Horse Mesa unit exemplifies how the BIA imposed a government structure on the Apache that they weren’t accustomed to.

Chief Baha: “Although I represent all Indians of my district they should come in and consider it, those that have cattle there.”

Supt. Donner: “The Council represents the tribe. This Council represents the tribe until the new Council is approved by the Office.”

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58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
Baha: “We should have notified all the Indians and they could pass on it.”

Donner: “The North Fork Indians selected you as a Council-man.”

Baha: “Before this I think I should have had a meeting with the North Fork Indians to discuss the matter.”

Donner: “I cannot agree with you on that. In order to do business, the tribe selects a Council and we do business with the Council. That is why we had an election several weeks ago.”

A representative government was incongruent with past governing practices of the Apache. Historically, local groups consisting of several households within a small territory made decisions by consensus with the advice of the local chief. Local chief’s had little influence over other local groups. Each local group was a self-sufficient unit making their own decisions about farming practices, cattle, ceremonies, hunting, and so on. Baha’s adamant wish to consult his people reflects this tradition. Donner’s imposition of Western-style government compromised the consensus-driven decision process of the traditional Apache political system. By admonishing Baha, Donner forced him into a politically vulnerable position, perhaps causing him to lose credibility with his people. However, Baha’s credibility wasn’t necessarily Donner’s concern. He had his own agenda, albeit presented as doing what was in the best interest of the Tribe. Donner was determined to force the contract through.

The Council backed Baha’s reluctant decision at a high social and economic cost. At the time, the Apache received more money from cattle than timber. So they were understandably concerned about potential harm to their cattle. John Taylay defended Baha’s concerns and asserted to Donner, “If Head Chief Baha wants to give up this timber it is all right, but you better put a couple of men up there to ride the range for him. Baha thinks more of the cattle than the timber…” With this idle compromise, the Tribal Council eventually half-heartedly approved the sale of the timber, but perhaps at the cost of being

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60 Basso, *The Cibecue Apache.*
61 “Minutes of the Council Called for Approval of the Horse Mesa Timber Unit.”
perceived as a puppet government. The way Donner presented the contract left the Council with little choice.

**Dismissal of Historic and Local Knowledge** – A number of Apache men received training in Western conservation techniques through the CCC-ID. These skills would especially be useful as the Tribe developed its own recreational program in the 1950s. Unfortunately, CCC-ID personnel disseminated knowledge from the top down. Educators assumed that Western conservation techniques were superior to Apache knowledge about wildlife. Clifford Presnall, a Fish and Wildlife Biologist, suggested that CCC-ID programs provided an excellent opportunity to educate Indians on “genuine [my emphasis] conservation,” implying that past Apache traditions were primitive or ineffective.62

BIA personnel were quick to blame the Apache for the decline in deer populations without considering other causes. And when species of wildlife such as turkey or Arizona native trout were abundant, it was only because the Apache had “taboos” against eating these animals.63 No one considered that aspects of the historical Apache hunting social structure may have limited overhunting. Furthermore, BIA and FWS land managers never considered that the past assimilation policy, which eroded Apache social structure that regulated against overhunting, might have had something to do with declining deer populations. Nor did anyone adequately investigate the nature of the social “taboos” against hunting certain species.

Ritual taboos have played a strong role in moderating the wildlife and fish harvests of other indigenous groups. To date, I am unaware of any anthropological or ecological study that has taken a serious look at the relationship between traditional Apache social structure, including taboos, and the

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mitigation of overhunting practices.64 Unfortunately, because anthropologists paid so little attention to hunting behaviors before Apache culture significantly evolved in the twentieth century, we may never know. However, clues in the anthropological literature suggest that Apache social structure could have regulated against overexploitation of wildlife.

The Apache cultural relationship with wildlife was inseparable from their subsistence use of animals. The Apache, living in an unpredictable and ecologically heterogeneous landscape, relied on a flexible style of subsistence. Hunting amounted to one of five modes of food acquisition, which also included wild plant collection, farming, trading, and raiding. The period of most intense hunting pressure occurred between November and early spring, when food garnered from farming and wild plant collection was less available.65 Although not with the same intent as the hunting season associated with Western game regulation practices, the seasonal hunting patterns of the Apache might have served a similar function. Hunting parties generally consisted of 3-5 adult men. Less frequently larger numbers hunted together, usually in connection with the apprenticeships of adolescents. Prior to the introduction of rifles, Apache pursued game with a wide assortment of weapons and tools, including bow and arrow, slings, fire, clubs, and spears. However, the bow and arrow was the most important weapon for apprehending large game.66

The Apache exploited a wide array of game, thus limiting pressure on any one species. Deer, the most popular game, inhabited a number of Apache hunting myths, indicating their revered status in Apache culture. Historically three species of deer occurred in the White Mountains: black-tailed, white-tailed, and Mexican. Besides deer, the Apache also pursued pronghorn antelope, elk, rabbits, squirrels, wood rats, jack rabbits, turkey, quail, pigeons, dove, and to a certain extent mountain lions, wolves, and

64 The only study that significantly touches on Apache hunting life prior to the 1940s is Winifred Buskirk’s The Western Apache. He only describes hunting techniques and the animals the Apache hunted. Taboos are only explored cursorily and seemingly written off as emerging from episodes of eating diseased or tainted meat.

65 Buskirk, The Western Apache; Goodwin, Social Organization of the Western Apache.

bear (only by religious practitioners with “bear power”). Beyond a source of nourishment, hunting provided materials for clothes, shelter, tools, blankets, shoes, and weapons.\textsuperscript{67}

Cultural relationships with animals probably regulated hunting among the Apache people. The cultural significance of turkey provides an example of how hunting rituals may have prevented overhunting. Because turkey was so abundant on Fort Apache, BIA officials felt obligated to explain this phenomenon. Their explanation invoked the supposed Apache taboo against turkey hunting.\textsuperscript{68} However, he was either ignorant of Apache traditions or prejudiced against the idea that the Apache could judiciously hunt a species. All Western Apache groups, including the White Mountain Apache, had long hunted turkey. According to Winifred Buskirk, an anthropologist who interviewed Apaches about their subsistence system in the 1940s, “Turkeys were hunted during the day and also at night. In the daytime a ‘gobbler tail’ was sometimes held as a mask before the hunter’s face. This was said to attract pugnacious turkey gobblers. The favored hunting technique for turkeys was to locate a roosting place and return at night to kill the birds.”\textsuperscript{69} The White Mountain Apache even used fire to flush turkeys from their roosts. Unfortunately, Buskirk’s work is only descriptive, with no inclination towards ecological theory. Even though he notes the historical abundance of turkey on the reservation, he offers no explanation for the prevalence of this species, despite turkey being a popular game item among the Apache.

Because of their intimate historical connection with wild turkey, the Apache must have had some valuable knowledge about the natural history of this species. Indeed, Turkey was a cultural hero among the Apache. In the Western Apache story, “Turkey Makes the Corn: Coyote Plants Cooked Corn,” Turkey was the historical source of corn and showed early people how to farm:

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Moffat, “Report on Wildlife, Fort Apache Indian Reservation.”
\textsuperscript{69} Buskirk, \textit{The Western Apache}, p. 138.
Turkey made food for our people. That was long ago when all the animals talked like people. A boy and his sister were living together. They were talking to one another about how they had no food. Turkey overheard them talking and came to that place. “What does your little brother want?” he asked the girl. “He wants something to eat, but we have nothing,” the girl said. When Turkey heard this, he shook himself all over and all kinds of fruits and wild food dropped out of his body. Then they ate these up. Turkey shook himself again and big corn (a variety of corn) dropped out of his feathers. Then he shook himself again and yellow corn dropped out. A fourth time he shook himself and white corn dropped out of him. The boy and girl did not use up all of this corn. Some was blue corn, and they hid it away for seed.\(^{70}\)

In another version of the this story that includes a great flood that ravages the Earth, Turkey helps orchestrate the restoration of the land back to a point where it can sustain the Apache people again.\(^{71}\)

The cultural importance of turkey to the Apache probably figured prominently in the way they hunted the species. Buskirk does not report any specific rituals associated with turkey; however, he also admits that by the 1940s when his research took place, significant knowledge about hunting rituals had been lost due to several generations of BIA assimilation policies. Nonetheless, hunting rituals were prevalent among the Western Apache, and it’s not implausible that Apache historically had elaborate rituals specific to turkey.

A general ritual that the Apache extended to all kills was sharing the take with those less fortunate. Apache custom dictated that successful hunters should divide meat among their neighbors, families without men to provide for them, or the hunter’s relatives by marriage. This idea of sharing plays out in “Turkey Makes the Corn,” the great flood version. As Turkey directs the restoration of the Earth, he realizes that no one has had meat for a long time.

He said, “Why don’t you go out and hunt deer so we can eat meat? But don’t skin the deer too quickly. Be careful and skin it out right to the hoofs. That’s the way Big Owl does when he kills deer.” Gray Fox spoke in the same way: “When I go along with you the deer all come together and I will make them easy for you to kill. But for doing this I want you to give me some meat.”


\(^{71}\) Ibid., pp. 50-61.
Other rituals and prayers pervaded Apache culture, conveying their respect and kinship relationships with animals they relied upon for subsistence. Many anthropologists, ecologists, and historians have long held that such rituals, especially those that require the sharing of meat, regulated over-hunting practices among indigenous cultures.72

Although sharing food has nothing to do with modern conservation practices that rely on knowledge of a species’ population ecology, evidence exists that such relationships functioned to conserve species. This is especially true, for example, for the James Bay Cree of Manitoba, Canada. Frikit Berkes, an anthropologist who worked with the James Bay Cree, believes that Cree fishery societies have a built in self-limiting principle foreign to the Western concept of conservation. He attributed this to sharing among families of surplus catches. If one family caught more than needed, they generally dispersed the surplus to less fortunate families.73 Such social structures certainly broke down at times, especially in the wake of modern capitalism and Indian assimilation policies, but one can’t conclude from this that pre-modern hunting societies couldn’t have been a source of knowledge or practiced alternative forms of efficacious game management.

Sharing the take and hunting rituals aren’t the only Apache social mechanisms that were in place that could have regulated hunting. On a regional scale, Western Apache bands guarded territories from outside intruders. Second, within bands, local groups held loosely protected hunting areas that covered a 3-8 mile radius surrounding farm settlements. Individuals from other local groups often hunted in these

72 See for instance, Frikit Berkes, “Common-property Resource Management and Cree Indian Fisheries in Subarctic Canada,” in The Question of the Commons, B.J. McCay and J.M. Acheson, eds. (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1987), 66-91. Berkes claims that Cree fishery societies have a built in self-limiting principle foreign to the Western concept of conservation. He attributed this to sharing among families of surplus catches. If one family caught more than they needed, they generally gave the surplus to families that did not catch enough. Joseph Taylor, in Making Salmon, presents an excellent historical overview of pre-contact relationships of Pacific Northwest groups with salmon. Environmental historian Richard White, in The Roots of Dependency, noted such behavior among the Choctaw before their integration into the capitalist market. He also claimed that hunting territories delineated among bands possibly had the secondary effect of regulating over-hunting.
areas, but usually asked permission from the local chief before proceeding. According to Greenville Goodwin, perhaps the anthropologist who earned the greatest trust among the Apache, “Apache, in general, repeatedly deny the existence of individual, family, or local group hunting tracts, asserting that a man had a right to hunt where he wished. Apache vehemently denies any claim to individual land ownership or sole rights, outside farming sites, and explains that it is for everyone. He points with resentment to the variance between the concept of landownership of white people and his own.”

Within a locality, the local chief determined when and where hunts would take place. The anthropological literature doesn’t indicate how local chiefs determined this, but presumably they possessed knowledge about the best times and places to hunt. And given their special status in the community, they probably had acquired special powers such as “Black-tailed Deer Power” or “Wolf Power,” which bestowed upon them insight into the best hunting grounds and techniques. Those individuals perceived by band members to have harnessed “power” often garnered widespread respect, especially if they used “power” to benefit others. Once recognized, these people often earned leadership roles in the community.

Another way that Apache indirectly regulated hunting was through age-dependent hunting practices. Local chiefs disallowed hunting until men reached twenty years of age. Even then, most individual’s first kill waited until after they were married. Adolescents sometimes participated in hunts, but only as apprentices – to learn rituals and observe hunting techniques. Apparently experienced hunters rarely instructed youth on actual hunting methods. Young Apaches learned these methods mostly through observation. However, learning rituals was a different story. Apache considered hunting rituals a form of powerful knowledge. Once Apache boys reached maturity, adult men took great care to personally convey this wisdom. An individual without this knowledge was typically at a disadvantage, attempting

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74 Buskirk, The Western Apache, p. 117.
75 Goodwin, Social Organization of the Western Apache, pp. 149-150.
76 Basso, The Cibecue Apache, p. 44.
to acquire prey would most likely result in failure. This special category of knowledge included “simple ritual practices such as placing a shed antler in a tree, praying to a raven flying overhead, setting aside a certain internal organ as an offering to Raven, method of skinning – all of which brought good luck to the hunter.” 77

Acquiring such knowledge was a mentally and physically challenging activity, requiring extensive memory, intellectual dexterity, and endurance. For example, earning “Black-tailed Deer Power” entailed memorizing fifty or more chants that include as many as twenty six verses each in a specific sequence – deviation from the proper order risked offending the power, rendering it ineffective. 78 Rituals, therefore, imbued power upon the hunter - a power that Apache elders considered too dangerous for the emotionally unstable adolescent. They maintained that “hunting power” was for the mentally mature, physically strong, and socially stable individual. Otherwise “his heart would not be strong enough to stand it; it could make him ill or even kill him.” 79 The age-dependent hunting structure of the Apache thus functioned to monitor reckless and wasteful behavior often found among young people. By not allowing certain age groups to hunt, the Apache reduced hunting pressure and perhaps unnecessary waste of wildlife that might result from unskilled pursuits of game.

As mentioned previously, no studies of the ecology of Western Apache hunting practices exist. Nonetheless, the above speculations are not far-fetched considering the Apache had similar social conventions as other indigenous cultures that successfully regulated against overhunting. Because of these similarities, the Apache may also have successfully regulated against wildlife overexploitation prior to cultural disruption. Indeed, as late as 1946, in response to the BIA’s insistence that the Tribe needed to adopt a modern game code for tribal members, the Tribal Council proposed that Apache religion regulated hunting, negating the need for such a code. In support of the Councils proposal,

77Goodwin, Social Organization of the Western Apache, p. 476.
78 Basso, The Cibecue Apache, p. 43.
79Goodwin, Social Organization of the Western Apache, p. 476.
Thomas Thompson claimed most Apaches “have some religious beliefs [about hunting] and are superstitious about hunting year round anyway.” He further explained that his people believed “they should not hunt during… the season they [deer] mate.” Fearing that an outright rejection of the Council’s idea would damage his agenda to bring “conservation of wild game” to Fort Apache, Superintendent Holtz, who replaced Donner in late 1946, side-stepped the issue by replying that a proposal “of this sort should be given considerable study on… results that may come.”80 Apparently any serious consideration of an Apache religious-based game code fell on deaf ears. Superintendent Holtz eventually convinced the Tribal Council to adopt a Western-style game code in 1947. This subtle act of paternalism neglected a possible innovative management strategy. Holtz, Donner, Moffat, and other BIA officials never seriously entertained such proposals - partly because such inquiries were before their time, but also because they religiously believed that Western conservation practices were superior to those of indigenous cultures.

Land Use – The implementation of John Collier and Robert Marshall’s roadless area policy in 1937 represented another manifestation of paternalism. Without tribal government consent, they imposed a rigid environmental philosophy on culturally diverse Native American groups across the United States.81 Once again, a bureaucratic agenda trumped Native American rights. Without direct knowledge of the policy, the Apache “donated” over 300,000 acres of their homeland to a Euro-American cause, confirming their fears that Section 466 of IRA would further erode tribal control of reservation lands.

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80 Minutes of the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council Meeting, March 5, 1951, RG75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 54, File #10197-46, Box #5.
81 Diane L. Krahe, Last Refuge (Dissertation, University of Washington, 2005); Philp, John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform, pp. 185-186.
According to Secretarial Order 486, the Apache, except as a last resort, no longer could develop the resources within the boundaries of the Mount Thomas and Black River Roadless Areas.\(^\text{82}\)

An analysis of Collier and Marshall’s beliefs about indigenous societies reveals how they arrived at what they thought was a reasonable rationalization for establishing roadless areas on Indian reservations.

From the standpoint of the Indians, it is of special importance to save as many areas as possible from invasion by roads… Most of them desire some place which is all their own. If, on reservations where the Indians desire privacy, sizable areas are uninvaded by roads, then it will be possible for the Indians of these tribes to maintain a retreat where they may escape from constant contact with white men.\(^\text{83}\)

This statement, however, seems to somewhat contradict one of the central tenets of the Indian New Deal, restoring an economic base to Native Americans. In an odd juxtaposition with overall Indian New Deal policy, the statement also denies Native Americans modernity, suggesting that all they want is refuge from Western civilization. However, Collier and Marshall’s intention maintained that roadless areas would offer an escape from the modernizing process taking place on reservations as a consequence of Indian New Deal programs.

Regardless of this statement, Collier and Marshall demonstrated sensitivity to the evolving economic needs of Indians. Marshall, for his part, realized, “It is one of the most important objectives in the program of John Collier…that the Indians should be helped not to an unearned income but to the opportunity of working for their own livelihood. Nevertheless, if the Indians used every acre of their land themselves and stopped renting altogether, they yet would not have enough land to support themselves at an adequate standard.”\(^\text{84}\) Despite this, Marshall felt that balancing economic and ecological concerns through conservation “exerts a helpful influence.”

The solution, according to Marshall and Collier, given that the Indian use of resources on reservations would eventually exceed the carrying capacity of their lands, was increasing the Indian land

\(^{\text{82}}\) Secretarial Order 486.

\(^{\text{83}}\) Ibid.

base – one of the programs of the Indian New Deal that essentially failed because Congress never appropriated sufficient funds for acquiring lands. Furthermore, Marshall knew this solution was fraught with problems because little surplus land remained in the West. Furthermore, federal agencies and private land owners wouldn’t relinquish land easily. Moreover though, he saw the Indian predicament inextricably linked to “the dominant economic problem of how to make all of the United States yield all of its citizens a reasonable standard of living.” Setting aside roadless areas on reservations, therefore, was no different from doing the same on National Forests or other public lands. Unfortunately, this thought process overlooked the fact that due to the relatively small land holdings of Native Americans, they would shoulder a disproportionate burden relative to the dominant society for “their” sacrifice.

As an inadequate economic compensation for their troubles, Marshall envisioned that roadless areas would provide tribal members with jobs as guides: “One important potential source of enjoyable and remunerative work is for the Indians to guide parties on camping and pack trips. It is obvious that no one is going to require a guide to travel down a road. The possibility for Indians to make money through guiding lies [sic] in maintaining portions of their reservations in a wild enough condition so that someone visiting them might conceivably need a guide.” Marshall perhaps overestimated the economic potential of this idea in the 1930s, but eventually many tribes, including the White Mountain Apache, have since developed robust recreational programs where paid guides are a significant source of income.

Collier recognized the deleterious effect that permanent economic restrictions might have on the already tenuous economic conditions of Native Americans. So he added a provision in Secretarial Order 486 that maintained roadless conditions except when “the requirements of fire protection, commercial

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85 Ibid.
use for the Indians’ benefit or actual needs of the Indians clearly demand otherwise.”

In addition, American Indians could also continue cattle grazing and other commercial activities that didn’t require roads, which seemed to fit the contemporary wishes of the White Mountain Apache. In addition, Mount Thomas Roadless Area also served the function of protecting the watershed from timber cutting, although this was not the expressed reason for establishing this management policy.

Despite these concessions to modernity and the potential conservation benefits, Collier and Marshall’s justification was seriously flawed from the Native American political standpoint. It became evident in the 1950s that not all Native Americans desired a wilderness refuge from Western Civilization. At the request of affected tribes trying to build their economic bases through the lumber industry, including the White Mountain Apache, the Department of Interior declassified all but two roadless areas on Indian reservations. Unfortunately, Marshall and Collier idealized a certain type of Native American to justify the establishment of roadless areas. Providing a critique of mainstream society for Marshall and Collier, Native American society supposedly represented all the good things that civilization left behind. According to Paul Sutter, Marshall “mistook tribalism for organic socialism; he assumed that Native Americans were single-minded avatars of his critique of modern America.”

This thought process held severe misconceptions about the political, social, ecological, and economic needs of Native Americans. It also fed into a paternalistic mindset that led to their biggest mistake concerning roadless areas, failing to consult any tribes about the establishment of these areas.

This policy proved ironic considering Collier wanted tribes to govern their own affairs. But in this instance, Collier and Marshall clouded the goal of wilderness preservation with what they ideally believed Native Americans wanted. After all, based on his extensive experience with native cultures, Marshall believed that Native Americans trusted his wisdom. This trust wasn’t a figment of his

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87 Ibid.
88 Krahe, Last Refuge.
imagination either. In the mid-1930s, a Pueblo community in New Mexico wanted to purchase land long held sacred to their people. ⁹⁰ In order to justify the purchase to the Department of Interior, the Governor of the Pueblo knew he would have to reveal knowledge about the sacred site. He wanted as few non-Pueblo to know about this site as possible. So he told Collier, “Let Marshall come here. We will take him with us to the place we want to buy, and we will tell him everything, in confidence, and he can tell you and Secretary Ickes, in confidence.”⁹¹ Supposedly Marshall was the first Euro-American told that the Pueblo deemed this place in the Eastern Rocky Mountains a sacred shrine. His journey with the Pueblo into the wilderness of the Rocky Mountains led to a successful purchase of this land. Experiences such as this could have easily led Marshall to believe he knew how Native Americans generally felt about the North American wilderness. The problem was, however, that he generalized specific experiences to all Native Americans. After Ickes signed Secretarial Order 486 in late 1937, Marshall wrote to William Zeh, the director of the Regional Indian Office in Phoenix, in a fit of romantic projection that “[I]t is not necessary for the Indians to approve…Obviously, the Indians themselves will not use their own funds to build such roads.”⁹²

The Order even survived a legal review to determine if it violated the Indian Reorganization Act and other federal mandates. William Zimmerman, also a wilderness advocate, prepared a legal justification of the Order for Collier to pass on to the Solicitor’s Office of the Department of Interior. Acting Solicitor Frederic Kirgis criticized the first draft of this justification stating outright that the Order violated constitutional guarantees to tribal councils that the BIA had to advise and consult with them prior to activities that may affect the tribe in question. Zimmerman responded by claiming that the Order

⁹⁰ This story about Marshall comes second-hand from John Collier’s *From Every Zenith*, pp. 259-261. Many of the details of this story are generalized because Collier purposefully left vague the actual Pueblo involved, the timing, and the location of the purchase because he respected the culturally sensitive nature of the sacred area being purchased.

⁹¹ The emphasis is Collier’s. Ibid., pp. 259-260.

was “merely an announcement of policy” and that establishing roadless areas did not constitute a “positive action that in any way interferes with these rights.”\(^93\) He went on to suggest that “the status quo is maintained in the areas in question. Certainly the Secretary of the Interior is not breaching any agreement or understanding when he notifies the tribes that such status quo is to maintain respect to the areas in question.”\(^94\) Therefore, since these areas were already roadless, BIA personnel hadn’t changed anything. This tortured logic suggested that the policy couldn’t affect tribes because the BIA took no action concerning “any sale, disposition, lease, or encumbrance of tribal lands, interest in lands, tribal funds, or other tribal assets” that would infringe upon the power of tribal councils “to veto.”\(^95\) Kirgis reviewed this response and concluded:

> In so far as the proposed order is simply an announcement of policy guiding departmental action in matters properly within the jurisdiction of the Department, there is no legal objection to such a statement. Unfortunately the language of the proposed order is not limited to such a statement. The declaration which is particularly criticized in the proposed memorandum transmitted for your consideration asserts “There may be constructed absolutely no routes passable to motor transportation.” This statement is not justified by existing law. Under existing law allotted lands may be condemned regardless of the approval of the Secretary of the Interior and roads may therefore be built through reservations regardless of the proposed order establishing “roadless and wild areas.”\(^96\)

Kirgis finally concurred with Zimmerman’s justification, but found holes in the attempt to permanently establish roadless areas. Tribal rights within constitutions had been defined quite narrowly to limit the powers of any given Tribe. Mainly, Collier reasoned, to protect tribes against themselves in the early stages of self-governance.\(^97\) Nonetheless, Collier and Marshall took advantage of those restrictions to push through policies that fulfilled their personal agendas. In this case, the hubris of a

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\(^95\) Ibid.

\(^96\) Frederick L. Kirgis, “Memorandum for the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” July 21, 1937, RG 75 General Service, CCF 07-39, Dec. 308, File # 40999, Box #863.

\(^97\) Talyor, The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism.
paternalistic policy blinded Collier and Marshall. In hindsight, their restriction of economic activities on reservations that already had limited resources was a social injustice – ironically, something that Marshall and Collier fought against their entire careers.

**Conclusion**

Federal paternalism would permeate BIA policy for the next forty years, creating perpetual tension between the Apache and federal land management agencies. According to Native American leaders that experienced the tumultuous early days of modern self-governance, the problem with organizing under IRA was it granted ultimate authority over tribal affairs to the Department of Interior. The Secretary of Interior would extensively exercise this authority in the coming years to restrict the decision-making power of tribal governments. Nevertheless, over time tribal councils would learn to manipulate the system to their benefit, increasingly exercising greater control over reservation affairs. Especially for the Apache, paternalistic policies gave impetus to the eco-political process of resistance and exchange that would eventually result in political autonomy.

While the IRA precariously created a political foundation from which the Apache eventually appropriated ecological restoration to control eco-cultural resources on the reservation, the CCC-ID would open the epistemological gateway that made this appropriation possible. Once again, though, paternalism would limit the educational potential of this program. The federal government not only controlled knowledge production through administrative policies, but they also controlled it through CCC-ID education programs. The next chapter explores the role of federal paternalism in CCC-ID efforts to educate Native Americans about Western land management techniques.
Chapter 3

The Civilian Conservation Corp – Indian Division: Acquiring Expertise and Knowledge in Western Restoration and Conservation Techniques

About the school, we want higher grades added to the school. We want a senior high school for the Indians. We do not want our children to go off to get an education. … After the children graduate from the boarding school here we want them to learn a trade here without going away to get a higher education. We want them to get it here.¹

Wallace Altaha, 1934

Prior to the Indian New Deal, the isolation of the White Mountains tempered the effects of Euro-American society on the Apache people. Pre-IRA Tribal Council members such as Wallace Altaha recognized, however, that maintaining tribal integrity in the wake of modernity would require educating Apaches on the reservation, not sending them away to boarding schools all over the United States. In general, with the imminent arrival of New Deal programs, tribal leaders realized that avoiding modernity was impossible. Although most members of this council spoke only Apache and had little formal Euro-American education, they acknowledged the imperative for younger Apaches to have adequate education in both the Apache and Euro-American way. Otherwise, the Tribe would have little control over the process of modernization; thus ending any chance of cultural survival.

Council members reasoned that by educating Apache youth on the reservation the cultural connection to their homeland would remain intact. Furthermore, young Apache would more likely apply their newly acquired skills to benefit the reservation community. Ostensibly, this was the intended goal of Collier’s Indian New Deal education programs. Even though the BIA failed to establish a school of “higher education” on Fort Apache during the Indian New Deal, the Civilian Conservation Corp – Indian Division (CCC-ID) in many ways partially fulfilled Altaha’s request.

¹ Council of Fort Apache Indians at White River, Arizona,” March 5, 1934, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 339, File #18-34, Box #63.
While the Indian Reorganization Act set the political stage for a delayed Apache eco-cultural revitalization, the CCC-ID introduced the Apache to restorative tools that would make this journey possible. For the first time, the CCC-ID immersed the Apache people in Western land management techniques. Unfortunately, the CCC-ID was a double-edged sword, maintaining a top-down knowledge production structure while introducing these new technologies. The CCC-ID focused on practical skills that the Apache could apply to the management of their farms, ranges, livestock, game, and forests. In essence, Collier believed that the basis of Native American self-sufficiency only required a rudimentary understanding of Western land management techniques. From there, communal native societies would coalesce around this educational foundation and thrive.

This pragmatic educational philosophy was all well and good, but by proceeding in this manner, Collier relegated American Indians to a marginal role in management decisions. Because CCC-ID training programs contained no theoretical and technical content, American Indians remained unable to develop comprehensive management plans. Furthermore, since they couldn’t create their own plans, they had no choice but to “trust” BIA experts to manage tribal resources. Although Collier wanted to instill self-sufficiency and political autonomy, his program left Native Americans dependent on the federal government. In essence, paternalism begot paternalism. Despite the maintenance of a paternalistic relationship between the BIA and Native Americans, the CCC-ID opened a gateway for some native nations to controlling knowledge production on their reservations. This chapter explores both the positive and negative consequences of CCC-ID educational programs on the White Mountain Apache.
The Philosophical and Sociological Foundations of the CCC-ID

The CCC-ID was an offshoot of the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC). The Roosevelt Administration designed the CCC to relieve high unemployment rates during the Great Depression. This program also handled a large portion of the conservation and restoration work associated with the New Deal Era. The CCC not only tackled ecological and economic restoration, this organization also targeted the social restoration of America’s men.² Drawing on the philosophy that rugged individualism emerged through the struggle of taming the Western frontier, this social project attempted to restore the body and mind of the Anglo-American male. Working with nature was an integral ingredient in this restorative process. Robert Fechner, Director of the CCC stated, “Our purpose is not only to rebuild forests and lands, but to build men.”³ Both physically and mentally degraded by the Depression, men joining the CCC supposedly experienced a revitalization of their body and spirit within weeks of participation.⁴

Soon after the formation of the CCC in 1933, Collier secured funds for a separate division of the CCC for Native Americans. This program of the Indian New Deal provided training in conservation and restoration techniques to numerous Native Americans until 1942, when Congress terminated the program in the wake of World War II. Before Collier took his post in late 1933, J.P. Kinney, Robert Marshall’s predecessor as director of forestry, lobbied the CCC (then known as the Emergency Conservation Work program) advisory council to include Native Americans in the program.⁵ Although the BIA hadn’t been formally invited to the CCC organization meeting, he realized the opportunity this program would provide to address urgent conservation matters on Indian reservations. He suggested to Commissioner Arthur Rhoads, Collier’s predecessor, that someone from the BIA should attend the

⁴ Maher, Nature’s New Deal.
meeting. Rhoads in return sent Kinney, who “was privileged to present the urgent need for conservation measures on Indian reservations.” Kinney struck up interest among the various agencies involved and opened the door for negotiations concerning the exact conditions that CCC work would take place. Once tapped Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Collier also saw funding from the CCC as a way to facilitate the implementation of his policies, especially Native American practical education and the restoration of the heavily degraded reservation landscapes.

The CCC-ID philosophically differed and ran separately from the general CCC program. The BIA took all administrative responsibilities for CCC-ID programs, mainly because of the unique political and social conditions on Indian reservations. Harold Ickes justified this separation on the basis that “although reservations needed conservation work, Indians would resent the presence of white enrollees and wish to live with their families rather than in regular CCC camps.” It is not clear that this was actually the case on Fort Apache, but on a similar note, initially the Apache protested the importation of Native Americans from other reservations.

The general CCC program required recruits that were single, unemployed men between the ages of 18-25. Enrollees also had to live in camps of 200 men away from their homes. Fechner relaxed these requirements for the CCC-ID. Given the special circumstances of the Indians, the BIA administered this program, including project supervision, medical examinations, discipline, and camp maintenance. The CCC-ID labor pool on reservations consisted mainly of Native Americans – in rare exceptions, BIA officials recruited whites when the workload exceeded the number of Native Americans available necessary to complete projects. Before hiring Euro-Americans, program supervisors recruited Native Americans from other reservations to fill positions. Because of a limited number of eligible Native

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6 Ibid., p. 75.
Americans under the regular CCC rules, Fechner allowed the BIA to enroll married individuals and individuals over the age of 25. In fact, one Apache enrollee was 67 years of age. Furthermore, many Native American men didn’t actually live in camps because they often had duties maintaining farm land and livestock. This was especially true on Fort Apache. According to Superintendent Donner, the only way the CCC-ID would succeed on Fort Apache was if the Central Office of the BIA implemented the program with some flexibility:

I hope, however, for the benefit of the Indians who have established homes, small farms, a few cattle and other assets that might suffer if Indians went into the work [CCC] for a six-month period, the Office will be able to make special arrangements whereby our people may be able to work during the time when they are not needed to work on their farms, care for their cattle, etc., …My thought is that the work be not too hastily planned and inaugurated, but that in planning this work for the benefit of the Indians on reservations you make it possible for Indians to go home as their individual interests demand.9

Perhaps the biggest difference between the CCC and CCC-ID was the significance of geographic place. Regular CCC enrollees had no prior personal connections with the areas in which they worked. Most were transplants from city life with little experience working with nature.10 Native Americans in the CCC-ID, however, often worked to restore and improve their traditional homelands. This was certainly the case for the White Mountain Apache. Many projects on Fort Apache directly impacted the Apache’s daily life, especially since most Apache during this period relied on either farming or cattle for their subsistence. For instance, enrollees carried out irrigation projects that improved and restored farmlands; removed rodents and predators to protect cattle; built fences, water tanks, and reservoirs to improve cattle ranges; and conducted erosion control and reseeding projects to restore grazing ranges and waterways (Fig. 5). A significant number of Native Americans had access to these programs.11

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9 William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 4, 1933, RG 75 FAIR, Records for the CCC-ID, Dec. 344, Box #93.
10 Maher, *Nature’s New Deal*.
11 Overall, it is difficult to ascertain how many White Mountain Apache enrolled in the CCC-ID program because accurate records by reservation are unavailable. Plus, even though in some cases reports refer to numbers of
individuals enrolled in camps, they don’t distinguish among the various tribal groups often mixed within a given camp. I refer to actual numbers of Apache enrolled when possible. Nevertheless, it does seem that a significant proportion of the male White Mountain Apache population had access to this program.

Fig. 5 – CCC-ID work projects in 1936: (Top) Apache rodent control crew. (Bottom) Apache men building a bridge for the North Fork truck trail (Courtesy of National Archives).
1933, the BIA recruited 25,000 American Indians. The peak number enrolled at any one time was 13,000; and over the nine-year span of its existence, out of a population of 300,000 American Indians, 85,000 individuals enrolled in the CCC-ID program. The initial quota for Fort Apache was 800 men, approximately a third of the reservation population at the time. This number reflected the vast extent of conservation work required on a reservation twice the size of Rhode Island. Despite the apparent opportunities to provide jobs and training, Superintendent Donner worried about how CCC-ID work would impact reservation farms and herds. At the time, he believed CCC-ID work distracted Native Americans from maintaining farms and livestock, which he considered their primary route towards assimilation. Resisting this “distraction,” he claimed that with a reservation population of 2,700, “We will not be able to put in 800 men…for a six-month period and at the same time take care of our crops, cattle, etc.” At most, he felt 450 to 500 men would be available to work on projects at any one time. Eventually Native Americans from nineteen other reservations were brought in to cover the perceived shortfall.

In the first six-month period, 450 Apache men, 75 Navajos, 25 Pima, 25 Camp Verde Indians, and “25 Indians from ‘Indian Town’ near Prescott” worked on thirty-eight separate projects that began a major transformation of the Apachean landscape. They strung out 53 miles of telephone lines; built 86 miles of truck trails and 29 miles of horse trails; erected 290 miles of range fence; constructed 25 units of springs and wells; and dug 13 reservoirs. These efforts were on top of erosion control, fire suppression, forest cleanup (hazard reduction, snag removal, roadside cleanup), and rodent control projects initiated at this time. As a result of these achievements, Fort Apache was one of ten reservations

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12 Parman, “The Indian and the Civilian Conservation Corp,” p. 43.
13 William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 23, 1933, RG 75 FAIR, Records for the CCC-ID, Dec. 344, Box #93.
14 William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 7, 1933, RG 75 FAIR, Records for the CCC-ID, Dec. 344, Box #93.
selected for a special commendation. Collier pointed out that although the labor force on Fort Apache was double that of most reservations, “your work completed is in the same scale. As of casual interest it is noted that you report a larger number of work projects than any other Agency with an I.E.C.W. [CCC-ID] allotment.”

As projects matured, Apaches moved into supervisory roles. It was CCC-ID policy to increase as much as possible the ratio of Indian to non-Indian supervisors on projects. Fort Apache had one of the better records of “inducting Indians” into leadership roles. As an audit of CCC-ID work indicated, “The Apache Indians have shown a fair degree of efficiency in their work, and as individual Indians have demonstrated their capability, their duties and responsibilities have been increased.” In July 1933, when CCC projects began on Fort Apache, no Indians held leadership roles. In November, one took on a supervisory role and by the next month Native Americans held 15 of 55 supervisory positions. This number increased to 31 in September of 1934. Project supervisors promoted individuals who mastered skills as carpenters, powdermen, truck drivers, stone masons, and heavy equipment operators. Early on, leadership roles involved camp organization, field project team supervision, and group foreman (the highest field position).

One of the expressed purposes of the CCC-ID program was to give American Indians on-the- job training that they could use as a stepping stone to future employment on or off the reservation. On the conservation front, John Collier, Ward Shepard, and Robert Marshall believed that Indians required re-training in the care of their lands. They envisioned a system of vocational education that would re-instill a positive relationship with the land among Native Americans. They believed “that with proper

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15 John Collier to William Donner, May 10, 1934, RG 75 FAIR, Records for the CCC-ID, Dec. 344, Box #93.  
16 C.C. Mather to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 20, 1935, RG 75 FAIR, Records for the CCC-ID, Dec. 344, Box #93.  
17 Ibid.  
18 Claude C. Cornwall to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 1, 1934, RG 75 FAIR, Records for the CCC-ID, Dec. 344, Box #93.
professional training, there is no reason why Indians cannot become expert land managers and gradually take over the administration of their community forests, grazing ranges, and farm lands.”19 Expanding on this idea, Ward Shepard, the BIA’s land policy specialist and a close friend of Collier’s, asserted the need for Native American education in practical skills. He wrote in *Indians at Work* that “we must put the main emphasis not on fitting Indians to enter into the white man’s industrial world, in competition with the white worker and the unemployed, but fitting them to enter into their own world and make it a success.” And this training should focus on “common sense training in land use, whether by farming, livestock or forestry.”20

At first glance, Shepard’s statement may seem demeaning to Native Americans – suggestive that they are incapable of competing with Euro-Americans for off-reservation jobs. However, the intent of the statement was quite forward thinking at the time. Shepard’s idea represented a break from the assimilationist policies of past administrations. Collier, Marshall, and Shepard wanted to empower Native Americans within the context of their homelands. They recognized then what many Native Americans began to claim in the late twentieth century: that place played an important role in the cultural integrity of indigenous groups. Historically, Native American cultures were deeply tied to their lands. Consequently, forced assimilation severed these ties, resulting in cultural malaise. By providing them with modern skills that would enhance and protect their landscape, Native Americans could once again rule over “golden lands.”21

The initial step of this training program was to take place through CCC-ID Leader Schools. In 1934 the CCC-ID set up four such schools, enrolling approximately 200 men each from various reservations. The BIA established a leader school at Fort Apache, where men received instruction in forestry, range

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management, irrigation work, and game protection. Other important training opportunities involved heavy equipment operation, blacksmithing, carpentry, machine operation, landscaping, and telephone maintenance. Besides nine Apaches, members of fifteen other tribes received training, including Blackfeet, Assiniboine, Crow, Pima, Shoshone, Creek, Northern Cheyenne, Chippewa, Papago, and Arapahoe among others. From the Apache ranks, Purcell Kane and Fred Larzelere eventually became tribal chairman and Byde Amos, a mixed-blood, became an employee of the Bureau’s Forestry Branch on Fort Apache. Despite this early push for education, Collier, Marshall, and Shepard’s romantic idealisms about American Indians assuming a greater caretaking role of their lands came into conflict with paternalistic policies and on-the-ground skepticism of the potential for Native Americans to assume full responsibility.

Idealism versus Reality: Early Apache Conservation Education, 1933 – 1937

Local supervisor’s and superintendent’s focus on production results rather than education hindered the early establishment of educational programs. Most leaders rationalized that on-the-job work experience infused enrollees with adequate skills to excel in later endeavors. Even Collier paid little attention to formal education early on. And he also put great stock in the benefits of on-the-job training. On his visit to Fort Apache in 1934, he observed CCC-ID work crews in action. Group Foreman Techantz showed Collier a young Apache’s work on a culvert as an example of on-the-job training. Waxing poetic about the work and its implications for Indian New Deal policies, Collier reported:

This is a culvert… I know nothing of culverts, but I can feel purpose, despatch [sic] and intelligence in this job. How unfortunate that I am not a road engineer. How unfortunate, for that

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22 This number is not the total. The number is taken from a follow up report on the leadership school. Only 53 of the approximately 200 Native Americans that attended the school made it into the report. Claude Cornwall, author of the report, admitted “this report is only a partial summary covering the present status of the Indian boys who were enrolled in the E.C.W. Leader School held at Fort Apache…It has not been possible for us to contact all the men.” Claude C. Cornwall, “Present Status of Fort Apache E.C.W. Leader School Students,” RG 75 FAIR, Records Concerning Enrollee Program, Dec. 346, File #31355-38, Box #9.
matter, that I am not a teacher, a physician, a property administrator, a forester, a psychiatrist, a financial expert, an agriculturalist and some more things. I wonder if in any government bureau there are to be found more phases of the New Deal, as it has come to be so conveniently called, than in the Indian Service, where there are opportunities for rehabilitation along so many lines – human and property. That was an excellent culvert.23

Clearly proud of the perceived accomplishments of his program, Collier was enthralled with the potential that CCC-ID work had for advancing the betterment of Native Americans. The skill that the young Apache demonstrated in constructing a culvert symbolized the self-determination and reconstruction of a culture that had hitherto been suppressed by forced assimilation policies. Collier perhaps exaggerated the educational benefits, but his enthusiasm for and faith in the “rehabilitation” of the Apache was genuine. The White Mountain Apache, in general, impressed Collier. Later in his memoir, written in 1962, he commended the Tribe for their “most democratic of economic venture…More perhaps than any other Indians, the Apaches were supposed to be ‘backward,’ ‘all-but-irreconcilable’ to modern ways, and in the pat, colonial phrase, ‘not ready for independence.’ The White Mountain Apache “are today self-governing, and economically cooperative and progressive.”24

Because of the early failure of the CCC program to provide formal education, Congress enacted the CCC Act of 1937, which mandated ten hours of formal training per week. The BIA created the Enrollee Program to carry out this mission. Robert Paterson, the BIA’s first educational director, failed to implement the Enrollee Program in the field. Unfortunately not much progress occurred in Indian education until 1938, when Collier tapped Claude C. Cornwall, previously the Southwest’s supervisor for CCC-ID programs, to lead the Enrollee Program. Cornwall unabashedly criticized previous manifestations of enrollee education, explaining to Collier that although the CCC-ID had a tremendous record on the production front, “it had failed miserably as an instrument of Indian rehabilitation.”25

24 Collier, From Every Zenith, pp. 180-181.
The CCC-ID program followed this general pattern on Fort Apache. Production supervisors insisted that Apaches were receiving adequate education from on-the-job training. In fact, very little in the way of off-the-job training – formal education classes, films, demonstrations - occurred on Fort Apache prior to 1938. Most supervisors shared the opinion that “the Apache Indian’s attitude toward and aptitude for educational regeneration is generally slower than that of some other Southwest Indian Tribes.”

In addition, foreman and supervisors claimed that scarcely any educational opportunities arose because very few Apache stayed in camp. They went home to tend their farms and cattle, “making it difficult to have camp or group solidarity.” Lack of time and deficient aptitudes, however, weren’t the real reasons for neglecting education. Foremost, foreman worried that formal education would cut into project productivity.

Dewayne Kraeger, Camp Supervisor on Fort Apache, advised the Central Office in Washington that if they desired educational programs, they needed to assure production supervisors that the program wouldn’t interfere with construction projects. Furthermore, the success of educational programs “depends largely on the appointment of permanent camp assistant who has enough enthusiasm for his work to overcome obstacles to its development.”

Essentially passing the buck, Kraeger implied establishing education programs beyond on-the-job training would require much labor and coaxing of production supervisors. Evident here was the priority production work and the perceived achievements of production supervisors took over the welfare of the Apache. However, this would change with Claude Cornwall’s appointment to head the national Enrollee Program.

Even prior to Cornwall’s appointment, evidence suggests that Apaches were more enthusiastic about education than supervisors led on. For example, one area where Apaches learned with fervor was

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
forestry. As early as 1936, Si Davis, Senior Forest Ranger on Fort Apache, succeeded at training Apache in forest protection and fire suppression techniques. Davis, a strong advocate for the Apache, genuinely liked working with Native Americans, dedicating his life to their betterment. In 1952, he would become the first head of the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise – an Apache business that would eventually employ hundreds of tribal members in eco-cultural resource management-related jobs. He would remain at this post until his death in 1959.\(^\text{29}\)

However, Davis’s work toward that end began with CCC-ID education programs. In a letter to Collier in 1936, Cornwall highlighted Davis’s work: “One of the important activities of E.C.W. [CCC-ID] during these months was fire fighting and the reports indicate that this activity resulted in a most effective fire suppression program, and the saving of much valuable timber, and wild life on the Fort Apache reservation.”\(^\text{30}\) Because of these successes, Cornwall suggested conducting a Fire School on Fort Apache, with “instruction …to be under the direction of Mr. S.O. Davis.” Between 1937 and 1941 the BIA held three Fire Schools on Fort Apache. Si Davis instructed Apache and other Native Americans in fire prevention and suppression techniques. As a consequence, by 1940, all fire control personnel on Fort Apache were Apache. Even the pessimistic Dewayne Kraeger claimed, “The success of this program [Si Davis’s work] is important to the enrollee programs because it indicates that the Apache Indian can be taught to assume responsibility, and to perform responsible tasks on his own reservation with efficiency and dispatch equal to that of white employees now on the job” (Fig. 6).\(^\text{31}\)

\(^{29}\) Harry Kallander to Harold Weaver, July 28, 1952, FHS, Harold Weaver Papers, Folder #8.

\(^{30}\) Claude C. Cornwall to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 21, 1936, RG 75 FAIR, Records Concerning Enrollee Program, Dec. 346, File #31355-38, Box #9.

\(^{31}\) Kraeger, “Discussion of CCC-ID Enrollee Program with Reference to Fort Apache Reservation.”
Fig. 6 – Fort Apache Fire School in 1937: (Top) Fire School students receiving on-the-job experience on a fire line. (Bottom) Si Davis leading a course on fire control equipment use (Photos courtesy of the National Archives).
Appealing to the public’s fear of fire at the time, the BIA even promoted the importance of the fire schools to the off-reservation public – a public threatened by the potential for tribal self-government and opposed to large government expenditures that didn’t directly benefit them. In a 1938 article that appeared in the *Arizona Republic*, the BIA reasoned that “the irrigation water that keeps the valley fresh and green comes from…the divides in Indian forest lands [Fort Apache and San Carlos Reservations]. And it is the Indians of the Indian division who protect those forests form the worst menace of all – fire.” The article then emphasized that fire suppression and protection prevented erosion that would eventually clog dams and rivers, the source of water for valley agriculture. Moreover, in the near future, these schools would become quite relevant to forest restoration. Fort Apache eventually became the site of important controlled burn experiments, which the BIA also justified as a tool for the betterment of the valley below the reservation.

**A New Direction in Conservation Education, 1938 - 1942**

Cornwall’s appointment as director of the national Enrollee Program resulted from his strong advocacy for educational programs in the Southwest. Prior to his appointment, he spent a good deal of time on Fort Apache. Besides prompting the establishment of a fire school, Cornwall worked with agricultural extension agents on southwestern reservations. He often wrote reports on extension activities such as annual reservation fairs in *Indians at Work*, the official organ of the BIA during the Indian New Deal. Fort Apache was particularly famous for its fairs, which included a rodeo, ceremonial dances, reservation-derived food, Apache arts and crafts, and educational exhibits. In one such report, a Forestry Branch exhibit in particular struck Cornwall’s interest.

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32 Anonymous, “CCC Indian Division Helps Control Fire,” no date, RG 75 FAIR, Records Concerning Enrollee Program, Dec. 346, File #31355-38, Box #9.
The exhibit contained samples of many of the tree species found on the reservation. However, one sample in particular drew a great deal of attention from fair attendees, the cross-section of a 420 year old giant alligator juniper. Forestry personnel marked the rings every ten and one hundred years to give observers a sense of history that had transpired since the germination of the tree. Cornwall reported, “On it have been indicated several historic dates. It was a mere three-inch sapling of forty years growth in 1492. When it was an eighteen-inch tree, the Pilgrim settled Plymouth. When its diameter reach thirty inches in 1882, the Apache scouts were organized, and three years later Geronimo came back with them from Mexico. The old juniper tree added another four inches in diameter by the time the World War [I] had begun.”

Even though the tree chronicled the demise of Apache culture, Frank Henderson, an Apache CCC-ID enrollee attending to the exhibit, proudly claimed the tree “was taken from the right-of-way on the O-Dart Butte Trail which is being built under the Emergency Conservation Work… I sawed it down myself.” The tree represented both the past and the future. Cutting down the tree was making way for the rebirth of Apache culture – a re-imagined culture taking control of its destiny and coexisting with Western society rather than being subsumed by it.

Despite establishing the fire schools on Fort Apache and working with extension agents, many of his early attempts to initiate education programs on southwestern reservations fell on deaf ears. Nonetheless, Cornwall’s persistence paid off. In 1937, he provided Superintendent Donner with an outline of the types of educational activities relevant to the enrollee program. Formal studies should include fire suppression, forestry, range management, agriculture, the English language, principles of government, law and enforcement, and cooperative enterprises. Recreation and entertainment were also important features of the program. In the spirit of highlighting both Euro-American and Apache culture, “there should be held occasionally evening camp fires, giving opportunity for expression in music,

34 Ibid.
dancing, singing, and speaking, both of Apache culture and American.”

Recreational activities would consist mostly of Euro-American sports, including baseball, which eventually flourished as a reservation-wide league, volley ball, basketball, and, horseshoes. Cornwall designed this curriculum to build a sense of community among the Apache. Moreover, contrary to the prevailing sentiment at the time, Cornwall emphasized that the CCC-ID foremost afforded an educational opportunity for the Native American.

While it will be expected that the ECW work program shall be efficient as a production unit, yet there will be always in mind that this is an enrollee training opportunity. It cannot be good training if it is not an efficient producing unit. However, foreman should not express annoyance if efficient workmen are taken away and given other jobs. Rather, the foremen should feel that this is a compliment to them, as recognition of achievement. We want to get the most out of the money invested, not only in “dirt moving” but also in human advancement.

With his appointment to national director and Collier’s backing, many of Cornwall’s proposals came to fruition.

Under Cornwall, the Enrollee Program grew in prestige. In fact, as Congress began to cut funding for other CCC-ID programs in 1940, the Enrollee Program received increased support. Perhaps one drawback of the program, however, was that it taught to the lowest common denominator. Due to the high illiteracy rate and lack of formal education among Native Americans at the time, educating Native Americans in practical skills seemed like a necessary first step. Collier didn’t think it necessary to over-complicate Indian education. Ironically, Collier drew his educational philosophy from Francis E. Leupp, an assimilationist-era Commissioner of Indian Affairs. He even reprinted Leupp’s philosophy in *Indians at Work*:

> Our duty is to adapt education to the Indian’s immediate and practical needs. To my notion the ordinary Indian boy is better equipped for his life struggle on a frontier ranch when he can read the simple English of the local newspaper, can write a short letter which is intelligible, …

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36 Ibid.
37 Parman, “The Indian and the Civilian Conservation Corp.”
knows enough of figures to discover whether the storekeeper is cheating him. Beyond these scholastic achievements his time could be put to its best use by learning… how to do the hundred bits of handy tinkering which are so necessary to the farmer who lives 30 miles from a town.\textsuperscript{38}

Collier believed these sentiments concurred with his present education policies, which still held that farming was the primary means of subsistence for most Native American’s.

Collier’s reasons for educating Indians in farming and livestock techniques, however, were quite different from past administration’s assimilation policies. He thought that most Native Americans desired to remain separate from mainstream American society. The only way this was going to happen was if they could make a living on reservations. And given the topography and ecology of most reservations, this meant that the majority of American Indians would have to make their livelihood through ranching or farming. Collier conceded that Native Americans could thrive in mainstream society if they so desired; indeed, he encouraged Indians to work in the BIA. However, he, along with Cornwall, pragmatically held that the majority of American Indians wouldn’t benefit from education in the theoretical aspects of natural resource management and other disciplines. They couldn’t imagine that this sort of education might aid Native Americans in rebuilding their societies and maintaining political sovereignty. So Collier’s policy failed to go beyond “practical education.” Collier and his minions never explored the notion that American Indians might have retained knowledge relevant to land management. As a consequence, “practical education” left Native Americans dependent on federal “experts.”

The pragmatic Collier is difficult to reconcile with the idealistic Collier. For instance, when criticizing Western civilization, he wondered when Euro-Americans would “learn from the Indian the age-old knowledge we now, through our acts, reject – the knowledge of the interrelatedness of life, of reciprocity and cooperation between man and nature, and between man and man?”\textsuperscript{39} In fact, Collier

\textsuperscript{38} John Collier, “Indian Education Should Be Practical,” \textit{Indians at Work} 2, no. 3 (1934): 13-14.

\textsuperscript{39} Collier, \textit{From Every Zenith}, p. 246.
believed that Native Americans, through years of cultural disruption, had lost most of this knowledge. Restoration of this knowledge was only possible through educational programs in Western land management techniques. But in the end, what his educational program “re-taught” was far from “reciprocity and cooperation between man and nature.” Collier’s and Cornwall’s educational program exposed Native Americans to utilitarian conservation techniques, which encouraged viewing nature as a passive object subject to the whims of human needs.

On Fort Apache, instructors gave lectures and demonstrations using “pictures, illustrations and the easiest reading material available on subjects.” Training plans directed instructors to encourage enrollee-led discussions with “the simplest language possible.” Instructors emphasized reading and writing skills, basing their expectations on the enrollees perceived education level. They expected Native Americans that attended grade school to be able to write a business letter; multiply, add, and subtract; understand market prices for produce and meat; comprehend “simple directions;” use a score card in judging livestock; properly plant and cultivate crops; and “take a greater interest in the upkeep of their farms.” One exercise involved enrollees corresponding with experts in disciplines of most use to them. For example, individuals who raised cattle wrote for pamphlets authored by meat packing companies. Farmers wrote for information on erosion control, seed selection, fruit growing, and weed and pest control. Instructors also designed this exercise to teach enrollees how to use the postal service and figure parcel post rates. Less was expected of enrollees that hadn’t attended grade school. Instructors focused on their ability to sign their names, write numbers, and understand “simple news articles.” They also received instruction on stock raising and farming. To facilitate learning, instructors required illiterate enrollees to join literate enrollees in discussions about topical newspaper articles. Instructors hoped this
strategy would spark interest in reading; another strategy to encourage reading involved having the
children of illiterates write letters to their parents.40

Despite these low expectations, a select few enrollees received more technical training. In one
instance, four enrollees had the opportunity to work with civil engineers surveying truck trails and “learn
plain engineering.”41 In 1939 sixty-seven enrollees received detailed formal education in forestry
practices, especially in the intricacies of forest protection. Apache learned techniques in fire detection,
fire suppression, radio and telephone communication, the “one lick method,” fire damage appraisal,
mapping burned areas, packing fire equipment, writing fire reports, and first aid. Another hundred
enrollees received “On-the-fire-training.” In 1940 another fifty-five Apache received similar training.
Other enrollees, 543 in all, received training in handling and the use of dynamite, truck driving and
repair, machine operation and maintenance, welding, woodworking, signal communication, telephone
maintenance and construction, and radio operation and maintenance.42 The CCC-ID employed all these
newly acquired skills towards building infrastructure for forest improvement, forest protection, and later,
the development of recreational facilities.

Even though much of the training involved vocational skills, the stated overall purpose of Fort
Apache educational programs focused on natural resource protection and restoration. The agenda for the
1940 Enrollee Program training plan sought “to better equip the enrollee to care for his farm and garden,
to improve his home, to care for grazing land and livestock, to care for forest land..., and to take a
greater interest in game preservation.”43 More specifically, instructors from the Forestry Branch,
Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery, and the extension agency trained Apache men as game

40 William Donner, “Fort Apache Enrollee Training Program, 1940-1941,” RG 75 FAIR, Records Concerning
Enrollee Program, Dec. 346, File #31355-38, Box #9.
41 Ibid.
42 William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 30, 1940, RG 75 FAIR, Records Concerning Enrollee
Program, Dec. 346, File #31355-38, Box #9.
43 William Donner, “Fort Apache Enrollee Training Program, 1940-1941.”
wardens, fisheries managers, foresters, range managers, wildlife technicians (especially concerning predator and rodent control), fire guards, and irrigation “engineers.” On top of the formal training given to Apache enrollees, instructors held approximately eighty community meetings a year that were open to the general Apache public. These meetings also stressed the importance of properly managing natural resources on the reservation.44

Perhaps one of the most important CCC-ID projects integrated into the Enrollee Program was the construction of the Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery in 1939.45 Williams Creek was the first federal fish hatchery built in the state of Arizona and became a pivotal political tool for the White Mountain Apache’s journey towards restoring control over eco-cultural resources. The hatchery also became a focal point for the first Apache business – the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise. As I detail in the next chapter, the hatchery constituted a site of both cultural and ecological restoration, a place where an almost extinct species of fish, the Apache trout, and a culturally decimated people, the White Mountain Apache, intersected to save each other.

Conclusion: The Lasting Implications of the CCC-ID and Indian New Deal

The CCC program in general had a lasting influence on the environment – not only in terms of physical changes to the North American landscape, but in socio-political terms. Neil Maher documents the movement of many CCC personnel into natural resource professional jobs after World War II. The CCC brought a whole generation of men into intimate contact with nature, and this experience created lasting impressions. These men would later move into professional positions in the Forest Service, National Park Service, and other federal agencies that focused on the protection and management of

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44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
nature. They became vital members of the mainstream environmental movement.\textsuperscript{46} Although with different results, the CCC-ID would have a lasting environmental impact on many Indian reservations.

The BIA enrolled approximately half the eligible White Mountain Apache males, estimated at 400, in the CCC-ID over the duration of the program, exposing a large number of these men to conservation and restoration techniques. Apaches began filling the limited number of available natural resource related jobs on the reservation. For instance, Byde Amos and Hobart Greggs became assistant foresters in the forestry branch; many others maintained work as game wardens, fire guards, and fire fighters; and a select few acquired work at the fish hatchery. Later, former CCC-ID enrollees would supply a pool of “expertise” for the Tribal recreation program. Moreover, many Tribal Council members during the 1940s and 1950s spent time in the Enrollee Program. Lester Oliver, Purcell Kane, Fred Larzelere, Clinton Kessay, and Roe Clark became Tribal Chairman. Lester Oliver in particular emerged as a strong Apache leader during the 1950s and 1960s, nurturing the growth of several natural resource-related tribal enterprises.

However the impact was not immediate. World War II slowed progress on the reservation. Many tribal members left the reservation during the War to join the armed forces or to secure jobs in the war industries and agriculture. Later, many of these individuals returned to the reservation and applied their experiences to economic development projects. Assimilationist-minded anthropologists at the time, such as William H. Kelly, suggested that these temporary migrations and the Indian New Deal helped break down the isolationist tendencies of southwestern tribes.\textsuperscript{47} Kelly reported that these migrations placed the Apache on a path towards the mainstream of American society, but in the long run, the process he described had the opposite effect. Indeed, encounters with Western technology, industry, and business operated to educate tribal members in the American way, but the Apache adapted this new knowledge

\textsuperscript{46} Maher, “Nature’s New Deal.”  
\textsuperscript{47} William H. Kelly, 	extit{Indians of the Southwest: A Survey of Indian Tribes and Indian Administration in Arizona} (Tucson, AZ: Bureau of Ethnic Research, University of Arizona, 1953), p. 11.
towards developing projects that would eventually aid the Tribe in asserting cultural autonomy and maintaining tribal sovereignty.

The Indian New Deal reawakened possibilities for the Apache to reconnect with their homeland. Unlike the enrollees from the larger CCC program, the CCC-ID didn’t inspire Apache enrollees to join the environmental movement. Not enjoying the post-War World II economic boom like most regular CCC members, the Apache began seeking innovative ways to use their eco-cultural resources to benefit the reservation community. Unfortunately as CCC-ID support diminished in 1942, so too did the opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge. Almost ten years transpired before the Apache would again have significant opportunities to pursue land management work. While regular CCC personnel went on to causes of protecting wilderness from economic development and middle-class communities from air and water pollution, most Apache returned to their farms and cattle to earn a meager living. The Apache’s environmental struggle remained intertwined with the political and cultural survival. Reestablishing political sovereignty and growing an economic base from which they could support the tribal community motivated the future Apache drive for protecting and restoring their resources.

The Indian New Deal and the CCC-ID provided a starting point for this quest. These programs began the restoration of the Apache eco-cultural resource base and developed some of the initial infrastructure – fish hatchery, camps, reservoirs, stream restoration, range restoration, forest restoration, wildlife restoration, roads, bridges - for the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise. The hundreds of miles of roads constructed during this time frame exposed the reservation population to new economic opportunities; however, these roads also required a more vigilant defense of their homeland from opportunistic non-Indian business ventures. To properly defend their homeland, the Apache still required further education. The Apache obtained “practical” knowledge of Western land management techniques, but without the theoretical and technical knowledge behind these management techniques,
the Apache still depended on federal “experts” to manage and protect their homeland. Because of this technical advantage, the Apache were at the mercy of federal personnel that may or may not have the best interests of the Apache community in mind when implementing management plans. This disadvantage eventually left the Apache vulnerable to state and federal watershed “restoration” projects construed under the auspices of “benefitting the Indians.”

In sum, the Indian New Deal marked an era of major cultural and ecological transformation of the Fort Apache landscape. Initially these improvements increased non-Indian exploitation of reservation resources. The Apache would require another fifty years to regain significant control of their eco-cultural resources. For all its shortcomings, the Indian New Deal sparked what eventually ignited the eco-cultural restoration of many Native American groups. The thirteen years of Collier’s tenure proved inadequate to carry out his goals and subsequent Congressional political interventions temporarily sidetracked his aspirations. In a 1938 report, Collier even predicted the restoration of native cultures “will not happen tomorrow; perhaps not in our lifetime.”

Nevertheless, by the 1990s many native societies had begun restoration efforts that embodied Collier’s vision – a hybridization of past cultural traditions with carefully selected aspects of modernity. Native American’s even expanded eco-cultural resource management beyond reservation boundaries onto federal and state lands.

In the following chapters, I trace the evolution of eco-cultural restoration on Fort Apache through fish and wildlife management. Wildlife restoration is only one of four strains of restoration techniques

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that emerged out of the Indian New Deal. The other three - forest, range, and watershed restoration - each had roots in the programs of the Indian New Deal and CCC-ID. I focus on wildlife restoration because this is the first form of restoration that the White Mountain Apache acquired significant control over. The story of wildlife restoration ties together the political struggle to control all four strains of restoration. Their work with wildlife, especially the Apache trout, formed the eco-political foundation of the Tribe’s quest for political autonomy. Under Apache control, the paths of all four strains of restoration converged in the 1990s. The next chapter explores the ironic role a CCC-ID fish hatchery project had in eco-cultural restoration of the White Mountain Apache Tribe.
Chapter 4

The Ironic Foundation of Eco-cultural Restoration:
The Williams Creek Fish Hatchery

The White Mountain Apache, like most Native American groups, historically had intimate links to wildlife on their homeland. Not only was wildlife a source of food, animals also played a significant role in Apache culture. Most Apache stories and myths include animal characters that act as guides, moral arbiters, and teachers of life lessons. The actions of these animal characters also explain the historical development of Apache society – the creation of their homeland, the birth of agriculture, how they learned to hunt, the origins of curing and puberty ceremonies, the source of mystical powers, and the emergence of sacred places.\(^1\) Furthermore, animals represent a source of “power,” a “set of abstract and invisible forces” that Apache can acquire for a variety of purposes. For instance, “Bat Power” derived from a war dance blesses each person with a bat’s ability to maneuver in the dark. The Apache employed this power as recently as 1942, when the Tribe conducted a war dance for seven Apache men leaving for combat in World War II. The Apache billed the ceremony a success because all seven men returned from the war alive (although two were badly wounded).\(^2\) The use of animal characters to illustrate the cultural development of the White Mountain Apache or as a source of “power” is indicative of their relationship with the nonhuman world. Unlike in Western society, Apache history privileges the human/nonhuman relationship.

Currently, the restoration of wildlife on Fort Apache, therefore, takes on a different meaning than your typical wildlife restoration project that Euro-Americans might undertake. In general, Apache eco-cultural restoration involves rediscovering Apache history and the Apache community’s ancestral

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connections to the land. Restoring wildlife on the Apache homeland thus reawakened cultural history. It also conjured up political power, providing leverage for not only regaining control of natural resources on the reservation, but also for maintaining and strengthening sovereignty. Ironically, wildlife restoration on Fort Apache received a jump start from an endangered species of fish that had little cultural significance to the Tribe – the Apache trout (*Oncorhynchus apache*).

The irony resides in the fact that fish aren’t mentioned in Apache stories like other wildlife – turkey, deer, coyote, bear, wolf, and mountain lions. Historically, White Mountain Apache considered eating fish taboo. Albert Regan, an anthropologist who worked with the Apache from 1901-1902, surmised that the Apache wouldn’t eat trout because worms infected them in the summer months. When he asked a medicine man why the Apache refused to eat fish, the medicine man replied:

> They are the spirits of wicked women. Do you see the spots on the fish. [sic] Once, a long time ago all our people got an ‘awful sick.’ They were hot. They were burning up with fever. The medicinemen took them all down by the river’s brink and there they gave them the ‘sick’ sweatbath, the hot steam bath of purification…. Then emerging from the sweathouse, [the sick] plunged themselves into the invigorating waters of the river, only to come out on the opposite bank and die…. The people were enraged against the medicinemen. They thought they had intentionally killed the sick. They rose, as one man, to annihilate them all, when the dead people began to turn spotted just like the fish in the river. The explanation was simple. The bad spirits of the fish had entered the people who had bathed and had killed them all. From that day to this no Apache has eaten fish."

Apparently, according to an Apache medicine man, the taboo arose not necessarily from an illness derived from the trout, but as a consequence of bathing with the fish; however, the taboo failed to persist among the Apache. Some reports depicted a growing interest among young Apache in fishing as early as the 1910s, but the skill wasn’t common among tribal members until the 1930s. And even then, younger Apache made up the bulk of Indian participants. Elder Apache still disliked the taste of fish.4

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Nonetheless, Apache trout became culturally important, not just as a source of food, but eventually as a recruit in the Apache struggle for political autonomy. Arguably, this relatively small, inconspicuous trout is a significant reason why the White Mountain Apache reached their current circumstance where they have the economic flexibility to restore culturally significant species and places.

The fate of the White Mountain Apache and the Apache trout became intertwined during the Indian New Deal. This developing relationship is a metaphor for the evolution and revitalization of Apache society in the second half of the twentieth century. Both the Apache and the Apache trout experienced a resurrection as a consequence of their interaction. However, this rejuvenating relationship did not result in a return to the past. It resulted in a process that blended the past with the present to create new possibilities, hence sending both the White Mountain Apache and the Apache trout on new potentially viable evolutionary pathways. The Apache trout struggled through the perils of natural selection as populations adapted to newly shaped environments, introduced competitors, and artificial breeding conditions. Simultaneously, the White Mountain Apache experienced a cultural evolution ignited by an intense interaction with Western society, resulting in a selective process that allowed for the persistence of some Apache traits while acquiring new Western traits.

The relationship between the Apache trout and the Tribe is symbolic of the Apache’s ability to adapt to changing environments. Not only did this emerging relationship signify a change for the better in the physical environment of the reservation, this relationship also signified a change in the intellectual environment. Both the White Mountain Apache and the Apache trout experienced and stimulated a transformation of knowledge production practices. As the Apache gained entrance into the halls of

Although no studies to my knowledge have been completed to assess how artificial breeding has altered the genetic constitution of this species, there is a distinct possibility that the restoration of Apache trout has involved unintentionally altering the evolutionary trajectory of this species. For a compelling example of how artificial propagation affects the evolutionary pathway of fish species, see Joseph Taylor, III, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 203-204.
Western science, they slowly influenced the production of knowledge on the reservation. As knowledge production moved away from the top-down, paternalistic form common in the first eighty years of the twentieth century towards a more inclusive, democratic structure, the fate of both the Apache and the Apache trout improved. The intimate, successful bond that developed between the Apache and the Apache trout provided the Tribe with political leverage that allowed them to begin to break the bonds of dependency with the BIA and other federal agencies. The relationship for both parties meant eventual self-sufficiency.

This journey also held significant implications for the nature of ecological restoration. As the Apache forced a change in the knowledge production on the reservation, they also influenced the practice of ecological restoration. Early on, the market economy defined restoration on the reservation. Most projects on Fort Apache initially focused on economically important natural resources such as timber, grazing lands, and game. The BIA compartmentalized projects. Restoration work for one species was largely disconnected from the restoration work of another species. For instance, very little coordination occurred between forestry and wildlife restoration work. Forestry restoration focused on creating conditions that would generate the highest economic yield of timber possible, with little regard to other components of the surrounding ecosystem. Whereas trout restoration focused on the productivity of streams, and only then in terms of producing high yields of game fish without consideration of how increasing populations might affect the functional ecological relationships of the entire stream community.

Tracing the historical path of Apache trout restoration, therefore, helps us understand how the nature of restoration work evolved on the reservation. Beginning with the Indian New Deal, ecological restoration evolved from a focus on many disconnected single-species projects to an ecosystem approach, integrating a diversity of restorative goals. In parallel, the perceived relationship of the
Apache trout to its environment evolved over this same time span. During the Indian New Deal, the land managers viewed the Apache trout as an economically important game species, designing management plans to optimize its reproduction. Later, land managers protected this species because they believed its existence was integral to the ecological health of the reservation’s watersheds.

Ironically, the empowerment of the White Mountain Apache and the recovery of the Apache trout involved a CCC-ID fish hatchery project conceived to stock Fort Apache streams with non-native trout species. Beginning with the construction of the hatchery, the Apache initiated a long and delicate negotiation with the dominant society and a move towards participating in the capitalist economy. The BIA, the predominant definers of restoration during the Indian New Deal, foresaw the reservation’s wildlife as a source of revenue for the Tribe. The Apache path towards autonomy, therefore, would involve recreational restoration and development. BIA and Bureau of Fisheries personnel worked quickly to convince the Tribe of this potential and establish a means for wildlife restoration. The unlikely empowering relationship between the White Mountain Apache Tribe and the Apache trout emerged through a maze of interactions with the BIA, the Bureau of Fisheries (now part of the Fish and Wildlife Service), the Arizona Fish and Game Commission (AFGC), sportsmen, and a number of introduced trout species. All of these actors were involved in establishing William Creek National Fish Hatchery.

To understand how Apache trout became culturally important to the White Mountain Apache, we must explore the political interaction among these actors. In essence, this chapter documents the creation of the unlikely partnership between a rare species of fish and the White Mountain Apache through the construction of a fish hatchery. First, I review the natural history of the Apache trout’s decline in the first half of the twentieth century. Second, I outline the BIA’s, Bureau of Fisheries’, the AGFC’s, and the Apache’s political justifications for requesting the construction of a federal fish hatchery on Fort
Apache. Third, I argue that the hatchery became a focal point for converting Fort Apache into a “recreational playground” for non-Indians, which eventually precipitated the tribally-established business, the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise. And last, I explore the early political, social, and cultural consequences of developing the recreational potential of the reservation.

The Path toward an Unlikely Partnership

Prior to 1972, biologists and fishers knew the Apache trout was endemic to Arizona, but it had been tentatively classified with another species, the Gila Trout. As early as the 1930s fisheries biologists commonly referred to this species as the Arizona native trout. By the 1960s, the Apache trout persisted only in a couple of streams on Mount Baldy. Extensive efforts to preserve this species did not commence until the White Mountain Apache closed Apache trout streams to fishing in the 1950s. Even though concentrated recovery efforts didn’t begin until the 1950s, the White Mountain Apache, the Bureau of Fisheries, and the BIA all expressed concerns about the fate of the Apache trout as early as the mid 1930s; yet an ironic twist laid the groundwork for the recovery of the Apache trout. The CCC-ID constructed a federal fish hatchery for the purpose of restocking non-natives to the streams of the White Mountains. Ultimately this hatchery became the propagating grounds for the endangered Apache trout, but not until the 1980s. Before telling this story, I need to delve into the complex history of the Apache trout’s near extinction.

The Decline of a Native Species - The Apache trout populations flourished at the end of the nineteenth century, inhabiting 800 miles of streams at elevations above 1800 meters in the White Mountains. These

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6 I consider fish cultures a form of restoration. Not a form of restoration recognizable perhaps by today’s standards, but a technique for restoring or renewing human created environments such as the recreational streams of Fort Apache. This form of restoration is what Marcus Hall would call maintenance gardening. Hall, Earth Repair. For the general rationale of early twentieth century fish hatcheries, see Taylor, Making Salmon, p. 78.
streams constitute the headwaters of two major watersheds: the Little Colorado River to the north and the Salt River to the southwest. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Apache trout was popular among fishers venturing into the wilderness of the White Mountains. With the construction of the railroad through the highlands from Albuquerque to Flagstaff came sportsmen and tourists looking for adventure and plentiful fish and game. The White Mountains’ remoteness provided all three.

As early as 1876, fishing enthusiasts advertised in Arizona newspapers that the Apache trout, then known as the speckled mountain trout, afforded “rare sport to followers and devotees of Izaak Walton.” In 1910, on an expedition into the White Mountains for the Boone and Crockett Club, Dillon Wallace declared, “This, [sic] indeed is one of the most attractive regions for the sportsmen in the United States. An ample open season is offered, and for deer and turkey hunting it is unsurpassed, while every stream of the White Mountains is abundantly stocked with trout. The fish are comparatively small, to be sure, but they are plentiful enough to satisfy the most ambitious angler.”

E.C. Becker, an early twentieth century resident of Springerville, a town just northeast of the Fort Apache Reservation boundary, reminisced in 1939 about his younger days exploring the streams of the White Mountains: “I personally remember that from 1898 to 1916 the fish were so plentiful that it was no trick for a boy to catch 100 in a few hours or 200 in a full afternoon. These fish were all of one kind; ‘Yellow Bellies’ [Apache trout] we called them. The Apache Indians did not eat fish and did not catch them. A superstition concerning them saved them for the white man.”

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9 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
Until 1917, the Apache trout remained the only resident trout in the White Mountain streams. During the first three decades of the century, however, Euro-American fishers, many of whom were lumbermen working for timber companies operating on Fort Apache, quickly overexploited the Apache trout, causing the near extirpation of the native trout population early in the 1900s.¹¹ By the twentieth century, artificial propagation of fish populations was the “natural” solution to such a problem. To facilitate this process, fish culturists had settled on a standard set of species for the continuous renewal of sportfish populations. As a consequence, native fish species, like native people, gave way to economic progress and efficiency.¹² The aquaculture movement, which began in the 1850s in the United States, came late to Arizona. Nonetheless, the movement, guided by the latent philosophy of “manifest destiny,” replicated its accomplishments in other regions of the United States and replaced native aquatic species with more economically viable and ecologically pliable non-native species. Historian Darin Kinsey observed that in the eastern United States the aquaculture movement turned “seemingly natural places where commercial fishermen, angling tourists, and average citizens came to fish … [into] hybrid ecosystems – part ecology and part human artifice.”¹³ This was no less true for the Southwest by the 1920s. Following the path of federal and state agencies that sought to enhance the recreational qualities and economic potential of other regions of America, the fledgling state of Arizona constructed its first fish hatchery just outside of Springerville in 1922.¹⁴

¹³ Kinsey, “‘Seeding the Water as the Earth,’” p. 553.
Shortly thereafter, Euro-American fish culturists began restocking White Mountain streams with non-native species: eastern brook trout, rainbow trout, Yellowstone cutthroat, and later brown trout (loch leven).\(^{15}\) Until the mid-1930s, the state only restocked off-reservation streams. However, the introduced fish didn’t recognize arbitrary human boundaries and migrated into the reservation. These introductions impacted the already depleted native Apache trout in two ways. First, the closely related rainbow trout hybridized with Apache trout populations, thus genetically swamping out and contaminating a large proportion of the remaining pure populations. Second, larger non-native species out-competed the smaller Apache trout for limited food sources, pushing the native out of their preferred habitat - places where the stream undercut the bank, leaving a small shelf that hid individuals from predators.\(^{16}\) On top of fishing pressure and restocking programs, a growing regional economy had consequences for the struggling Apache trout. Increased livestock grazing, timber harvests, road building, water diversions, and reservoir construction contributed to stream bank erosion and altered stream flow and volume, all compromising Apache trout habitat.\(^{17}\)

The fate of the Apache trout took a turn for the better in the early 1930s. Because the state hatcheries couldn’t keep up with the increasing demand for sportsfish, several political sectors in Arizona began calling for the establishment of a federal hatchery on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Although the primary focus for establishing a hatchery on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation initially had little to do with restoring the Apache trout, eventually it would. In the meantime, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission (AGFC), the BIA, the White Mountain Apache, and the Bureau of Fisheries all clamored

\(^{15}\) Miller, “Classification of the Native Trouts of Arizona,” p. 408.
for federal funds to build a hatchery. The AGFC and Bureau of Fisheries even conducted a series of preliminary studies that suggested Fort Apache was the best site for the hatchery.\(^{18}\)

As each of these agencies pushed for a hatchery throughout the mid to late 1930s, a number of AGFC biologists, and later M.C. James of the Bureau of Fisheries, proposed that the construction of the hatchery occur at the head of Williams Creek, located on the north central edge of the reservation. At an elevation of 7500 feet, fisheries biologists deemed Williams Creek an optimal spot for rearing fish stock due to its relatively large size, constant flow, and uniform daily temperature fluctuations. Fort Apache also contained one of the few remaining populations of the Arizona native trout. In addition, the location of Williams Creek was appealing, running approximately half a mile from the Rice-Springerville Highway, now state route 73, and four miles from McNary, an upstart lumber town (Fig. 7).

Fig. 7 – Williams Creek prior to construction of the hatchery in 1939 (Courtesy of National Archives).

Justifying a Hatchery - Diverse political and social motivations drove the various advocates for the hatchery. Arizona’s interest in a federal fish hatchery was clear. State hatcheries lacked the capacity to stock the abundance of high elevation fishing streams found in Arizona. In the 1930s, the state’s growing population resulted in an increased demand for recreational fishing, which was becoming an important aspect of the state’s tourist economy. However, the BIA’s motivation for building the hatchery wasn’t as straightforward.

On the surface, Superintendent Donner’s proposal for a hatchery mirrored the AGFC’s proposal. He admitted a lack of regulation of non-Indian fishers and poor management of reservation streams prior to the Indian New Deal led to the depletion of native trout and non-native trout species. Due to this past neglect, Donner claimed Fort Apache needed a hatchery to restore and maintain a stock of “mountain trout” within reservation streams. However, a 1935 letter from Donner to John Collier reveals another motive for establishing a hatchery on the reservation.

We have at various times considered the advisability of closing the reservation to fishing, but because… of the protest that the representatives of this state would be compelled to make, to satisfy their constituents, would be so extensive that in the interest of harmony we would probably not be able to close the reservation. We, therefore, consider it advisable to keep the mountain streams stocked and permit trout fishing through regulation.19

External political pressure from the state, therefore, clearly drove the BIA to request a federal hatchery.

Donner also saw the hatchery as an opportunity to improve the economic conditions on the reservation. With the proposed hatchery began a push to turn Fort Apache into a “recreative playground.” In 1935, fishing permits generated $3000 in revenue for the Tribe. In the same letter where Donner admitted state pressure drove the need for a hatchery, he went on to offer that Fort Apache was recreationally superior to the Grand Canyon, “because in addition to its primeval forests, mountains and canyons, it contains the necessary trout streams which are lacking in other sections of the Southwest.”

Donner also suggested “the Apache Indians themselves, who have not been fish eaters, are annually becoming more and more accustomed to the use of fish in their diet and they take advantage of the recreative sport in getting the same.”

Donner explained that the establishment of a hatchery on the reservation would have indirect benefits as well. For instance, the hatchery would aid the restoration of grazing lands. He proposed that “wild” horses could serve as a source of feed for fish broods, connecting the hatchery to the BIA’s wild horse removal program to reduce overgrazing on rangelands. Euro-American ranchers leasing reservation lands had persistently implicated the estimated 7,000 to 11,000 head of wild horses in contributing to the poor quality of range on Fort Apache. Donner perceived the hatchery as a way to persuade Apaches to sell their horses, thus reducing the number on the range.

The White Mountain Apache, for their part, also outlined the benefits they would derive from a hatchery on the reservation. In a letter to John Collier dated February 15, 1935, the Tribal Council (not under “official” IRA constitution yet) stated:

We are favorable to granting for an indefinite period the use of the location desired by the Federal Bureau of Fisheries on condition that a reasonable effort will be made to keep all streams on the reservation well stocked with mountain trout; that insofar as possible Indians of this reservation be favored with such labor as they can perform at commercial wages; that in the purchase of worthless ponies the Hatchery give Indians preference in supplying the same.

Chief Baha (Alchesay), John Ethelbah (Chief, Carrizo District), Charley Shipp (Chief, Canyon Day District), Yahit Kane (Chief, Cedral Creek District), John Bigelow, Isaac Gaas (Chief, Turkey Creek District), Floyd Toggy (Chief, Eastfork Distric), Jack Keyes (Chief, Eastfork District), John Taylay

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 This was an important distinction at the time. One way the BIA applied pressure to tribal governments to accept IRA constitutions was to ignore or discount tribal council wishes until they developed a constitution, especially when a tribe’s request countered BIA goals. See Kenneth R. Phlup, John Collier’s Crusade for Indian Reform (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1977).
(Chief, Cibecue District), and Will Lupe (Chief, Oak Creek District) either signed or put their mark (thumb print) on this letter. In 1937, testing the dimensions of their newly instituted self-governance under IRA, the Tribal Council took another bold step towards affirming their desire for a hatchery. When the North Fork timber unit went up for sale, the Tribal Council requested the designation of several hundred acres of land around Williams Creek for Indian use. In essence, the Tribe sacrificed potential revenue from timber to ensure that the land necessary for building a hatchery remained available in the future. Superintendent Donner and Forest Supervisor Moffat both agreed with the Tribe’s proposal, which in turn led to the Secretary of Interior authorizing the proposal.24

Even though Superintendent Donner aggressively pursued the establishment of the hatchery on the Apache’s behalf, the Tribe wanted to make sure that their interests weren’t overlooked. Increasingly during the Indian New Deal and in later years, the Tribe began corresponding directly with officials in Washington D.C., asserting their wishes for land use on the reservation. These subtle actions were early marks of tribal autonomy. Despite the Council’s emerging political determination, the letter to Collier and the decision to set aside land for the hatchery certainly bore the mark of the BIA. Both Donner and Moffat previously advised the Council on the economic benefits of the hatchery. They convinced the Council that fishing license fees, potential labor, and wild horse removal would generate desperately needed revenue for the Tribe. Furthermore, the congruence between BIA and Apache goals most certainly facilitated the authorization to set aside land for the hatchery. Nonetheless, the Tribe went out of their way to articulate what they wanted from the hatchery. The fact that they sent the letter and asked to have land designated for the hatchery illustrated the importance of the project to the Tribe – not only

as a source of revenue, but as a form of subsistence among younger tribal members. Such political volition became more independent of BIA influence and commonplace in the years to come.

**The Political Fight for the Hatchery** - In the mid 1930s, Senator Carl Hayden of Arizona, on behalf of the AGFC and the White Mountain Apache, pushed the first effort to fund the hatchery through Congress. Hayden ostensibly advocated for federal projects on the reservation for the next 30 years. He would eventually bring federal dollars to the reservation for a massive juniper eradication program, which was essentially a water development project, in the 1950s and the construction of a second hatchery on the reservation in the 1960s. In general, he was politically savvy at using Native American tribes in Arizona to justify federal funds for projects that benefitted non-Indian populations more than Indians. This was certainly the case in the 1950s with the controversial Corduroy Creek and Cibecue Creek Watershed projects on Fort Apache, which in the guise of range restoration diverted water off-reservation. Doubtless, the same motivation drove Hayden to sponsor S. 813, which sought to benefit Arizona fishers at the expense of the federal government and Native Americans.

Nonetheless, Hayden introduced S. 813 in 1935 “to provide for a five-year construction and maintenance program for the United States Bureau of Fisheries.” The bill sought to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to construct a “fish cultural station” in Arizona and to appropriate $60,000 to carry out the project. Hayden produced several versions of the bill, most of which never made it through Congress, despite the popularity of conservation measures during the New Deal era. In the fall of 1938, a version of the bill actually landed on President Roosevelt’s desk; however, Roosevelt vetoed

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President Roosevelt’s office advised the Secretary of Commerce “that this proposed legislation would not be in accord with the financial program of the President.” Since Roosevelt was a conservation-minded president, it is not clear why he vetoed the bill. Two factors might have contributed to his decision. First, a great deal of political tension existed between the federal government and the state of Arizona over water development issues associated with the Colorado River. Arizona, driven by its hardcore state’s rights Governor Moer, refused to sign the Colorado Compact with the five other states appropriating water from the Colorado River, effectively hindering federal reclamation projects along the river. By vetoing the bill, Roosevelt may have been “punishing” Arizona for its lack of cooperation. Second, on a more mundane note, Roosevelt simply may have rather had conservation work such as the construction of a fish hatchery funneled through the CCC than the Bureau of Fisheries. And indeed, the CCC-ID eventually funded the project.

Despite this legislative setback, Donner and the White Mountain Apache persisted in their quest to establish a federal fish hatchery on Fort Apache. As it became apparent that receiving funds from Congress was a long shot, Donner turned to Collier and requested CCC-ID funds to construct it. In July of 1937, he reiterated to Collier earlier arguments for the merits of establishing a federal fish hatchery on the reservation. Again, he billed the hatchery as a centerpiece for the development of a recreational program that would generate sorely needed revenue for the reservation population – in essence, it “would initiate a stream and fish development program on this Reservation which would result in the

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28 William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 27, 1938, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 931, File #58631-36, Box #97.
29 D.W. Bell to Secretary of Interior, April 15, 1935, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 338, File #3501-35, Box #53.
30 August, Jr., Vision in the Desert, pp. 142-148.
31 William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 20, 1937, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 931, Box #88.
most desirable recreational area in the Southwest.”³² The overarching reason for the hatchery, however, was to reduce the State’s role in restocking reservation streams. Donner reported to Collier that “this State does not have sufficient fish hatcheries to stock them fully and there is not a Government fish hatchery in Arizona. Since the area is heavily fished the streams are always understocked [sic]; in spite of the excellent cooperation from the State and the large areas reserved from fishing on headwaters of our streams.”³³

While Donner continued attempts to secure funds for the hatchery, reservation streams remained vulnerable to overfishing. Demand for game fish was on the rise. As a stop gap measure, Donner requested 500,000 brown trout from the state hatchery at Pinetop, Arizona, for restocking reservation streams. The Pinetop hatchery agreed to rear the fish so long as the Bureau of Fisheries supplied the eggs for free. The Bureau of Fisheries complied and collected the requested stock from wild fish populations in Montana.³⁴ Until the BIA obtained funds for the hatchery, the BIA, AGFC, the Bureau of Fisheries, and the White Mountain Apache cooperatively worked together to restock reservation streams. The state hatchery at Pinetop continued to serve in this capacity until the Williams Creek Hatchery opened for operations in 1941. However, at times, the state hatchery had difficulty producing enough fish to stock both state and reservation streams.

The tenuous agreement between the state and the BIA led to worries among reservation personnel that the state someday might have to make a choice between supplying its streams or reservation streams. Fred Moffat wrote in the 1938 Annual Report for Fort Apache that “Altho we have splendid cooperation from the Hatchery at Pinetop, it is only natural that the interest of the State Fish and game

³³ William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 20, 1937, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 931, Box #88.
³⁴ Charles E. Jackson to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 21, 1937, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 931, Box #88.
[sic] Commission and Arizona sportsmen is centered in State rather than Reservation streams. We cannot expect increased help from the State Hatchery toward stocking of our streams.”\textsuperscript{35} Even though the state was willing to help, they had limits. They claimed they couldn’t both adequately restock reservation streams, which technically weren’t in their jurisdiction, and state streams on a long-term basis. Accordingly, the AGFC placed pressure on the BIA to find a way to fund a federal hatchery. Indeed, included in Moffat’s rationale for the hatchery was to “eliminate our present insecure dependence on the State Hatchery” and also “preclude the possibility of criticism by Arizona officials and residents toward stocking of Reservation streams by an agency [AGFC] which is not equipped to care fully for State streams.”\textsuperscript{36} From the states end, A.W. Yoder of the AGFC continued to assert the need for a federal hatchery, maintaining that Fort Apache was the ideal location because the reservation “comprise[d] one third of the trout water of our state.”\textsuperscript{37}

Even before Collier approved CCC-ID construction funds, Donner began working with the Bureau of Fisheries to develop plans for the hatchery. As late as June of 1938, Donner received word from the Central Office that the project had not been approved because a “[f]inal decision has not been reached as to location nor is it know [sic] definitely that construction can begin the present year.”\textsuperscript{38} Donner reminded the Central Office that both Bureau of Fisheries and AGFC personnel already deemed Williams Creek a suitable site for a hatchery. He also asserted that, if funded, construction could begin as early as spring of 1939. Despite previous setbacks, Donner must have had reason to believe he could eventually convince Collier to fund the project. He corresponded with the Bureau of Fisheries and began arrangements for the construction of the hatchery. By February of 1939, Charles E. Jackson, Acting Commissioner of the Bureau of Fisheries, dispatched M.C. James, Assistant Chief of the Division of

\textsuperscript{35} Fred Moffat, “Narrative Section: Annual Report,” p. 5.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 5.
\textsuperscript{37} A.W. Yoder to Bureau of Fisheries, September 15, 1937, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 931, Box #88.
\textsuperscript{38} William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 27, 1938, RG 75 FAIR, CCC-ID, Dec. 931, File #58631-36, Box #97.
Fish Culture, for another inspection of Williams Creek. In a letter dated March 4, 1939 Jackson informed Donner that Williams Creek “meets with the approval of the Bureau of Fisheries…As soon as practicable, we will forward to you blueprints of the hatchery building, a dwelling, rearing ponds, water supply intake, and other details which may serve as a basis for the preparation of detailed plans by your engineers.”

In the same letter, Jackson also suggested that the Bureau of Fisheries and the BIA draw up a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining each agency’s responsibility in the project. Essentially, the BIA agreed to supply “the entire funds for material and labor necessary for the construction of the hatchery.” For their part, the Bureau of Fisheries offered the services of a technical assistant to draw plans for the hatchery and oversee the construction.

Donner passed a draft of the MOU on to the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council, now ruling under an IRA Constitution and ostensibly viewed as a legitimate government in the eyes of the Department of Interior, for their approval. Having already expressed an interest in a hatchery in the past, the Tribal Council, now consisting of Chief Baha, Roe Clark, Silas Tenijieth, Purcell Kane, James Dehose, Hinkey Tosca, Lester Oliver, and Laurence Johnson, approved the MOU on March 31 with the understanding that “the construction of [the] hatchery [is] for the benefit of the reservation.”

Before the Tribal Council granted formal approval of the MOU, Donner and Jackson presumptuously proceeded to prepare for the construction of the hatchery. On March 10 Jackson mailed a preliminary draft of the hatchery plan to Donner. Subsequently Donner relayed this plan and a labor cost proposal to the Central Office on March 15. Pressuring Collier, Donner explained, “We are very anxious to start preliminary work on the hatchery site at the earliest possible moment. This proposed

40 Memorandum of Understanding: Fish Hatchery Development – Williams Creek, Arizona (Fort Apache Indian Reservation), April 21, 1939, RG 75 FAIR, CCC-ID, Dec. 931, File #58631-36, Box #97.
41 Approval of Agreement, March 31, 1939, RG 75 FAIR, CCC-ID, Dec. 931, File #58631-36, Box #97.
project is not only an important one for improvement of our stream life, but also, in the preliminary stages, almost 100% hand labor [CCC-ID enrollees] which we are depending on to assist us… It is also a fact that our two best working months are May and June, when summer rains are not the interfering factor they become later on."42 In other words, the project would not only supply conservation benefits, but educational opportunities to Native American enrollees. After rejecting several overtures from Donner in the past year, Collier must have been impressed with Donner’s latest bureaucratic assault. On April 19, 1939 Collier allocated $10,000 to begin work on the Williams Creek Fish Hatchery. Two days later the BIA and Bureau of Fisheries signed off on the Memorandum of Understanding.

**Building a Hatchery, Expertise, and Fish Populations** - CCC-ID enrollee labor built the hatchery with Bureau of Fisheries (soon to be the Fish and Wildlife Service) personnel supplying technical assistance. A crew of approximately 40 men – Apaches, members of several other Native American tribes, and a technical supervisor from the Bureau of Fisheries - began work on April 24, 1939. On this first day, the crew cleared the area for the hatchery and cleaned out a brooding pond site (Fig. 8).43

Initially, on top of tasks that required minimal skill such as clearing brush and digging brooding ponds, White Mountain Apache enrollees received on-the-job training in three primary disciplines: carpentry, concrete work, and fishery management. The carpenters built fishing troughs for the hatchery building, rearing ponds, residence quarters, and a garage; the cement workers constructed Foster Lucas rearing ponds and dams; and the fisheries workers learned how to raise the brood stock of various

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42 William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 15, 1939, RG 75 FAIR, CCC-ID, Dec. 931, File #58631-36, Box #97.
43 Charles E. Jackson to William Donner, April 25, 1939; William Donner to Jackson, April 19, 1939, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 931, Box #88.
Fig. 8 – Rearing ponds at Williams Creek Fish Hatchery in 1941 (Courtesy of the National Archives).
species of trout. Once the hatchery was on line, training opportunities diversified. Not only did several Apaches receive training in fish culturing, but also instruction in technical skills such as stream restoration, stream restocking, construction of “natural” rearing ponds, and hatchery equipment maintenance. Eventually, once Congress terminated the CCC-ID program, the hatchery permanently employed “[t]hree boys…to assist in keeping ponds clean. They also butcher horses, feed fish, and various other required duties to keep up the hatchery.”

The White Mountain Apache CCC-ID workers, the BIA, the Bureau of Fisheries (now part of the Fish and Wildlife Service) had the hatchery operating within two years. From 1940 to 1941 CCC-ID labor completed six large cement rearing ponds, capable of holding 12,000 fish each of six inches or less in size, and “several natural rearing ponds.” The enrollees worked hard to complete these tasks during the spring before the heavy rains of summer made work more difficult. W.B. McMillan, regional assistant CCC-ID camp supervisor from the Phoenix regional office, noted, “On days when the crew is pouring concrete in one of the rearing pond forms at the hatchery it keeps the entire kitchen crew very busy feeding them, as they work two shifts in order to complete each pond in a day.” During this same time frame, they also built a Girl Scout camp and began work on a truck trail from the hatchery to state route 73.

Early restocking activities focused on non-native species. By June 15th of 1941 enrollees planted the first 700,000 rainbow and brown trout in reservation streams, with another 500,000 eggs and small fish

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44 “Enrollee Program, Fort Apache Indian Reservation, 1940-1941,” RG 75 FAIR, Records Concerning Enrollee Program, Dec. 346, File# 31355-38, Box #9.
45 Fred R. Moffat to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Monthly CCC-ID Progress Report, June 1942, RG 75 FAIR, CCC-ID, File #032, Box #92.
46 W.B. MacMillan to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 2, 1941, RG 75 FAIR, Records Concerning Enrollee Program, Dec. 346, File# 31355-38, Box #9.
waiting in the hatchery troughs for dispersal. Over the next three years, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Tribe, and the BIA planted almost two million non-native individuals (brown, rainbow, black spotted, and brook trout). At the time, FWS biologists also tentatively planned to rear Arizona native (Apache) trout at the hatchery – several hundred individuals “were caught in headwater streams [of Mount Baldy] for use as brood stock in the fish hatchery.” In the 1941 Annual Report on Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Fred Moffat claimed, “It is planned to have our hatchery specialize in the hatching of Arizona Natives. This is the original type in our Mountain [sic] streams and the most desirable from any viewpoint; the gamest [sic], best acclimated and most edible.” Furthermore, hatchery officials had begun to make arrangements with the AGFC and the Forest Service to restock state and national forest streams. Even though FWS personnel made several overtures to the restoration of the Apache trout in the early 1940s, annual restocking reports show no evidence that they carried through with these plans. In the 1940s, the FWS - with the aid of the BIA and White Mountain Apache - restocked reservation streams with large numbers of rainbow trout and moderate numbers of German brown trout. According to official wildlife reports, no agency restocked streams with Arizona natives until the 1960s.

Why the early plans to restock reservation streams with Apache trout never came to fruition isn’t entirely clear. However, the BIA and FWS’s economic goals for the hatchery probably contributed to the failure to use the hatchery for the rehabilitation of Arizona native trout populations. In essence, plans for restoring the Apache trout were lost in the shuffle of turning the hatchery into a centerpiece for

47 “Proposed CCC-ID Program for Fiscal Year 1943,” June 30, 1942, RG 75 FAIR, CCC-ID, Box #95; Fred Moffat, Narrative Section: Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1941, Fort Apache Indian Reservation, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 31, File #55302-41, Box #1.
recreational activities. The Tribe, on the other hand, expressed concern for declining fish populations in general. As early as 1934, the Tribal Council considered closing streams to outside fishers because they felt non-Indians overfished streams, decreasing the availability of fish to the increasing number of young Apaches taking an interest in fishing. Superintendent Donner advised the Tribe against this action, however, because he feared that it would cut off a source of growing tribal revenue. Again, the year before the hatchery went into production the Tribal Council discussed the possibility of closing streams. This time Donner convinced the Council that the hatchery would soon produce “a great many fish to stock the streams,” including Arizona natives.\footnote{“Special Meeting, White Mountain Apache Tribal Council,” May 17, 1941, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 339, File #32406-41, Box #25.} According to the records, the Tribe took no action to close streams at this time. Apparently the BIA discouraged any such action because they didn’t want to reduce the recreational potential of the reservation.

Once the hatchery went into production, Donner, Moffat, and FWS personnel took every opportunity to promote the recreational potential of the hatchery. For instance, in a 1941 inspection report of the hatchery completed for the Commissioner’s office, Randolph Hellwig, an assistant forester stationed at Fort Apache, suggested that Williams Creek Hatchery was quite amenable to day visitors: “Considerable thought should be given to the establishment of picnic grounds. The public will be attracted to this inviting area and would hardly attempt the long drive without planning on a picnic lunch. No doubt, there are many who will camp out near this site.”\footnote{Randolph W. Hellwig to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 21, 1941, RG 75 FAIR, Records Concerning Enrollee Program, Dec. 346, File# 31355-38, Box #9.} Statements such as this were very common in CCC-ID reports in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In general, by the 1940s, the CCC-ID shifted their goals on Fort Apache. In the first seven years of the program, very few projects had a primary emphasis on recreational development, whereas in the last few years of the program, many CCC-ID activities focused on conservation and development of resources for the sake of attracting tourists. While the BIA still
considered the restoration of timber and range lands a priority, increasing numbers of projects centered efforts on protecting resources that would enhance the recreational potential of Fort Apache. BIA policy also shifted in terms of promoting timber exploitation on the reservation. In rare instances land managers considered the bigger picture, especially when timber extraction or cattle grazing might impact the aesthetics of recreational hotspots on the reservation. Toward the end of the Indian New Deal, leaving “scenic strips” along streams, roads, and in areas with recreational potential became BIA policy on Fort Apache, even, in some cases, against the wishes of the Apache.53

The FWS’s and the BIA’s focus on developing recreational infrastructure on the reservation left little time and resources for doing the research required to develop new techniques for rearing a trout species that fish culturists never artificially propagated before.54 The immediate concern became restocking streams for the growing number of fishermen exploiting the wilderness environment of Fort Apache.

53 William H. Zeh to J.D. Lamont, June 20, 1941; William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 21, 1941, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 339, File #32406-41, Box #25; See also RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 339, File #10157-36, Box #63 and CCF 40-56, Dec. 339, File #32406-41, Box #25.

54 The FWS’s interest in the Apache trout reflected a shift in federal wildlife policy away from a singular focus on the management of game species. Influences from the field of ecology began to trickle into the federal agencies as a new generation of personnel began to replace the Progressive Era efficiency experts. For instance, more nuanced understandings of predator/prey dynamics guided decisions on predator eradication programs. In the first twenty years of the twentieth century all predators were bad. They competed with big game hunters for valuable game. The Bureau of Biological Survey eliminated predators in the name of efficiency so as to maintain game populations at a sustained yield level for hunters. When game populations began to outstrip the food resource base of their habitats, game managers witnessed a severe decline in game species. These early twentieth century “natural” experiments revealed that predators played an important regulatory role in animal communities. This wisdom began to play itself out in the 1930s. Predator control programs continued, but the realization that the indiscriminate killing of predators was detrimental to sustaining healthy animal communities and that non-game species were important to the maintenance of communities began filtering into federal policy (See File #s 53608 and 20324 in RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, Box #45 for detail of this shift in BIA and FWS. For instance, these files mention the work of Adolph Murie, prominent in influencing FWS’s view on predator control, on the San Carlos Apache Reservation. Murie’s work angered Donner.). Hence forth, the BIA and FWS administered predator control programs with a measure of caution and in the case of FAIR, only nuisance animals were killed – predators that threatened livestock. This sort of mentality led to interest in species such as the Apache trout. But this interest was fickle and didn’t necessarily lead to a commitment to saving a species. In the end, the FWS’s interest in the Apache trout was probably linked to utilitarian concerns rather than a new policy that considered rare, endemic species. Nonetheless, the FWS’s interest in the Apache trout demonstrated a growing interest in non-game species. Thomas R. Dunlap, Saving America’s Wildlife: Ecology and the American Mind, 1850-1990 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 79-83; Timothy J. Farnham, Saving Nature’s Legacy: Origins of the Idea of Biological Diversity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 61-80.
Fortunately, the establishment of Mount Thomas roadless area helped protect, even if unintentionally, the headwaters where the last remaining pure breeding populations of Apache trout persisted until the Apache directed more attention toward them in the 1950s.

**Shaping the Fort Apache Landscape as a Euro-American Recreational Playground**

In the early 1940s, the BIA intensified plans to divert ecological restoration and conservation measures to turn Fort Apache into a “recreative playground” for non-Indians. BIA officials realized that the land they held in trust for the White Mountain Apache amounted to a diamond in the rough. Fred Moffat proudly claimed, “The White Mountains are one of the few summer vacation areas of Arizona. A considerable, and probably the most beautiful portion of these mountains, are contained within the Fort Apache Reservation. Clear mountain streams and cienagas in the midst of perfect recreational settings provide ideal camping spots. The person who wishes to spend a vacation in mountain solitudes with good fishing, a cool climate and satisfying scenery, need not look beyond the White Mountains.”

In the 1930s and 1940s the Apache permitted non-Indians to fish and camp on the reservation, but disallowed non-Indian hunting. The BIA, for the time being, focused their efforts on creating improved campgrounds and providing ample fishing opportunities to alleviate Apache concerns over the growing problem of uncontrolled use of reservation lands. As fisher traffic increased, BIA personnel found numerous “dirty campgrounds” scattered randomly throughout the reservation, stream pollution, and a “very definite increase in fire hazard.” To avoid these problems, Moffat proposed a restriction of vacationers to specially located, improved campgrounds. In 1940 the Donner adopted a two-year plan to develop a series of “modern campgrounds.”

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56 Ibid., p.9.
Clifford Presnall, a FWS biologist, wrote a report in 1941 titled *Suggestions for Wildlife Management on the Ft. Apache Indian Reservation*. This report detailed an early proposal for turning Fort Apache into a recreational haven for non-Indians. Presnall praised the general potential of the reservation as a recreational hotspot, and in particular highlighted what he believed were the educational and economic benefits of Williams Creek Fish Hatchery to the Apache people:

> It was evident that the area has unusual possibilities, both as regards natural wildlife resources and willingness of the Indians to practice genuine [my emphasis] conservation. It was also apparent that considerable progress has already been made in developing a fish management program, and that with thorough study and zealous application the Reservation can become a demonstration area for the entire Indian Service, primarily to show what can be done in management of sport fishing.  

This rhetoric clearly was not new, but Presnall’s claim was significant because he believed that the hatchery program on Fort Apache deserved replication on other reservations. Presnall also suggested pushing the boundaries of recreational activities beyond camping and fishing.

Although the White Mountain Apache and BIA prohibited non-Indian hunting, Presnall felt that allowing hunts on a limited permit system would generate more revenue and also help solve predator control problems. He surmised that such a system would alleviate problems with non-Indian poachers and regulate the increasing numbers of tourists visiting the reservation. On a related note, Fred Moffat observed over the past seven years that because of the prohibition against non-Indian hunting on the reservation, “wildlife on the Reservation [sic] is abundant, compared to the adjacent country, and we are faced with a game protection problem. The temptation to kill wild turkey and to fish on the headwaters of our streams is especially inviting and constant patrolling to control such poaching is necessary.”

Moffat claimed, however, that by 1941, because of several competent Apache game wardens, poaching

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by non-Indians had subsided “to such an extent that it is no longer serious.” The reservation even became a source of wildlife for game restoration programs taking place in other parts of Arizona. For instance in 1940, because of the abundance of turkey on the reservation, the Tribal Council gave permission to the FWS to trap turkey for restocking depleted populations elsewhere in the state.

Despite the improving wildlife conditions, Presnall recommended, because of the growing reservation and state population, that a more structured monitoring system was necessary to maintain the bounty of wildlife on the reservation. The first step towards more efficient management of wildlife resources required a “thorough survey of all game resources…with emphasis on the ecological factors locally affecting game populations, especially turkey and deer.” Second, he recommended that the Tribal Council and Superintendent Donner work out expanding administration and law enforcement concerning game and fish management. Third, the BIA needed to initially provide enough funds to make a recreational program self-supporting. Fourth, apply the recreational program as an educational tool to teach “genuine conservation to the Indians.”

For this latter goal, Presnall felt the Williams Creek Hatchery would be particularly useful: “Every effort should be made to realize the full value of the fish management program as an educational demonstration project. Members of Tribal Councils, Indian Service personnel, and Indian School groups should whenever possible be routed to the Williams Creek hatchery when visiting or traveling through the Southwest, and no effort should be spared in explaining the operation and benefits of both the hatchery and the fish management of the entire Reservation.” The BIA had already taken advantage of the hatchery for this purpose through CCC-ID training programs and the employment of Apaches as

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59 Ibid., p. 1.
60 Fred R. Moffat, “Report on Wildlife, Fort Apache Indian Reservation,” April 8, 1940, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 932, File # 35362, Box #88, p. 5.
62 Ibid., p. 25.
game wardens and fisheries workers. Groups of Native American girls also frequently used the Girl Scout camp next to the hatchery and took tours of the facilities (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9 – A group of Apache girls learning “genuine conservation” at Williams Creek Fish Hatchery in 1941 (Courtesy of National Archives).

In terms of wildlife regulation, Presnall offered up several specific suggestions that the BIA and Apache eventually adopted. He recommended increasing recreational services in the form of campgrounds monitored by wardens who would collect fees earmarked specifically for wildlife conservation. He also suggested a beaver restoration program. This would serve two purposes. First, beaver would create natural fish rearing ponds, thus increasing the number of fish available to tourists. Second, Apache game wardens could trap surplus beaver for fur, thus generating further revenue for the
tribe. Given the considerable interest from non-Indian game hunters in the increasing elk population, Presnall also argued for the creation of a hunting license program. Further, by offering permits to kill bear, this program would also alleviate the problem with bears killing reservation cattle. To further financially capitalize on the hunting program, Presnall also proposed requiring hunters to acquire a reservation license and the accompaniment of a tribal guide. Hunting equipment not already owned by the licensed hunter “must be rented from the guide or other Indians.” By 1952 when the Tribe established the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise, the BIA and the Apache had implemented many of these suggestions.

**A Pathway of Ambivalence toward Eco-cultural Restoration and Modernization**

Despite the potential economic benefits of an emerging recreational thrust to the White Mountain Apache, a flip side to this story emerged. The reservation population didn’t evenly benefit from the program and some segments of the population resisted the social, political, ecological, and economic changes occurring as a result of inviting more non-Indians onto the reservation. In effect, although the development of a recreational program on the reservation would eventually confer an overall benefit to the Apache, the path towards this development often furthered cultural disruption and threatened tribal sovereignty. In the following pages, I illustrate the socio-politically bivalent nature of modernization and eco-cultural restoration that directly resulted from the BIA encouraging non-Indian tourism on the reservation.

**Cultural Disruption** – When the BIA linked Williams Creek Fish Hatchery to the wild horse removal program, this action caused frustration and hard feelings among some tribal members. Ownership of horses conferred prestige among the White Mountain Apache - the more horses one owned the more

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63 Clifford C. Presnall, *Suggestions for Wildlife Management on Fort Apache Indian Reservation.*
prestige. According to BIA officials, whose agenda involved increasing the carrying capacity of grazing lands for cattle, most Apache-owned horses consisted of “inferior animals that they neither rode nor worked.”64 These herds appeared unkempt and wild. Moreover, the horses competed with cattle for limited grazing. In essence, the BIA instituted what current restorationists would call a passive restoration program to rehabilitate damaged grazing lands. Passive restorationists remove the disturbance, in this case “wild” horses, and subsequently let nature heal itself. Ultimately this action alone didn’t restore grazing lands on the reservation, but it amounted to the BIA’s first attempt among many – all of which were controversial among the Apache.65 Shortly after the initiation of the horse removal program, the CCC-ID began an experimental juniper eradication program to restore grazing lands and increase water yield.66 The horse removal program created friction between Apache cattlemen, Apache horse owners, and the BIA.

In order to garner support for the removal program, BIA officials exaggerated the extent to which wild horses competed with cattle, claiming that as many as 10,000 horses roamed the White Mountains. Later, in the 1950s, BIA officials admitted that this was an overestimate and the number was closer to 4,000 head. Nonetheless, beginning in the 1930s, Superintendent Donner began offering Apaches one dollar a head for rounding up and killing “wild” horses. To receive their money, tribal members had to bring the tip of the tail as evidence to the Fort Apache Agency office. Once the hatchery was operating,

64 Buskirk, The Western Apache, p. 57.
65 In the 1950s, the BIA would employ active restoration techniques such as juniper removal, reseeding, and prescribed burns. The BIA, Forest Service, and a number of university-based hydrologists and ecologists designed this project with two goals in mind: 1) restore grazing land on the reservation, 2) increase water yield to non-Indians in the Salt River Valley. Ultimately this program, which ran during the 50s and 60s, became the subject of hotly contested water rights battle in the 1970s and 1980s.
the BIA provided further monetary incentives for Apaches to round up horses and sell them as fish food.\footnote{Thomas R. McGuire, \textit{Mixed Bloods, Apaches, and Cattle Barons: Documents for a History of the Livestock Economy on the White Mountain Reservation, Arizona} (Tucson, AZ: Arizona State Museum, Archeological Series No. 142, 1980), pp. 175-176.}

Even though the Tribal Council approved the program in 1939, not all Apache agreed with horse removal. In 1934 when the program began, Gail Massey, a Tribal Council member, expressed concern about Apaches losing too many of their horses: “A long time ago we paid $80.00 and $90.00 for horses. Now after they have increased they have been driven away. This must never happen again. We do not want our horses taken away from us. We are using them to round up our cattle.”\footnote{“Council of Fort Apache Indians at White River, Arizona,” March 5, 1934, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 07-39, Dec. 339, File #18-34, Box #63.} According to Massey, the BIA encouraged the eradication of too many horses, which in turn caused eager Apache horse wranglers to confuse “wild” horses with work horses. The latter problem apparently wasn’t uncommon. Horses, wild or not, tended to be free range, adding to the confusion of which horses were legitimate problems. Eva Watt of Oak Creek remembered an instance when Apache cowboys killed one of her stepfather’s horses for fish food:

They were killing horses. They were killing wild horses for fish food. Somebody told the [Apache] cowboys from Cibecue that there was lots of wild horses at Oak Creek and Chediskai, so they came over there looking for them. If they killed one they got paid. When my stepfather knew the cowboys were down there, he called to the horses. ‘Here! Here!’ They all came down the mountain by themselves and stood at the gate. He told them, he said, ‘They’re hunting you, so don’t show yourselves out here in the open.’ He said, ‘Go to Do’ Bi Gowa and stay there.’ So they did. They understood. They marched down there and stayed ‘till all the cowboys were gone. See, sometimes they don’t know if a horse was wild or if it belonged to somebody. That’s what happened to us – they killed one of my stepfather’s horses.\footnote{Eva Watt, \textit{Don’t Let the Sun Step Over You} (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2004), p. 188.}

The horse eradication program in the 1930s and early 1940s proved mostly unsuccessful. Even though the program never removed large numbers of horses, it still frustrated some Apache. Much to the
chagrin of the BIA and Apache cattlemen, many tribal members resisted pleas from the BIA to sell surplus horses and continued to keep large herds. In the 1950s, the BIA finally made headway in reducing horse numbers on the range; however, this proved only a temporary reprieve. Wild horse grazing on and off the reservation continued to periodically aggravate Apache and non-Indian ranchers. Even today, non-Indian cattlemen, under pressure from the Forest Service to limit the head of cattle they graze on leased lands within Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, complain about “large” numbers of wild horses migrating from Fort Apache and degrading the range.70

**Threatened Tribal Sovereignty** – With modern conservation came modern game and fish regulations – many of which the White Mountain Apache weren’t accustomed to. The Apache, through Article VI of their constitution, reserved the right to regulate hunting and fishing on the reservation; however, up until 1947 failed to mandate any regulations.71 To better protect wildlife on the reservation, the BIA persuaded the Tribal Council to adopt the Arizona game and fish laws, at least in terms of seasons and bag limits. According to BIA wisdom, synchronizing White Mountain Apache code with state laws would facilitate prosecuting both non-Indian and Indian violators. However, by doing this, BIA officials realized they might compromise tribal sovereignty – in essence, give Arizona authority on matters within the reservation.

Because many tribal members recognized implementing Arizona game regulations on Fort Apache threatened tribal sovereignty, instituting state laws on the reservation proved an extremely sensitive issue. In a wildlife report to the Commissioner’s Office that considered this problem, Moffat warned

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71 *Constitution and By-laws of the White Mountain Apache Tribe of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation*, August 26, 1938, p. 4.
against imposing state regulations on the Apache. He believed that establishing state fish and game laws on the reservation “would be a decisive factor toward attaining a greater degree of conservation; however, adoption should proceed gradually and through independent action by the Tribal Council.” By doing this, Moffat felt that the White Mountain Apache would take ownership of the law and more responsibility for ensuring its enforcement. He also warned that implementing the laws before properly educating the Apache about their merits would only result in resistance to these laws and pervasive enforcement problems. Moffat provided an anecdote to support his point.72

A bad hatching season and poor weather in 1938 resulted in a decline in the reservation wild turkey population. The Tribal Council reacted by closing the regular hunting season. Tribal members accepted this closure without protest. When Thanksgiving arrived, a group of tribal members wanted a turkey for their celebration. Instead of breaking the law, they requested an exception to the law. The Tribal Council granted their wish. Moffat opined, “The acceptance of, and spirit toward, this regulation would not have been the same had it originated from a State Fish and Game Commission rather than from their Tribal Council.”73 He finished his recommendation by asserting that BIA officials and Apache game wardens, not state officials, should enforce fish and game laws on the reservation. Along the reservation boundary where unclear jurisdiction over violations undoubtedly would occur, Arizona and the BIA should cooperate enforcing the game code. Indeed, the AGFC deputized Apache game wardens to facilitate dealing with incidents adjacent to reservation lands.

To further mitigate against the perception that Arizona had control over game regulation on the reservation in the 1930s and 1940s, the BIA adopted Moffat’s recommendations and persuaded the Tribal Council to officially approve a slightly modified version of the state regulations as a separate Tribal code – once again, using the Council to facilitate the BIA’s agenda. The Tribal code only

72 Moffat, “Report on Wildlife, Fort Apache Indian Reservation.”
73 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
diverged from state code mainly in terms of delineating who had the privilege of hunting and fishing on the reservation. The Council only allowed tribal members and BIA employees hunting privileges. Non-Indians could fish and camp on the reservation, but the Tribe prohibited non-Indians from taking game. The Apache and BIA considered any hunting by non-Indians poaching. However, the Apache couldn’t prosecute violators in tribal court, only tribal members were subject to this court. Instead, Moffat instructed Apache game wardens to send non-Indian violators to Superintendent Donner, who in turn decided the fate of these perpetrators. But Donner very rarely submitted violators to state court. And official records don’t indicate what types of punishments Donner doled out to non-Indian poachers; however, the fact that the BIA prohibited subjecting non-Indians to tribal court bothered many Apache.

During the 1940s, two brewing areas of controversy with the state foreshadowed the war between Arizona and the White Mountain Apache over the state’s right to enforce conservation laws on Fort Apache that took place in the 1970s. First, the Tribal Council approved a bear removal program on the reservation to protect the Apache cattle industry. This program targeted bears that killed cattle. Some local non-Indian residents and the AGFC believed the removal of bears proved excessive. However, the Apache and BIA maintained that there had never been an open season on bear on the reservation, resulting in an overpopulation problem and predation on cattle. Second, non-Indian game hunters wanted access to the reservation, especially for the reservation’s abundant wild turkey populations. The rest of the state had suffered a severe decline in turkey populations, leaving Fort Apache as one of the few prime turkey hunting grounds in the state. Since wild turkey was in such high demand, opening the reservation would expose the turkey population to an onslaught of hunting enthusiasts, which in turn would decimate the population. And for the Apache, the turkey at the time still held cultural significance. They had “no intention of ever opening the reservation to wild turkey hunting.” And from

74 Ibid.
the BIA’s standpoint, the Tribe’s position amounted to a “fortunate policy for the entire State, since the reservation is a source of supply for all adjacent areas.”75

Moffat presented these issues as minor problems in his report to the Commissioner’s Office. However, tensions between the state and the Apache would only grow. In the 1950s, as the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise struggled to gain an economic foothold, water rights issues boiled over and remained a source of tension for the rest of the century. In the 1970s, the White Mountain Apache would initiate an elk management program that rankled the feathers of the AGFC, resulting in protracted legal battles in state and federal court. Nonetheless, despite the potential threat to sovereignty that implementing Arizona game regulations represented to the Apache, instituting these laws provided a governing infrastructure that helped the Tribe better monitor their valuable wildlife resources. Game regulation, along with the campgrounds, the fish hatchery, and the restoration work completed by the CCC-ID, established the infrastructure necessary for the creation of a tribal recreation program. The development of the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise in turn initiated a long road towards economic, political, and environmental self-sufficiency, a self-sufficiency that would later empower the Tribe to fight Arizona’s later attempts to control wildlife management on the reservation.

**Conclusion**

Despite the Euro-American origin of Williams Creek Fish Hatchery, it served several critical purposes that aided the White Mountain Apache’s quest for political autonomy. First, the Apache, FWS, and AGFC had a high yield source of game fish to restock reservation and off-reservation streams for recreational purposes. Unfortunately, even though the FWS had tentative plans to use the hatchery mainly for raising the native trout, during the 1940s, the Apache trout remained a low priority. Second, the hatchery provided a training site for the Apache in modern conservation techniques. A number of

75 Ibid., p. 4.
individuals through the CCC-ID helped build the hatchery and learned how to raise fish and restock streams. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the hatchery provided a springboard from which the Apache could restore economically valuable resources and build their own recreational enterprise. Although the impact was slight at first, the hatchery generated interest on the reservation in conservation-oriented jobs. Furthermore, the products of the hatchery drew more non-Indians to the reservation, providing a justification to build recreational infrastructure such as campgrounds and picnic areas.

No doubt the modernization of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation through the Indian New Deal was a double edged sword for the Apache. During this time period, the program financially benefited a large number of tribal members, but this was only a temporary and marginal reprieve from dire economic conditions on the reservation. When Congress cut the program to divert funds to the war effort, life on the reservation, in many ways, returned to pre-New Deal era circumstances. Capital improvements on the reservation slowed to a lull and very few Apache retained jobs outside of farming. Some individuals who had gained skills through the CCC-ID went to work for the war industry, while others joined the military. Others held on to jobs as game wardens, foresters, and fisheries workers. But the majority went back to farming their lands. One thing is certain: far more Apaches had a rudimentary understanding of Western conservation and restoration techniques than before the implementation of the Indian New Deal.

Unfortunately, for all the good the Indian New Deal provided, it lacked a sustained emphasis on maintaining Apache cultural traditions; instead, the program worked to further assimilate Apaches into Euro-American society. The Indian New Deal fell short of creating a blend between the best of Western society and indigenous society that Collier intended. Nonetheless, the White Mountain Apache had

made a large step towards Westernization that would continue throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Ironically, limited Apache assimilation into the dominant society would ultimately create the economic and political leverage by which they could focus on restoring lost cultural traditions rather than solely survival as a people. From the standpoint of restoration and conservation, the further Westernization of the White Mountain Apache occurred with the incorporation of the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise in the 1950s. Through this entrepreneurial endeavor the Apache trout and the White Mountain Apache would find the economic and political foundation for eco-cultural restoration. In the 1940s, the Apache trout’s cultural significance to the Tribe was in its infancy, but the relationship between the two would only grow. Together, the trout and the Apache would revitalize each other. Neither would find themselves returning to pre-Columbian geographic ranges or life ways. But they would spark the re-creation of the eco-cultural landscape of the reservation, a hybridization of the past and present and of Western culture and Apache culture.
Chapter 5

Institutionalizing Resistance and Exchange: The White Mountain Recreational Enterprise

We’re not dying off…We’re growing.

Nelson Lupe, Sr.¹

In 1960 D’Arcy McNickle, the famous Salish scholar, activist, and writer, predicted that American Indians will “probably use the white man’s technical skills for Indian purposes” and that “Indians are going to remain Indian… a way of looking at things and a way of acting which will be original, which will be a compound of these different influences.”² The White Mountain Apache establishment of the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise (WMRE) preceded this prediction. By 1952, the cultural hybridization and recreation of Indian identity that McNickle spoke of had already begun for the Apache.

The WMRE became the foundation for resistance to and exchange with Euro-American society. For the first time, the Apache formed an independent institutional boundary between themselves and the dominant society. On the surface, the WMRE embraced the ideals of Western land management and business techniques, developing reservation resources to generate revenue and supply jobs for the Apache. Upon a closer look, however, the WMRE embodied the Tribe’s quest to restore control over reservation resources. This enterprise made it possible for the Apache to appropriate Western science and technology for the benefit of the tribal community, becoming an economic cornerstone from which they could rebuild their society. Furthermore, the WMRE became a platform from which the Apache

could begin asserting control over knowledge production on the reservation. It provided restoration and land management training programs that expanded the pool of Apache expertise. Some of these programs led to long-term career opportunities in natural resource management, contributing to a measure of economic stability for some tribal members.

In essence, this chapter argues that the WMRE became the institutional foundation for resistance to and exchange with Euro-American society that propelled the Apache’s quest to control eco-cultural resources on the reservation. To understand how this happened, I first outline the social and political context in which the WMRE emerged. Second, I describe the Tribe’s internal political struggle to establish the WMRE. And third, I demonstrate how the Apache employed the WMRE as a tool of resistance against non-Indian attempts to exploit their water resources and a tool of exchange with Euro-American society to acquire knowledge, expertise, and economic stability.


Restoration and conservation work on the reservation lulled during the 1940s. Nonetheless, the Apache trout stubbornly persisted, partly because of the de facto protection Mt. Thomas Roadless Area provided for remaining populations and partly because steep grades in the upper reaches of the watershed acted as natural barriers to rainbow trout migration. No active management of the Apache trout occurred at this time. The BIA, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the White Mountain Apache had meager funds for the restoration and management of economic resources. As a consequence, the BIA reduced conservation activities to a minimum - mostly centered on fire suppression as a national security imperative and timber sales for the war effort. Williams Creek Fish Hatchery, which remained in operation, still stocked reservation streams with non-natives. The BIA also continued range
improvement through horse removal and juniper eradication. The emphasis on turning Fort Apache into a “recreational playground” died down with the end of the CCC-ID and the onset of World War II.

The war put a dent in non-Indian visits to the reservation and federal funding for conservation work. Through 1944 fishing permits only generated $1,000 dollars in annual revenue, down from a high of $3000 in the mid 1930s. During the war, the BIA and White Mountain Apache had little choice but to de-emphasize recreational development, with annual funding allotments for this program averaging well below $1,000 a year.³ Lack of personnel and funds restricted recreational management efforts to cleaning up campgrounds and low-level monitoring of campers and fishers.

Even after the war, when visitation rates increased, the BIA and the Tribe devoted little attention to developing the recreational potential of Fort Apache. Furthermore, pessimism among BIA staff concerning the potential for the Apache to run a recreational program also hindered progress. Nonetheless, in the second half of the decade fishing permit revenue increased, generating between $4,000 and $8,000 per year. However, half of that money went towards maintaining Williams Creek Fish Hatchery, leaving little for further recreational development.⁴ In 1946 the Tribe also opened the reservation to non-Indian elk hunts for the first time, but this action failed to pay immediate economic dividends.⁵

A 1951 BIA report from the regional forester on the reservation’s recreational facilities provides further evidence of neglect. The author claimed that the campgrounds built by the CCC-ID were “inadequate…and shortage of personnel and funds prevents proper maintenance and policing. For the

³ Post War Program 10-Year Plan, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Fort Apache Indian Reservation, June 1, 1944, RG 75 FAIR, SMCO, Entry 797K, Box #2
⁴ R.D. Holtz to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 24, 1947, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #35419-43; Box #45.
⁵ Tribal Resolution #176, October 14, 1946, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #35419-43, Box #45; R.D. Holtz to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 22, 1947, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #35419-43, Box #45.
same reason fire patrol and law enforcement are inadequate.”

This same report went on to claim that Fort Apache personnel left the Mont Thomas and Black River roadless areas largely unprotected. With only a few foresters and game wardens on the reservation, “it is impossible even to maintain the horse trails necessary for travel through such areas.”

Because of low funds, an insufficient number of game wardens, and an increased visitation rate by both authorized and un-authorized non-Indian “tourists,” the Apache game wardens and BIA land managers lacked the resources to adequately respond to poaching, other game code violations, and fishers without permits. As a consequence, the Tribe suffered from unnecessary wildlife depletion and lost potential revenue. The lack of protection in the highlands also left the Apache trout more vulnerable to exploitation.

In general, Apache life on the reservation seemed to regress in the 1940s from its temporary brush with modernization during the Indian New Deal. For some Apache, especially the young adults receiving skills from CCC-ID programs, this was agonizing; economic opportunities on the reservation dwindled, with timber, cattle, and farms remaining the main forms of subsistence. Until the establishment of the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise, most families supported themselves through raising livestock and farming. Local Euro-American timber operations provided the only wage labor. In 1952, for example, of the 986 self-supporting families on the reservation, 951 worked in farming or cattle, leaving only 35 families subsisting off of wage work. However, for many Apache, the regression from modernization offered a welcome retreat.

John O. Crow, Superintendent of Fort Apache in the early 1950s, commented on this division among tribal members: “While many are still pitifully poor their plight is slowly improving and they do not yet

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7 Ibid., p. 4.
8 For an Apache account of this time frame see Eva Watt, Don’t Let the Sun Step over You (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press), pp. 251-257. I obtained the data from Post War Program 10-Year Plan; William H. Kelly, Indians of the Southwest: A Survey of Indian Tribes and Indian Administration in Arizona (Tucson, AZ: Bureau of Ethnic Research, University of Arizona, 1953).
have any general or specific dissatisfaction with their way of life or standard of living which would drive them to more rapid progress.”

Of the 3,700 individuals residing on Fort Apache in 1952, 800 spoke no English at all. Many communities, especially Cibecue on the drier western side of the reservation, remained quite isolated from the reservation’s political capital, Whiteriver. As a consequence many traditional Apache rituals and ceremonies thrived and remained central to local family cluster social organization. Even though earning a living remained difficult and people lacked material wealth on par with Euro-American standards, Eva Watt remembers that people were happy: “We had lots of fun ‘cause we were always doing something. And you know, it seems like every day something different happened…. Chediskai [a community on the west end of the reservation] was a really good place.”

Despite this content, tension between the Apache way and the Euro-American way would again heighten with the establishment of the WMRE. The tribal population’s uneven cultural acceptance of modernization made developing reservation enterprises difficult, as Nelson Lupe, Sr., Tribal Chairman from 1950-1954 and the main advocate for the WMRE, found out.

However, a far more ominous specter than budget cuts and cultural tension over modernization loomed on the post-World-War-II horizon. Native Americans experienced the post-war economic boom quite differently from the general American population. While most Euro-Americans experienced a rise in economic status, most Native Americans did not. On top of that, prospects for termination of tribal sovereignty and the inadequate economic support they received from the federal government, made already bleak conditions on Indian reservations seem bleaker. For American Indians, the time roughly between the end of Collier’s tenure as Commissioner of Indian Affairs until the early 1960s is known as

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9 John O. Crow to A.L. Miller, June 18, 1953, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 77, File #17155-52, Box #8.
10 Kelly, *Indians of the Southwest.*
12 Watt, *Don’t Let the Sun Step Over You,* p. 149.
the Termination Era. This time frame received its name from Congress’s infamous termination policy and the enactment of Public Law 280, which were the products of a major conservative backlash against New Deal era policies in general. Congress cut funding for many Collier programs intended to last indefinitely, including crucial health and education services. Some Congressional proposals even called for the immediate liquidation of the BIA. To further dissolve federal responsibility for Native Americans, Congress enacted Public Law 280 in 1953, which authorized states to assume jurisdictional control over criminal and civil law on reservations. Despite this assault on tribal sovereignty, this threat had the effect of injecting a political energy into reservation life not seen since the dawn of the reservation era.

Although Congress had informally practiced termination policy since the late 1940s, the House of Representatives, with the Senate concurring, formally promulgated this policy on August 1, 1953 through House Concurrent Resolution 108. In a complete one-eighty degree reversal from Collier’s solution to the “Indian problem,” conservatives put forth their own plan:

Whereas it is the policy of Congress, as rapidly as possible, to make the Indians within the territorial limits of the United States subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities as are applicable to other citizens of the United States, to end their status as wards of the United States, and to grant them all of the rights and prerogatives pertaining to American citizenship.

Turning the clock back once again, Congress sought to assimilate Indians into mainstream American society. Their solution essentially entailed terminating the federal government’s trust responsibility. To


14 House Concurrent Resolution 108.
promulgate their policy, President Truman and President Eisenhower based subsequent appointments of Commissioners of Indian Affairs on their ability to frugally cut and consolidate programs; thus efficiently “freeing” Indians from government control. Commissioners Dillon Myer (1950-1953) and Glenn Emmons (1953-1961), the prime movers for Congress’s policy, proved efficient at their jobs.\(^{15}\) In particular, Myer, best known for his work incarcerating, removing, and relocating Japanese-Americans as the director of the War Relocation Authority, had a desirable resume. Myer saw the liquidation of the Japanese concentration camps as analogous to his current task, eliminating the BIA. He planned to transfer BIA social services “either to the Indians themselves if the service involves the handling of their own economic affairs or other governmental agencies if it is the type of service normally rendered by government to citizens generally.”\(^{16}\)

As a consequence of this policy, Native Americans experienced a complete swing in the administrative philosophy from one of paternalism during the New Deal era to one that demanded their release from federal supervision. Despite differing ideological foundations, both policies espoused a form of autonomy for Native Americans. The Indian New Deal attempted to restore and maintain tribal communalism whereas termination policy found its roots in the individualist ethos of liberal economics. Congress, reasserting Allotment Era politics, viewed almost any governmental intervention in personal affairs as an affront to individual freedom. They believed they were doing the right thing by “liberating” the Indian.

Arthur V. Watkins, United States Senator from Utah, led the charge. He truly believed that future generations would judge the Termination Era as a critical turning point in American Indian history. He equated federal supervision of Native Americans to the slavery of African-Americans: “Following in the footsteps of the Emancipation Proclamation ninety-four years ago, I see the following words

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\(^{15}\) Robert M. Kvasnicka and Herman J. Viola (eds.), *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1824-1977* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), pp. 293-310.

\(^{16}\) Quote taken from Kelly, *Indians of the Southwest*, p. 128.
emblazoned in letters of fire above the heads of the Indians – ‘THESE PEOPLE SHALL BE FREE!’”\(^{17}\)

According to Watkins, Native Americans under the current system lacked incentives to work and provide for themselves. Promulgating the erroneous perception that American Indians lived solely off federal handouts, Watkins asserted that Native Americans would only learn responsibility if they had no choice but “to work and to take care of their own affairs.”\(^ {18}\) Apparently he failed to realize that most Native Americans since the beginning of the reservation era worked to make a meager living off of substandard land. Furthermore, when American Indians had natural resources, the BIA neglected to educate them in natural resource management and development until the Indian New Deal. It never occurred to Watkins, or any of his colleagues, to consider the situation from the Native American standpoint. They assumed with self-evident confidence that their fulfillment of the American dream was accessible to all, regardless of cultural, economic, and geographic circumstances.\(^ {19}\)

Tribes considered “self-sufficient” would have their lands taken out of federal trust, making them taxable, and would have federal support withdrawn, including basic services such as health care and education.\(^ {20}\) Critics of termination policy claimed that even the most economically advanced nations would have difficulty paying taxes on their land; thus creating further loss of the Native American land base. This prediction, unfortunately, came true. Reminiscent of the Allotment Era, terminated tribes’ lands, especially the Klamath, began to fall into the hands of Euro-American investors once again. As for withdrawal of services, this action made already vulnerable tribes even more susceptible to epidemics and led them further into economic depression. In 1969, as this policy was in its twilight,


Vine Deloria, Jr. described the termination program as “a combination of the old systematic hunt and the deprivation of services…. In the old days blankets infected with smallpox were given to the tribes in an effort to decimate them…. During the past twenty years federal medical services have been denied various tribes, resulting in tremendous increase in disease…. Yet this policy was not conceived as a policy of murder. Rather it was thought that it would provide that elusive ‘answer’ to the Indian problem. And when it proved to be no answer at all, Congress continued its policy, having found a new weapon in the ancient battle for Indian land.”

Many Native American tribes feared the consequences of termination. Not only would it represent an abrogation of treaty rights, withdrawal of federal services could devastate the cultural integrity and tribal sovereignty of even the most economically advanced nations. And tribal members ubiquitously feared the loss of tribal lands. Detailed plans for the termination process emerged out of a hostile Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee hearing in 1947. The Committee subpoenaed acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Zimmerman, a supporter of the Indian New Deal, to testify on ways that the BIA could save money. The Committee also ordered Zimmerman to assess the potential “readiness” of all tribes for release from federal supervision. Zimmerman outlined three categories that indicated different levels of self-sufficiency. The first level included groups ready for immediate withdrawal. The second level of sufficiency constituted those tribes that needed at least ten more years of BIA assistance. The third level consisted of tribes that indefinitely required the services of the BIA. He based his taxonomy of tribal “readiness” on each tribe’s degree of acculturation (assimilation), economic condition, and willingness to dispense with federal aid. A fourth criterion involved the ability of a state in which a tribe resided to take on some responsibility for essential tribal programs. Zimmerman’s proposal provided several safety nets for terminated tribes, including long-term tax

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exemptions on tribally held assets. But in the end, Congress ignored all of his recommendations except for the list of tribes ready for immediate termination: Klamath, Menominee, Flatheads, Iroquois of New York, Potawatomi of Kansas, several California groups, Osages, and, conditionally, the Turtle Mountain Chippewa.  

Thus was the national political climate in which the White Mountain Apache and the Apache trout found themselves in the early 1950s. Zimmerman’s list didn’t include the Apache, nor did Congress or the BIA subject them to an aggressive path towards termination. Nonetheless, the Congress and the BIA Central Office in Washington conducted several studies to assess the withdrawal status of the Tribe. In 1953 the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs submitted a questionnaire to Superintendent Crow concerning the potential release from federal supervision of the Apache. Crow’s conclusion suggested the Tribe was far from ready. Lack of business, legal, and political experience on top of a persisting “low level of educational achievement” would leave the Tribe vulnerable to economic failure and the liquidation of their assets, pushing them further towards destitution. He warned that due to the Apache’s relative geographical and cultural isolation from the non-Indian world “at best, assimilation will be a slow process.” He also added that tribal members demonstrated no interest in federal withdrawal of services. Most importantly, the Apache “fear the possibility of losing their land.” A 1956 report basically came to the same conclusion: “Complete withdrawal of Federal services for the White Mountain Apaches should be a gradual process. The present need has not changed in adult education, home demonstration, and business management.” Nevertheless, this report indicated improvements in the Tribe’s economic self-sufficiency. By then, the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise and another upstart Apache enterprise, the Apache Mercantile Company (tribal sawmill and hardware supplier), had

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23 John O. Crow to A.L. Miller, June 18, 1953, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 77, File #17155-52, Box #8.
several years under their belts and maintained some economic headway. Combined with the Tribe’s cattle industry and sources of revenue from timber, these enterprises created a foundation from which the Tribe could work towards federal withdrawal.

Fortunately for the White Mountain Apache, the time frame in which termination policy remained at the forefront of Congressional concerns proved short. The heyday of termination policy roughly lasted 15 years (1950s – early 1960s). Also, the Apache didn’t fit the profile of tribes that Congress sought to terminate. Regardless of a tribe’s self-sufficiency, Congress focused on tribes they could intimidate either due to their small size and limited resources or those seeking Indian Claims Commission (ICC) settlements. For instance, the Menominee of Wisconsin were due an ICC award of $8.5 million for federal mismanagement of their lands. All ICC settlements required Congressional approval for distribution. So Congress threatened to withhold the Menominee’s settlement unless they agreed to termination. Because of this ultimatum, the Menominee rejected their settlement but Congress forced withdrawal on them anyway. Congress lacked this sort of leverage on the White Mountain Apache. The Apache had filed an ICC suit for the mismanagement of tribal natural resources in 1950, but the Tribe wouldn’t receive an opinion until the late 1960s and an award until 1995, which became the foundation for a watershed restoration fund.\(^\text{25}\)

Despite the overall negative tone of the Termination Era, Native Americans achieved a modicum of political and economic progress in the 1950s. Noted American Indian historian Peter Iverson once pointed out that “[i]n overdramatizing the difficulties of the time, we may not give sufficient credit to the enduring nature of Indians in this country. By the end of the 1950s, tribal resources were more

\(^{25}\) The White Mountain Apache’s case actually outlived the ICC and was transferred to the U.S. Claims Court in the late 1970s. The White Mountain Apache contested several court rulings and rejected several award offers as inadequate. They stubbornly challenged the court’s findings until they received 20 million dollars in 1995, of which 20% went towards setting up a watershed restoration program. See *White Mountain Apache Tribe of Arizona v. The United States*, Docket No. 22-H, 11 Cl. Ct. 614, February 6, 1987.
studied and better understood; tribal council leadership was often more effective.”26 This characterization indeed fits the White Mountain Apache experience. No doubt the Tribe was troubled by the possibility of termination, but the development of the WMRE illustrated their ability to persevere and adapt during difficult times.

**Building towards a Recreation Development Program**

During most of the 1940s the BIA and the Apache worked little towards developing the recreational potential of Fort Apache, but by the late 1940s, a few key personnel changes and the implementation of several new land management projects helped set the stage for a more comprehensive recreational program. This time frame saw the initiation of a prescribed burn program, the intensification of the juniper eradication project, and the implementation of a beaver management plan. All of these projects had both positive and negative consequences for the Apache. On the one hand, these programs exposed the White Mountain Apache once again to new conservation techniques and provided educational opportunities. In some cases, they even temporarily improved the condition of the Fort Apache landscape and generated modest amounts of income for the Tribe. On the other hand, these programs, especially juniper eradication and prescribed burns, increased the exploitation of Apache resources by non-Indian interests. Both of these programs, while pitched to the Tribal Council as means to improve the forests and range of the reservation, in practice increased run-off to the rapidly developing Salt River Valley communities below the reservation watershed. Furthermore, the science behind the prescribed burn and juniper eradication programs was far from airtight. De facto, Fort Apache became an experimental testing ground for newly developed, untested conservation and restoration techniques. Like the conservation work associated with the CCC-ID, these new BIA programs had two faces – one

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presented to the Tribe and one presented to those looking for opportunities to exploit the bounties of the reservation at the expense of the Apache. Along with these projects, two people in particular would have lasting impacts on management of natural resources on the reservation: Harold Weaver, a BIA forester, and Lydo Harvey, a White Mountain Apache game warden.

**Harold Weaver** – As the newly appointed Phoenix Area Forester in 1948, Weaver brought with him from the ponderosa pine ecosystem of the Pacific Northwest his controversial prescribed burn experiments and a demonstrated interest in recreational development, extensively critiquing all aspects of forest and range management on Fort Apache.²⁷ Weaver, who was on the cutting edge of the ecological science, employed a more ecosystem level approach to viewing the landscape. Weaver also bucked the system, challenging the efficacy of federal fire management and predator control policies. Protecting their reputation from the controversial nature of controlled burn research, the BIA required Weaver to use a disclaimer on all his published articles. Although he only held the Area Forester post for just over two years, his research had lasting implications for the Fort Apache landscape. His research was ultimately a mixed blessing, both improving the management of the forest, but also justifying increased exploitation of Apache water resources. Besides as a tool to reduce fire hazards, Weaver justified his prescribed burn program to watershed experts as a technique for increasing water yield.²⁸


²⁸ For the goals and rationale of the program see George W. Barr, ed., *Arizona Watershed Program* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona, 1956). The idea was that fire would reduce the litter layer in the forest, thus reducing the water retention capability of the soil. Also, prescribed burns would eliminate much undergrowth, thus reducing
In Weaver’s defense, he criticized past management of Indian forests and suggested sweeping restoration efforts through forest thinning and prescribed burns:

Can anybody deny that we have profoundly changed the old Indian country, even the reservations he now occupies? The formerly grassy, park-like ponderosa pine stands, to cite only one instance, are now largely grown up over extensive areas to dense understories of reproduction. Such has apparently been brought about by overgrazing in earlier days and, as a necessary prerequisite to sustained yield forestry practice, by attempted total exclusion of fire, which once swept these forests periodically, at fairly frequent intervals. Many silviculturalists view those crowded young stands with satisfaction. The writer wonders, however, if we can continue to protect them from fire and if, in many cases, they aren’t too crowded for optimum growth.29

His remedy for this situation, of course, was to restore fire as a legitimate component of forest and range management. Weaver also immediately challenged the efficacy of the predator control program on Fort Apache. Under Clifford Presnall’s guidance, who now was a field agent in the FWS’s Predator and Rodent Control branch, the BIA implemented the most recent manifestation of predator control policy in the early 1940s.30

Predator control, mostly on behalf of Indian and non-Indian ranchers, had been part of wildlife management policy on the reservation since the 1910s. Presnall’s plan proved more systematic and destructive than previous efforts; thus Weaver felt that it was excessive. Presnall had a reputation for violating FWS policies that restricted the extent of predator control. Clarence Cottam, a critic of predator control policies within the FWS, once complained about, “instances where there were flagrant violations of Service [FWS] policy by field personnel of the Service and I believe in every case [Clifford] Presnall and [Dorr] Green were not only sympathetic with these violations but gave support

the amount of water used by the rapid growth and respiration rates of seedlings, saplings, and other understory plants.

to the field men who violated the regulations.”31 Weaver also condemned the once wanton policies of predator extermination promulgated by the FWS (before reorganization in 1940, the Bureau of Biological Survey) in the interwar years. The FWS had tamed this policy in recent years, but the old-guard attitude remained strong, in particular with Presnall.

Moved by a gut feeling about the situation, Weaver felt obligated to challenge what he saw as excessive predator control on Fort Apache. Although he approved of control when “excessive losses” to domestic livestock occurred, he vehemently disagreed with “campaigns of extermination.” Partly drawing from Aldo Leopold’s ecological worldview, Weaver viewed with “extreme suspicion any attempt to improve on nature’s methods in management of our wild lands.” He believed that too much undocumented “shooting, trapping, and poisoning,” had taken place on Fort Apache in recent history, perhaps resulting in unnecessary and ecologically damaging depletion of wildlife. To bring the problem under control, Weaver argued that the predator control program should justify additional efforts through empirical reports.32 Fortunately, L.D. Arnold, the Chief of the Branch of Forest and Range Management, took Weaver’s recommendation seriously. In subsequent years, the BIA tightened the regulation of the predator control program on Fort Apache, an action that would prove valuable to the Tribe’s establishment of a recreational enterprise.33

Weaver also encouraged recreational development on Fort Apache. In a 1951 report, Weaver argued that the mountainous portions of the Fort Apache and San Carlos Reservations had exceptional possibilities for development. Like Collier and Marshall before him, the scenery of the region charmed him: “The eastern portions of these reservations include the White Mountains, a region of magnificent

31 Clarence Cottam to Starker Leopold, February 8, 1956, quote taken from Dunlap, Saving America’s Wildlife, p. 118.
32 Harold Weaver to Walter V. Woehlke, “Memorandum: Sections of White Mountain Tribal Council Resolution No. 51-4 pertaining to control of juniper and elimination of predatory animals,” February 20, 1951, RG 75, NA FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #35419-43, Box #45.
forests, clear, running streams and high mountain meadows. Wild turkeys abound in the pine woods, elk herds are increasing and moderately good fishing may be had in the streams.”34 Weaver’s optimism about recreational development was tempered by his general skepticism about Native American abilities to widely accept the principles of natural resource conservation. Like his predecessors, he adopted a paternalistic view towards Indian affairs but was nonetheless sympathetic to their needs for economic development. He believed Native American participation in wildlife management was important, “[a]fter all he owns the reservations.” But he also strongly believed that “our efforts should be channeled towards teaching him conservation [my emphasis].” Only when Native Americans had a firm grasp of Euro-American management techniques, could the BIA “turn over to him intact the land, forests, range and wildlife.” Weaver disapproved of integrating the “accustomed manner” in which Native Americans hunt and fish because “as a result wildlife suffers.”35 Weaver’s skepticism was partly based on reality but also partly based on misconceptions, not unlike his predecessors’ assessments of Native American land management capabilities.

Weaver asserted, and rightly so, that most reservations remained too small to accommodate both large populations of game and the growing populations of Indians. Since Native Americans lacked access to their historically large hunting territories and were generally restricted to reservation wildlife for subsistence, resuming traditional hunting practices would quickly deplete wildlife populations on smaller reservations. However, he may have taken his hypothesis too far when he claimed, “Even the larger reservations are too small to permit hunting by the Indian in his accustomed manner, as he did before [the] coming of the white man…. The writer has never been elsewhere, for instance, a region comparable in area to the Navaho that is so devoid of wildlife.”36 Weaver offered no evidence to support

34 Weaver, “Problems Involved in Wildlife Management,” pp. 3-4.
35 Ibid., p. 4.
36 Ibid., p. 5.
this last assertion.\textsuperscript{37} He simply correlated the presence of Native Americans with the depletion of wildlife. Again, largely repeating Fred Moffat’s attitudes towards Indians and recreation, Weaver boiled traditional Apache wildlife management practices down to primitive customs: “Towards recreation, so called, he is most apt to take the extremely practical viewpoint. He hunts and fishes for subsistence, not primarily for recreation, though there can be little doubt that he enjoys such activity. Relative scarcity and abundance of certain animals ...can be attributed to Tribal taboos and superstitions.”\textsuperscript{38} Not much had changed in the ten years since Moffat offered his assessment of traditional Apache land management practices.

Nevertheless, Weaver optimistically stressed the potential for educating the Indian; the problem remained a matter of convincing Native Americans that the white man’s way was the proper way to manage natural resources. In implementing such an educational program, BIA personnel must understand that a strong aura of distrust towards Euro-American ideals existed among Native Americans due to the faulty logic and the unjust nature of past BIA policies. Confidently convinced that current policies and science were logically sound and more just, Weaver offered the following advice, “Indian Service efforts towards improving Indian wildlife management and recreation, particularly hunting and fishing, are directed largely towards education and towards attempts to persuade the Indian to adopt and enforce more restrictive game codes. In such attempt [sic] the Service is encouraging some success, but many disappointments. The Indian has at least the average I.Q., and when he can be convinced that game conservation is in his own interest, it is most likely that he will cooperate. It should be

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\textsuperscript{37} According to Richard White, the depletion of wildlife on the Navajo reservation was related to a complex set of factors that essentially boil down to the disruption of their subsistence system. Like the White Mountain Apache, the Navajo had a flexible subsistence system that depended on farming, hunting, gathering, livestock (sheep), and raiding. Once the reservation era began, the Navajo lost their ability to raid, which diminished a source of food and supplies. This in turn forced them to rely more on sheep herding, but with less grazing territory than during pre-reservation times. Several things happened as a result of this. The sheep out-competed wild ungulates for grass. Hunting on the reservation also increased because of frequent droughts that disrupted farming. Richard White, \textit{The Roots of Dependency} (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), pp. 245-246.
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\textsuperscript{38} Weaver, “Problems Involved in Wildlife Management,” pp. 5-6.
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remembered, however, that many of them were ‘pushed around’ in the early days, that they haven’t forgotten it and that they view any attempt to modify their rights to hunt and fish with extreme suspicion.”

According to a 1948 Weaver memorandum, the BIA’s educational system had failed the Indian in this respect. Because Indian schools, especially in the primary grades, didn’t teach the “principles of conservation,” Indian children grew up not caring about this valuable way of life. Like the greater American public, the American Indians were becoming alienated from the environment in which they subsisted. People, and especially Native Americans dependent on government services, were no longer “fully cognizant of the fact that real wealth originates from food crops, forage, timber and wildlife growing on the surface of the earth.” Weaver surmised that if the BIA had put more effort towards conservation education among Native Americans, then they would have been more willing to cooperate with forest and range conservation measures. Moreover, Weaver proffered that “the Indian Service Forestry Division might be manned largely by Indians having degrees in forestry from various colleges and universities. Instead they can probably be counted on the finger of one hand.” He concluded his condemnation of the Indian education system by chastising American Indians for taking “little interest in such matters,” even though many tribes derive a “livelihood… from forests and ranges.”

What was obvious to Weaver, however, was also obvious to most Native Americans. Weaver had underestimated the extent that past BIA policies had undermined the functional capacity of traditional social systems.

In an attempt to promote empathy for the Indian situation among his peers, Weaver finished his 1951 report on recreational development on a condescending note, calling for more toleration for the reluctant attitude of Indians to adopt modern conservation techniques: “Remember that he is a natural hunter who

39 Ibid., p. 7.
only a few decades ago had to make his living largely by such practice. He now strews the landscape with tin cans and bottles, instead of with deer and fish bones. Before condemning him for such, look at the examples set by some of his white brothers. After all, tidiness is a habit that must be learned. If asked to he can probably present an interesting ‘bill of particulars’ against the white man.” The statement is in some ways progress from previous BIA views on the Apache, but at the same time remains ignorant of and unwilling to explore past and even contemporary Native American knowledge of the land. Knowledge production remained a one way street, diffusing from the pool of federal land management experts that brought with them universalist, non-local models of how nature works. With the establishment of the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise, this rigid knowledge production structure would begin to unravel.

Unlike his attitude towards most Native American groups, however, Weaver remained cautiously enthusiastic about the White Mountain Apache’s ability to develop their resources. For him, the reason the Apache stood out was that since tribal organization in 1938, they had already established a tribal game code for their own people, cooperated with the FWS and AFGC on fishery management, insisted that timber companies leave scenic strips along roads and streams, and had “embarked on a conservative, sustained yield beaver cropping plan.” In short, he viewed the White Mountain Apache as a relatively progressive tribe.\footnote{Ibid. p. 4.} Despite Weaver’s prejudices, his feelings about the potential for Native Americans to grasp Western science and technology represented an improvement over the general pessimism that existed within CCC-ID educational programs. To that effect, Weaver was willing to give his full support to the development of the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise: “A well-planned and orderly-developed recreational program should be of considerable importance to tribal income, as well as afford employment and enterprise opportunities to individual tribal members. Every encouragement

\footnote{Weaver, “Problems Involved in Wildlife Management,” p. 7.}\footnote{Weaver, “Problems Involved in Wildlife Management,” p. 7.}
and assistance consistent with proper management and undiminished future yield should be offered to
the Indians in their endeavor.”

Toward that end, in 1948 the BIA, FWS, and the Tribe provided Lydo Harvey, the first full-time game warden for the WMRE, an in-depth education in Euro-American land management techniques.

**Lydo Harvey** – Twenty-three and freshly back from his war-time service in the Marines in 1948, Lydo Harvey became the first White Mountain Apache to receive comprehensive education in Western-style conservation and ecological principles. From the WMRE’s inception in 1952, his newly found expertise contributed to its success. Harvey, a grandson of Chief Alchesay who would work for the WMRE until his death in 1977, helped save the Apache trout from extinction. His education in conservation and restoration techniques came by way of a short-lived beaver management project that the FWS suggested as a lucrative way of increasing tribal revenues. The project amounted to another federal paternalistic endeavor born from experts in the FWS, but nonetheless, it provided Harvey with invaluable experience and knowledge that he combined with his local knowledge of the reservation gained during his teenage years while helping his family manage cattle.

Before his beaver management training course, Harvey worked with Bill Schroeder, a range supervisor for the BIA, and Clarence Aldous, a FWS biologist and the designer of the beaver management plan, on a survey of beaver colonies within the reservation. Aldous praised Harvey for his work on the survey: “I believe the Indian boy is going to be able to handle the work in good shape as he has been extremely interested in the work and willing to undertake any work that was assigned to

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43 Harold Weaver (for L.D. Arnold) to Ralph M. Gelvin, March 12, 1953, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #3940-43, Box #45.
him." Harvey took his training course at the local Veterans Training School in 1949. The course entailed both a field and classroom component, involving some of the most rigorous education on conservation techniques that any Apache had ever received, far more than any CCC-ID program. Harvey learned from Edward Royal Warren’s, *The Beaver* (1927), Ira Gabrielson’s *Wildlife Conservation* (1941), Ernest Thompson Seton’s *Lives of Game Animals* (1929), and even the seminal text on game management of the time, Aldo Leopold’s *Game Management* (1933). The course covered basic ecological principles in population dynamics: predator prey relationships, disease, food, habitat requirements, and interspecific and intraspecific competition. Conservation principles discussed included protection of breeding stocks, stocking, range protection, estimating populations, and sustained yield harvesting. More specifically on beaver, Harvey learned about the species’ life history, behavior, effects on water resources, habitat requirements, predation, stocking, harvesting, care of pelts, and sale of pelts. His fieldwork for the course involved examining beaver habitat to estimate the carrying capacity of local populations, estimating population size, trapping practice, skinning and preparation of pelts, and pelt grading.

After completing the training course in the summer of 1949, Harvey went to work on the beaver management program. This program had two basic purposes. First, the project entailed restoring beaver populations to desirable locations on the reservation so the Tribe could make money off of pelts. Second, the project removed nuisance populations that damaged Apache farms. Clarence Aldous also claimed that the Apache would derive a number of fringe benefits from the program. Most notable for our purposes, he predicted that beaver dams would conserve reservation water and create natural ponds for trout, essentially producing more opportunities for recreational fishing: “The building of dams by

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45 Clarence Aldous to Director, FWS, “Memorandum: Beaver Survey Fort Apache Reservation,” November 22, 1948, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #4561, Box #45.
46 N.W. Hosley to R.D. Holtz, April 12, 1948, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #4561, Box #45.
47 “Outline for Veteran’s course in Beaver Management,” RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #4561, Box #45.
beaver on most of the streams on the reservation is an asset to fishing values. Dams impound water thus creating pools along the streams where fish such as trout can find cool or cold water in the bottom of such pools in the hottest of summer days. Flood areas encourage the growth of aquatic plants which in turn support aquatic insects upon which fish depend for a great deal of their food… Here on this reservation, then, beaver are a valuable asset to the fisheries resources.”

The BIA pushed Aldous’s plan within the tribal government. Desperate for revenue, the Tribal Council, under the leadership of Lester Oliver, accepted the plan in February of 1949.

After Harvey’s training, the Tribe created the paid position of Wildlife Aide for him. In general his duties covered working with the FWS on beaver management and fish culture at Williams Creek Hatchery. He began “beaver transplanting activities” in September of 1949. He made preparations at Pistol Creek, Bull Creek, and Diamond Creek for releasing beaver by constructing small water impoundments and temporary dens to acclimate beaver before release. Economically, his three years of work yielded decent returns relative to the amount of effort employed. He trapped approximately 250 beaver a year, receiving $65 a piece on the market. However, the knowledge he acquired from this experience is hard to estimate in monetary value. His ecological expertise later helped build a multi-million dollar a year enterprise, making his knowledge an invaluable asset.

In 1949, when Harvey took his post as Wildlife Aide, the potential for developing a recreational enterprise seemed a long shot. Both the Apache and BIA officials, for different reasons, were less than optimistic about recreational development on Fort Apache. Harold Weaver, despite lending
“enthusiastic” support for the endeavor, pessimistically offered that the available recreational infrastructure remained “inadequate or at least ‘spotty.’” He attributed this situation to “entirely inadequate funds and to lack of personnel.” He held little hope for improvement, “unless desirable changes happen to attract favorable attention of local whites of political influence.” Most importantly, Weaver believed that successful recreational development required the Apache to demonstrate initiative.\(^51\) This prediction proved partly right and partly wrong. Local Euro-American political clout wasn’t the catalyst for recreational development; however, Apache initiative indeed played a strong role in the establishment of the WMRE. Against seemingly low odds, the friendship between a White Mountain Apache, Nelson Lupe, and a BIA forester, Silas Davis, provided the political and technical will to move a recreational development program forward.

**The Birth of an Eco-cultural Enterprise**

The fate of the Apache trout lay in the hands of the White Mountain Apache. Ironically, a measure of Western economic development tempered with Apache wisdom would be the savior of White Mountain Apache culture and the Apache trout. In general, the Tribal Council hesitated to invite non-Indians on to the reservation, but the newly elected tribal chairman in 1950, Nelson Lupe, eventually convinced the Tribe that it was in their best interest to develop tribal resources. If they failed to do so, somebody else would, and not necessarily with the best interests of the Apache people in mind.

Lupe wasn’t new to Tribal politics. He had served on the Tribal Council prior to World War II. According to Lupe, when he returned to the reservation after the war, he had no plans to run for reelection because of his frustration with the anti-progressive nature of tribal politics. However, his wife convinced him otherwise. She believed that “one of these days the people are going to thank you” for

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\(^51\) Weaver, “Problems Involved in Wildlife Management,” pp. 7-8.
advancing progressive ideas in the tribal government. When he was reelected to the Tribal Council, the council members selected him to be Chairman. Before 1958, the Council chose the Chairman from the pool of elected members. Tribal Chairman only served two-year terms on a part-time basis. Lupe, knowing the extent of work required to improve the economic and ecological condition of the reservation, convinced the Council to turn the position into a full-time job.

Even though the BIA and FWS promoted the recreational potential of the reservation during the Indian New Deal, they did little towards developing recreational resources after the termination of the CCC-ID. In 1950 Nelson Lupe picked up where the BIA had dropped the ball, initiating an earnest push to promote the business. He had acquired some business acumen while working off-reservation during World War II. He worked in Nevada on the construction of an air base and later worked at the Phelps Dodge Copper Company smelter plant in Morenci, Arizona. After his return to the reservation, these experiences indirectly inspired the recreational enterprise: “The manpower shortage was awful; we worked 16 hours a day, six days a week. And then on Sunday, golly, you wanted to get out of that dreary place.”

Lupe and his family had an old pickup truck which they used to escape from Morenci. They drove up into the mountains along the Coronado Trail. The pastoral beauty of the mountains impressed the Lupe family:

When you get on top there, you get beautiful springs, you know, and oak trees and beautiful shade. The kids loved that place. We did that every weekend. Four years I worked there. And I kind of thought about this place [Fort Apache]. I didn’t think about it as outdoor recreation at the time. I just wanted to go to a place where there was a stream, where I could lay down just in the shade somewhere and get a little snack and a picnic and take the kids out there.

Lupe’s original vision involved converting Fort Apache into a haven for working-class non-Indians. He realized that Arizona had very few upland vacation areas and that the Fort Apache Indian Reservation encompassed a great deal of what little there was in Arizona. He believed establishing a recreational

53 Ibid., p. 37.
54 Ibid.
enterprise would prove an excellent economic opportunity for the Tribe, providing sorely needed wage labor.

Lupe wasn’t the sole visionary behind the new venture. He worked with Silas Davis to revive the recreation idea on the reservation. They dreamed big. Lupe and Davis knew they were sitting on a potential gold mine. Perhaps more importantly, their friendship marked a new level of exchange that went beyond paternalism or the top-down model of knowledge production. Their relationship was built on a more even playing field: Lupe provided the political will and ability to convince a reticent Tribal Council of the worthiness of recreational enterprise and Davis shared his knowledge of the Fort Apache landscape and conservation techniques.

Davis enjoyed a great reputation within the BIA. Harold Weaver considered him “to be the best fire suppression man in the Indian Service.” He also received a meritorious honor award from the BIA for his development of a fire protractor for employment in fire suppression work (Fig. 10). A native of Texas, he began his professional career as a forester for the BIA in 1926, receiving an appointment at the Klamath Agency. He transferred to Fort Apache in 1935, where he organized the fire control program and led fire suppression training courses for the BIA Fire Schools. He worked in this position until 1944, when the BIA transferred him to the Colville Reservation to improve their fire suppression crew. Not long after Weaver assumed his post as Phoenix Area Forester, he requested for Davis’s return to Fort Apache. In 1948, the fire hazard condition of the reservation forest had reached a critical condition. According to Weaver, “the fire hazard has increased tremendously since early days due to profound ecological changes resulting from the activities of whitemen. Where the early rangers used to suppress fires with a few hand tools, and small crews of men, it now requires hundreds of men and

heavy fire trail building equipment to stop fires sweeping through dense reproduction and pole stands.”

Weaver alerted Washington of the fire danger on Fort Apache, proposing that part of the remedy included Davis’s services. Weaver got his wish, and in 1948 Davis returned to Fort Apache to work with Harry Kallander (who replaced Fred Moffat as Forest Supervisor in 1949) on Weaver’s experimental prescribed burn program.

Two decades of forestry work allowed Davis to build an intimate relationship with the White Mountain landscape. He also earned a solid reputation with the Apache through his days of training fire guards and fire fighters during the Indian New Deal. Truly enjoying his work with the Apache, Davis relished the idea of devoting his services full-time to the Tribe’s recreation program. For Davis, unlike many of his colleagues, helping the Apache amounted to much more than a job. Harry Kallander, his supervisor at the time, projected his own pessimism about working with the Apache onto Davis’s new charge, but admitted, “Si has a new burden of handling the tribal game wardens which he likes tho [sic].”

In the early stages of developing the recreational program, Davis performed double duty, as he remained obligated to manage fire control activities on the reservation. Nonetheless, he revealed his passion for developing the WMRE when he selflessly labored extra hours to help Lupe. As a show of appreciation for his “long record of service” to the Apache people, the Tribal council “granted a lifetime free privilege of hunting and fishing on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.”

Davis provided many suggestions to Lupe concerning the location of good campgrounds and the places that would draw the largest number of fishers. He also moved Lupe to remember his days of pastoral refuge along the Coronado Trail from a week’s hard work at the smelter plant. According to Lupe, in the 1940s Davis even encouraged some fishers to visit the reservation to drum up revenue.

57 Weaver to Zeh, June 1, 1948.
58 Harry Kallander to Harold Weaver, July 28, 1952, FHS, Harold Weaver Papers, Folder #8.
Fig. 10 – Silas Davis working on his fire protractor (Courtesy of National Archives).
As a result, the Tribe sold a few more permits than usual, but not enough to matter. Lupe reminisced that “most people who came here fished for free. It was just a summer sport for them, and they didn’t pay anything to the tribe. It was Sy [sic] Davis who kind of pictured the whole thing to me. We’d talk about the streams. We’d drive out, and he’d say, ‘Wouldn’t it be wonderful, Nelson, to have a campground in here? We could sell fishing licenses and stock the stream with fish, so fishermen can come back here and give us some money in the summertime.’ And right then and there, my mind went back to Morenci. That was the thing I was thinking about there.”

From the Apache standpoint, establishing the WMRE involved walking a political tightrope. According to Lupe, the “oldtimers” were resistant to the idea. One of the biggest issues revolved around distrust of Euro-Americans: “All the subchiefs were opposed. All the medicine men… objected to it. They said, ‘We been giving the white people a free hand and we been losing our land.’ They said, ‘Our land used to go beyond Springerville, way back behind that white mountain [sic], and the other way the boundary went way back toward Tonto, Camp Verde, Flagstaff, all over that place.’” The “oldtimers” remembered how they ended up on the reservation. They feared that a major influx of white people would repeat the process of disenfranchisement from their homeland. In essence, they believed Euro-Americans would see the value of reservation land and want it for themselves.

Lupe argued that by allowing non-Indians onto the reservation, the Tribe could begin to economically compensate itself for past losses. He also asserted, “As long as we develop our land, from corner to corner, we’ll have something to hold and something to be proud of and something that we can claim as our own and something that we have done ourselves in developing the resources.” Through selling fishing and hunting permits, building hotels and gas stations, and creating lake resorts, the Tribe could assume control of their own economic future. They wouldn’t have to rely exclusively on the

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61 Ibid.
whims of the BIA and outside business interests. Lupe’s economic argument implied that for the Apache to maintain their sovereignty and restore their cultural identity, they had to develop an independent economic base. Only from this standpoint would the tribal government acquire any political sway in their own affairs. Lupe’s proposal represented a bold step towards breaking the bonds of dependency and paternalism.

The Tribal Council, influential medicine men and elders, and Apache ranchers balked at the proposal. Lupe labored for two years to convince these factions, especially the ranchers, that the WMRE was a sound idea. The ranchers feared that white tourists would interfere with the reservation’s cattle industry, which aside from revenue from timber leases, remained the single most lucrative enterprise on the reservation. Lupe sympathized with their claim, not denying that they might have to sacrifice some rangeland to support the recreational enterprise. At the same time, he presented the alternative. He explained that the reservation population was growing, approximately from 3,000 in the 1930s to near 4,000 in the 1950s. He predicted that revenue generated from the cattle industry couldn’t accommodate all these new tribal members. In essence, an increasingly smaller proportion of the reservation population would derive income from raising cattle. What would this growing population of Apaches do to support themselves? Lupe reasoned, “Cattle raise us money, all right. But we got to think about the members of the tribe that don’t have cattle. The day might come when they going to tell you they might tax you for the income from your cattle. The cattle belong to you. The grass the cattle eat belongs to you. But the grass belongs to them, too. They might tell you they are going to tax you for the grass so they can get some money from the cattle you have.” The Apache ranchers eventually succumbed to this logic. The Tribe needed to diversify their economic base so as to not overburden the cattle industry. Apache ranchers figured they had far more to lose through taxes than the loss of a few acres of land.

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62 Ibid.
The First Year

After considering the proposal for two years, in 1952 the Tribal Council finally gave Lupe and Davis the go ahead to start working with tribal members to improve the existing recreational facilities and begin building new ones on the reservation. Initially, the Tribe had very limited funds to invest in the program. Despite this, Davis and five Apache exhibited resourcefulness, accomplishing an amazing amount of work in the first year. Davis’s crew included three game wardens, a carpenter, and a “helper.” The game wardens, Lydo Harvey, Dewey Lupe, and Jones Adley, doubled as law enforcement officers and game managers. On top of this, they assisted Davis with maintenance and construction duties.

On the law enforcement front, in the first year Harvey and the other game wardens patrolled 27,083 miles by car and another 700 miles by horse. They checked and interviewed 3,383 fishers, campers, and hunters. They also issued 71 warnings for violations and made 53 arrests, which resulted in 43 convictions in Tribal Court, 2 convictions in State Court, and the collection of $821 in fines.63 The game wardens had very few resources from which to protect the entire 2,600 square mile reservation. For example, Harvey’s equipment consisted of a horse and saddle, a 1942 Ford coupe, a skinny bedroll “and lots of determination to back up the shiny new badge he wore.”64 Harvey, along with Dewey Lupe and Jones Adley, monitored the fish and game on the entire reservation, requiring many lonely days and nights patrolling the often roadless regions of the reservation.

While patrolling, they occasionally encountered belligerent non-Indians who resented having to abide by tribal game laws. On one occasion, Lydo Harvey confronted a businessman of high standing and much political clout from a local non-Indian town about illegal hunting practices. As a consequence, the businessman threatened to harm Harvey if he didn’t let him hunt on the reservation as he saw fit. The

64 Sparks, “Lydo Harvey.”
perpetrator thought because of his high status, he was immune to the laws on Fort Apache. Harvey called his bluff, stood his ground, and turned him away. James Sparks, his boss for two decades, proudly described Harvey as a man “that never let threats of bodily harm or political reprisal sway him from his duty.” Besides enforcing game laws, the game wardens also spent much of their time looking for lost tourists, a task that frequently involved multiple days of camping, horseback riding, and walking. In Harvey’s case in particular, Sparks claimed that “many persons owe their lives to his tracking skills and determination.”65

On the recreational and land management front, Davis and his crew focused on attracting the angler crowd, since trout fishing was the biggest potential draw at the time. To facilitate the visiting fisher’s experience, Davis and his crew constructed access roads and trails and built campgrounds near prime fishing spots. Tribal funds also went towards erecting hundreds of directional and informational signs, orienting the less wilderness savvy. They helped distribute non-native trout and catfish from Williams Creek Fish Hatchery to reservation streams and conducted an extensive survey of game animals. They also developed a fish tank that the FWS “thought very adequate.” FWS personnel at the hatchery were so impressed that they asked Davis’s crew to build one for them. Much of their work in the first year, however, involved developing recreational infrastructure. They cleaned up 62 campsites, cleared one lake area of debris and trash, bulldozed 11 garbage pits, planted 18 stock tanks, dug and filled 2 fish ponds, constructed and placed 115 camp tables, and installed 15 camp toilets.66

On top of restocking reservation streams with fish, the rudiments of White Mountain Apache-directed ecological restoration projects appeared during the WMRE’s first year of operation. A good deal of experimental transplantations involving plants and animals occurred. To improve wildlife habitat, the WMRE imported huckleberries from the state of Washington, planting them at six different

65 Ibid.
66 Davis to Crow, “Memorandum: Accomplishments.”
sites. Davis reported, “We reviewed some 300 plants and if they survive and produce fruit we expect to plant some 50,000 in the future. Black Cap raspberries should do well in some localities and we plan to try a few plants this coming season.” They also released nine mink originally from New York on Cibecue, Big Diamond, and Bonito Creeks. The Tribal Council even established a game preserve to serve as a refuge for breeding populations of game animals.67

The most important restoration work initiated at this time involved the Apache trout. Despite recurring interest from the Tribal Council since the late 1930s to close Apache trout streams on Mount Baldy to fishing, the FWS and BIA took no action. In 1952 R.D. Holtz, formerly the Fort Apache Agency Superintendent and currently the Phoenix Area Forester (Weaver’s replacement), admitted, “The matter of closing the headwaters of some of the high streams… was discussed sometime ago,” but a representative from the FWS claimed that native trout “were abundant” and believed that it was unnecessary “to close these streams to fishing.”68 The Apache trout remained a low priority for the FWS. Even though the FWS had tentatively considered raising native trout at Williams Creek Hatchery for restocking in 1941, they failed to follow through with this proposal. Also, Clarence Aldous’s beaver management program in the late 1940s and early 1950s only considered the effects that beaver dams would have on non-native trout, not the Apache trout: “Occasionally very high dams obstruct the upstream movement of trout, but in the reservation where stocking of legal sized fish are planted each year on most of the streams, high dam obstructions are not too serious for fish planting can be made above such dams as well as below them.”69 Using Aldous’s logic, beaver dams could reproductively isolate native trout populations, further jeopardizing their existence. No evidence exists to suggest that this program had an adverse effect on the Apache trout, but the fact that Aldous didn’t consider the

69 Clarence M. Aldous, “Beaver Survey and Management Plan.”
potential consequences of his project to Apache trout lends credence to the notion that the FWS treated the conservation of this species with low priority. As a result of this neglect, Apache trout populations continued to decline. Fortunately, White Mountain Apache interest in this species persisted. Because the Apache trout were “in danger of extinction,” the Tribal Council ordered the closure of six streams to fishing and camping in the headwaters of Mount Baldy that contained pure populations. Davis and his crew even erected a fish screen on one of the streams to prevent the migration of non-native trout into pure populations of the native trout.70

The Tribal Council officially established the WMRE by tribal resolution in 1954.71 Although most of the early work had little cultural significance to the tribe, the WMRE’s projects did have economic, educational, and political significance. The WMRE provided an opportunity for a whole generation of Apache people to gain knowledge in Western management techniques – more so than during the Indian New Deal. This time around the Tribe received obvious direct economic and technical benefits from the venture. By 1958, the first profitable year, the enterprise employed twelve people and generated $119,000. By 1964, the enterprise boasted sixty permanent employees and raked in $1,200,000. And these numbers would only increase through time. As the WMRE expanded, so too did its responsibilities for the construction of roads and the management of hotels, stores, and gas stations. However, its primary mission remained the protection and conservation of “wildlife, recreational, and natural resources of the White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation for the members of the Tribe and the general public.” The WMRE also furnished the Tribal Council with fish and wildlife population estimates so they could establish seasons and bag limits. And perhaps most importantly, the enterprise

70 Special Meeting, White Mountain Apache Tribe, March 24, 1952; Resolution of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, No. 52-9, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 54, File #10197-46, Box #6.
71 Resolution of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, No. 53-50, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 54, File #9990-49, Box #6.
served as a “liaison… with State and Federal Agencies concerned with… wildlife and recreational resources.”

With the growth of the WMRE came resource battles with Euro-Americans. At the same time, the WMRE provided the Tribe with political and economic leverage that they had never experienced before. As revenues increased, the Tribe reinvested in the recreational infrastructure of the reservation and, more significantly, the restoration of their homeland. Until 1957 the enterprise derived most of its revenue from fishing permits and a few hunting permits. The WMRE’s revenue source greatly increased with the construction of Hon-Dah, the first tribally owned recreational complex, which included a motel, gas station, and tackle store. Strategically positioned at the northwestern reservation entrance, these facilities functioned to capture the growing number of tourists entering Fort Apache. Income generated by Hon-Dah fed back into the development of the enterprise, allowing the construction of more recreational facilities. Another big boost to the WMRE’s income was the construction of Smith Park Reservoir, later renamed Hawley Lake in honor of Albert M. Hawley, the reservation superintendent of Gros Ventre heritage that helped the Tribe overcome legal hurdles involving the construction of the reservoir. The construction of Smith Park Reservoir represented the Tribe’s first significant sovereign struggle to resist non-Indian influence over reservation resources (Fig. 11).

Resistance: The Battle over Hawley Lake

The Smith Park Reservoir (Hawley Lake) controversy held major political implications for the White Mountain Apache. This water resource controversy represented the Tribe’s largest show of resistance to date against outsider attempts to control their natural resources. For the first time, the Tribe led the way to protect their resources, while the BIA remained in the background, mainly in an advisory

Fig. 11 – Hawley Lake and Smith Park Dam (Photos taken by author).
role. The political and economic leverage emerging with the establishment of the WMRE meant the Tribe could take on institutions that had historically exploited the Tribe’s resources with little resistance and consequence.

The battle over Smith Park Reservoir began in 1954, when the Tribe laid plans to build the dam as their first major project for the WMRE. The Salt River Valley Water Users’ Association (SRVWUA) objected to the construction of the dam on the grounds that the Tribe was impounding water that they had claimed prior rights to. However, much of the conflict came to a head in 1957 when lurid reports circulated through non-Indian communities about the construction of the lake taking place under the protection of armed Apache guards. These stories inflamed racist images of the Apache as aggressive warriors, conjuring up visions of the Apache wars of the nineteenth century. Of course, though, journalists blew these stories out of proportion. Even the Apache County Sheriff admitted, “There were no hard words…They were just doing their job.” Contrary to rampant rumors, “there has been absolutely no violence in connection with any actions of the tribe relating to Smith Park Dam, nor has any physical force been brought to bear upon any person to prevent his entering the construction area.”

Lester Oliver, a Tribal Council member at the time, remembered the events differently. He claimed that the Sheriff pulled a gun on the guards, only retreating after realizing he was in the sights of an Apache rifleman perched on a nearby cliff. Later that evening, Oliver received an anonymous phone call threatening that if the Apache remained on the “war path,” the state would “send in the National Guard.”

Regardless of the true circumstances, tensions ran high between the Apache and the SRVWUA.

*The Arizona Republic*, the primary Phoenix newspaper, covered much of the affair. The citizens of Phoenix were interested in the controversy because they resided in the Salt Valley, the place supposedly

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74 F.M. Haverland to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 15, 1958, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 341.7, File #14871-56, Box #30.
being “victimized” by the construction the reservoir. Articles both sympathetic to and against the Apache appeared. Ben Avery, a columnist who was often critical of the Apache, chastised the federal government for overstepping its bounds by encouraging the Apache not to enter into agreements with the state of Arizona over water development. However, Avery had little understanding of Indian law, never mentioning the Winters Doctrine of 1908, the product of a Supreme Court case that ruled that Native Americans have prior use rights to water on reservations.76 In an article sympathetic to the Apache, Paul Simmons, a non-Indian working as the tribal clerk, defended the rights of the Apache: “I seem to have read some place where the Apaches were shoved back farther into the hills from Globe area when white men located gold there. Now the Apaches are expected to give up waters from their springs…Times haven’t changed much for the Redmen – only the names of white men who have pushed the Apache almost to the limit.”77 And surprisingly, one article even accurately described the legal implications of the conflict: “The government is expected to maintain that it is not a valid party to the suit against the Apaches; and that Arizona, when it became a state, took no jurisdiction over the Indian nation or Indian reservation lands.”78 Essentially the battle over Smith Park Reservoir boiled down to a sovereignty issue over the rights of the Tribe to manage resources on the reservation without outside interference. Although this battle didn’t involve an act of restoration, it had a significant bearing on future restoration efforts. The construction of Smith Park Reservoir represented a successful assertion of tribal sovereignty, thus a gain in political and economic leverage to manage resources on the reservation as the Apache saw fit. To see this political evolution, we need to trace the struggle from the beginning.

In 1954 the Tribal Council voted to use tribal monies for the construction of the Smith Park Reservoir. Simply out of respect and partly misinformed (they were probably incorrectly advised to do

so – misunderstandings about water rights were common within the BIA), the Tribe sought permission from the SRVWUA to build the reservoir. The SRVWUA believed that according to the Kent Decree (also known as *Hurley vs. Abbott et al.*), a court case in 1910 that supposedly adjudicated water rights in Arizona, they had rights to all water in the Salt River Watershed. However, the Decree never considered the Apache, whose reservation encompassed the headwaters of the Salt River. So in reply, the SRVWUA stated that they would allow the construction of the dam under the condition that the White Mountain Apache Tribe signed an agreement recognizing the Water Users’ claim to all the water in the Salt River Basin. The BIA later advised the Tribe against entering any agreement with the SRVWUA. Phoenix Area Director Haverland described the SRVWUA’s request as “unconscionable.”

After all, even though no tribe in Arizona to date had challenged the Kent Decree, the Winter’s Doctrine of 1908 gave Native Americans prior use rights to water on their reservations.

In 1955 the SRVWUA threatened court action if the Tribe proceeded to construct Smith Park Dam. Si Davis, Lester Oliver, and Nelson Lupe joined A.B. Melzner and Geraint Humphreys, field solicitors for the BIA, to determine whether or not SRVWUA had a solid case. Melzner and Humphreys believed “that the Salt River Valley Water Users’ would not be in a position to sustain any action against the Fort Apache Tribe for the construction of Smith Park Dam.” Three major conclusions emerged from the meeting: first, the construction of the dam would only minimally impact the flow of the Salt River; second, the Tribe held water rights equal to or above those of the SRVWUA due to the Winter’s Doctrine; and third, the contested watershed resided entirely within the bounds of Fort Apache, thus giving the Tribe clear jurisdiction over the construction site. Based on these conclusions, Haverland informed Commissioner Emmons that he advised the Tribe to proceed with the project. He also warned

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79 F.M. Haverland to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 15, 1958, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 341.7, File #14871-56, Box #30.
the Apache not to enter into any agreement with the SRVWUA because “such action might jeopardize Indian rights to water on the reservation.”

Believing the law was on their side, the Tribal Council hired a construction company owned by Thomas Mulcaire. Work commenced in August of 1956, only to be halted five weeks later. The SRVWUA, after filing a law suit, obtained a court injunction to stop construction “on the justification that the dam would result in undue water loss on account of evaporation.” On September 7, 1956 the Deputy Sheriff of Apache County served Mulcaire a temporary restraining order. Mulcaire subsequently ceased operations and removed his equipment. The timing of the injunction was not entirely damaging to the Tribe’s efforts. The imminent approach of winter, which comes early in the White Mountains, would have temporarily suspended all construction work until the spring anyway. However, the Tribe immediately realized that their water rights had been thrown into jeopardy. Because of the limited legal resources of Superintendent Hawley and Area Director Haverland, the Tribe sought the advice of the BIA’s Central Office and the Solicitor’s Office of the Department of Interior (DOI). Unfortunately, the DOI and the BIA responded slowly.

This caused Clinton Kessay, the current Tribal Chairman, to fire off a letter to Commissioner Emmons stating the Tribe’s dire concern about the situation:

> We, as members of the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council, know that the right to utilize our water will determine whether or not we are to exist and we therefore firmly desire to protect the water that was set aside for our use... We are also aware, that if our water rights are not adequately protected by the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the water rights of all Indian reservations in Arizona will be in jeopardy. We have never been given a clear cut understanding just what the positions of the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs were in the protection of these water rights. Our tribal attorney has been unable to secure any definite information as to the role of the Solicitor’s office... Our water and the right to use our water to develop our resources is vitally important to us as a tribe, and we are therefore very anxious to know just what the Bureau of Indian Affairs position is and what action

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81 Fred H. Massey to White Mountain Apache Tribal Council, March 7, 1957, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 56, File #7593-56, Box #8.
we can expect from the Solicitor’s office regarding the present pending lawsuits and what we can expect if in the future the White Mountain Apache Tribe’s water development program is harassed by outside agents.\textsuperscript{82}

Kessay’s letter conveyed the Tribe’s inherent distrust in the BIA’s ability to protect their resources. The Tribe was troubled by the BIA and DOI’s lack of response to the Hawley Lake litigation. They had backed the project, but had given the Apache very little guidance on how to proceed if the SRVWUA pursued a litigious path. And up to this point concerning the injunction, the Solicitor’s Office told the Apache, “In view of the present status of the \textit{Mulcaire} case, you should, of course, not attempt to cause further construction work on the dam.”\textsuperscript{83} The Tribe received that information approximately a month after the issuance of the court injunction, and by the first of the year, they had received no further news. The lack of action on the part of the Washington officials wasn’t surprising given the political climate of the Termination Era. An administration seeking the eventual dissolution and assimilation of all tribes into the mainstream society probably was not in a hurry to defend the sovereignty of the White Mountain Apache. Fortunately, however, the Apache had the law and determination on their side. And because of the controversial nature of termination policy, tribal lawyers and Native American political groups increasingly held the BIA under a legal microscope. They were compelled to act.\textsuperscript{84}

With the DOI dragging their feet, Barry DeRose, the Tribal Attorney, and the Tribal Council felt they had to push the issue, especially since they wanted the dam constructed by the summer of 1957. The Tribe had already invested $30,000 in the project and feared further financial losses if resumption of the project didn’t occur by spring. On February 5, 1957, Derose, along with a tribal delegation, traveled to Washington to discuss the matter face to face with BIA officials and representatives from the

\textsuperscript{82} Clinton Kessay to Glenn L. Emmons, January 8, 1957, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 341.7, File #14871-56, Box #30.
\textsuperscript{83} Edmund J. Fritz to F.M. Haverland, October 18, 1956, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 341.7, File #14871-56, Box #30.
\textsuperscript{84} On outside political pressure forcing the hand of the BIA see Thomas W. Cowger, “‘The Crossroads of Destiny’: The NCAI’s Landmark Struggle to Thwart Coercive Termination,” \textit{American Indian Culture and Research Journal} 20 (1996): 122-144.
Solicitor’s Office. Derose and the Tribe presented a loophole they found in the case. The lawsuit failed to name the White Mountain Apache or the BIA. Because of this, the Tribe believed they could continue building the dam as long as they constructed it themselves. The DOI, after some muddling around, eventually concurred with the Tribe.\(^{85}\) On April 15, 1957 the Tribal Council passed a resolution authorizing “the Chairman and the Secretary of the Council …to negotiate and sign lease rental agreements for equipment that is needed in the construction of the Smith Park Dam.”\(^{86}\) At last, the Apache took the matter into their own hands and built the dam themselves.

The Tribe didn’t know what to expect given the tension between them and the SRVWUA, so under armed guard, they moved forward with the construction of the dam. Lydo Harvey, with his usual quiet skill and confidence in handling difficult situations, supervised the tribal peace officers.\(^{87}\) The SRVWUA got wind of this soon after construction recommenced. On June 4, 1957, they attempted to serve legal documents to the Tribe, Area Director Haverland, and Superintendent Hawley. To avoid being served, Chairman Kessay, Vice Chairman Lupe, and other tribal leaders fled to New Mexico.\(^{88}\) In addition, Harvey and the armed guards rebuffed the Apache County’s Sheriff’s office attempt to serve the restraining order to the Tribe at the construction site. The Tribal Council had instructed them not to admit anyone on to the construction site “unless authorized by the tribal council.” By this point, though,

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\(^{85}\) On March 7 the Tribe received a letter stating they couldn’t proceed because the money for the project “is under control of the Superintendent [who] would not be justified in advancing further funds until the injunction is removed.” In this same letter, after being told in 1955 not to negotiate with the SRVWUA, they were told to negotiate with the SRVWUA. In a second letter dated March 28, the Central Office gave the Tribe permission to proceed. Fred H. Massey to White Mountain Apache Tribal Council, March 7, 1957, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 56, File #7593-56, Box #8; Fred H. Massey to F.M. Haverland, March 28, 1957, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 341.7, File #14871-56, Box #30.

\(^{86}\) White Mountain Apache Tribal Council Resolution No. 57-31, April 15, 1957, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 341.7, File #14871-56, Box #30.

\(^{87}\) Sparks, “Lydo Harvey.”

the Apache had completed the dam, with the reservoir commencing to fill. State officials returned the next morning with armed “body attachments” to find the worksite deserted.89

Finally, through a jungle of legal and bureaucratic hassles, the Tribe had dammed Trout Creek to create Smith Park Reservoir. They built the reservoir at an elevation of 9,000 feet above sea level within an appealing forest setting dominated by ponderosa pine and Engelmann spruce. The lake impounded 252 surface acres of water with a maximum depth of 40 feet. The Tribe expected the lake to accommodate the increase in fishing activity on the reservation. Jack Hemphill, a FWS biologist working on the reservation, predicted that the new lake would “absorb the displaced anglers during the dry years when stream flows are poor.” Further, he believed the stability of the lake would allow fisheries biologists to “determine each fall what management measures are required to provide maximum lake harvest the following spring.” The lake eventually served two major purposes: diversify fisheries management options and increase the profitability of the WMRE. Because the lake attracted an additional 48,000 man-days of angling and other recreational uses, an early estimate predicted that Hawley Lake would generate an extra $100,000 a year.90

The Tribe built the spillway for Smith Park Reservoir in 1958, two years ahead of schedule. The lake filled by March 1958 because of a heavy snow the previous winter. The first planting of rainbow trout occurred in 1958, and the lake was open for business that same year. The Tribe constructed three more dams (Hurricane, Pacheta, Drift Fence) in 1959 and another in 1960 (Earl Park), all while the Hawley Lake incident remained in court. A total of seven reservoirs existed on Fort Apache by 1960, with more

89 F.M. Haverland to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 15, 1958, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 341.7, File #14871-56, Box #30.
in the offering. In 1960 the Tribal Council conducted another feasibility study to determine the best sites for future reservoir development on the reservation.\footnote{The BIA constructed two small reservoirs in the 40s, Tonto Lake (1943) and Bog Creek (1946). F.M. Haverland to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 15, 1960, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 341.7, File #14871-56, Box #30.}

The SRVWUA continued, to no avail, efforts to have the Smith Park Dam removed. Eventually, these attempts devolved into negotiations seeking compensation for “water loss.”\footnote{Barry DeRose to Albert Hawley, September 19, 1960, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 341.7, File #14871-56, Box #30.} To ease the tension between the Apache and SRVWUA, Superintendent Hawley and the BIA suggested that the Tribe lease land around the lake to potential Euro-American home owners.\footnote{Albert Hawley to F.M. Haverland, February 11, 1958, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 339, File #3295-58, Box #17.} Unfortunately for the Apache, the BIA structured the deal such that they offered leases at less than the going market value. Furthermore, the BIA discouraged the Apache from adding a clause that would allow the Tribe to periodically raise rent. Given that the Tribe had legal rights to the water anyway, nothing legally bound them to make this concession. Whether the Tribe decided to make the concession because of pressure from the BIA and the SRVWUA or because of mounting legal costs is not known, but the case eventually went away. But the compromise clearly indicated another situation where non-Indian interests exploited the Apache. Even when the Tribe developed water resources to their benefit, non-Indians found a way to disproportionately benefit themselves. This compromise, however, would lead to another major controversy in 25 years, when a politically stronger Tribal Council decided not to renew the leases, much to the chagrin of many non-Indians who had built homes around the lake.\footnote{Ronnie Lupe, “Chairman’s Corner: Hawley Lake is another Example of How Indians must Live under a Double Standard,” \textit{The Fort Apache Scout} 35 (May 10, 1996): 2.}
With resistance came increased exchange. The more the White Mountain Apache pushed back, the more respect they received. Before and after the battle for Hawley Lake, as the Tribe diversified its economic base, natural resource development on the reservation was on the increase. Even before the Tribal Council officially adopted the Plan of Operations for the WMRE in 1954, the non-Indian public and BIA personnel began to notice positive changes in Fort Apache’s recreational infrastructure. Only after a year of work, Ralph Gelvin, the Phoenix Area Director, commented that “The public that has used the facilities at the Fort Apache Reservation has been complimentary on the improvement in the facilities and the high caliber of enforcement of local game and reservation ordinances.”95 L.D. Arnold also commended the Apache on “the progress made in utilizing the very important fish, wildlife, and recreational resources of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.” Arnold also noted with particular interest the enterprise’s emphasis on restoring the Tribe’s natural resources, “not only for proper and wise use …, but also for their orderly development and the expansion of their productivity.”96

Despite the early positive press, the Apache needed to counter bad press as a result of the Hawley Lake controversy, their reputation as isolationists, and the circulation of myths about the aggressive and unfriendly nature of Apache people that persisted among the non-Indian public. 97 Soon after establishing the WMRE, the Tribe immediately began work on public relations by advertising in and soliciting articles for newspapers and magazines such as The Arizona Republic, The New York Times, Arizona Highways, and American Legion Magazine. These articles often described Fort Apache as a primeval wilderness, as if the Apache and white man had left it untouched. In one article “white hunters

95 Ralph M. Gelvin to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 4, 1953, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #3940-43, Box #45.
96 L.D. Arnold (Harold Weaver signed) to Ralph M. Gelvin, March 12, 1953, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #3940-43, Box #45.
stalk[ed] the wilderness for bobcat, fox, elk, deer, javelin, and migratory waterfowl.”

Arizona Highways referred to the White Mountains of Fort Apache as “the last remaining perfect wilderness area in the state.” In another article found in American Legion Magazine titled “Apacheland Welcomes White Man,” the author depicted the Hawley Lake area as “virgin forests of spruce, fir, and aspen.” The author went on to say, “We spent two hours driving to this beautiful lake, but could have made it in half that time had we not paused so often to rhapsodize over the glorious scenery and gape at animals we’d never seen at such close range.” Of course, though, this area of the reservation had been grazed, logged, and dammed. Nonetheless, the Apache remained rightly proud of the relatively good ecological health of their homeland. And if outsiders perceived it as a wilderness, this only increased its appeal. After all, middle-class Americans began developing a love affair with the wilderness ideal in the 1950s.

Another tactic for exposure involved Nelson Lupe, Lydo Harvey, Chairman Oliver, and other tribal officials spending time with journalists visiting the reservation. Following one such visit, Richard Dunlop of the Saturday Evening Post wrote an article describing the recreational “playground” of Fort Apache. Playing off of old Apache stereotypes, the article’s subtitle read “A family of palefaces from the Midwest spends its vacations on an Arizona reservation and learns Indian outdoor lore from Apaches whose ancestors once shot it out with U.S. Troopers.” By turning such stereotypes on their head, the White Mountain Apache used them to redraw Indian-non-Indian boundaries to their advantage. Clearly welcoming the characterization of the Wild West, Nelson Lupe traveled along with Dunlop’s family and

100 Hyatt, “Apacheland Welcomes White Man.”
showed them “cliffs from which Apache snipers once shot down blue-coated troopers.” At the same time, Lupe wasn’t shy about delivering a message of Apache independence and perseverance: “Apaches have always lived around here… We always will. We fought hard to keep this country. We know that whites are still trying to take it away from us. If we fail to develop our reservation, sooner or later outsiders will do it. It would be for their benefit, not ours. We know that the more tourists that come, the more secure our country will be for our kids.”

Lupe blatantly erected a boundary, albeit a porous one. The Tribe welcomed Euro-American science, technology, and economic strategies, but on Apache terms.

Lydo Harvey practiced a different type of exchange. He took the Dunlop family up to Mount Baldy and showed them how to fish the “Indian way.” Demonstrating the cultural adaptability of his people, he explained, “Apaches never fished in the old days. We ate no cold-blooded animals.” He fashioned a fishing rod out of materials found on the spot and in “less than a minute… flipped a rainbow trout onto the bank.” This demonstration symbolized the Apaches broader achievements in adopting new technologies and adapting them to local conditions.

Later the family met with Chairman Oliver, the first college-educated Tribal Chairman. Dunlop wanted to know how the WMRE benefitted the average tribal member. Oliver used this opportunity to dispel the common myth that all Native Americans were on a federal dole at the taxpayers’ expense: “We’re trying to better our personal lot in life just like everybody else. Eventually we intend to use Indian investments to give individual Indians opportunities for advancement – scholarships to college, public housing, when we can afford it… You tourists are helping individual Apaches to achieve independence from welfare handouts.”

In a similar vein, because Arizona was a haven for

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102 Richard Dunlop, “Apache Camp-Out.”
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
conservative Americans, the Apache had to overcome the impression they were socialists or communists.

Oliver found a comment in the *1958 Annual Report of the Tonto Soil Conservation District* concerning land management practices on the reservation that illustrated this misconception very well. But the comment wasn’t all negative. In fact it endorsed the Tribe’s management efforts:

> We have a rather ironic situation in Gila County. The Whiteriver Apache Indian Reservation lies across a fence from the Tonto Soil Conservation District. Their conservation efforts (in my personal view) are handled in a semi-democratic, semi-fascistic manner. Ours are strictly on the democratic principle. In conservation, restoration, water yield and water salvage, the Reservation is years ahead of us. Why should lands under the trusteeship of the Department of Interior come up with answers to present day land management problems so far ahead of lands administered under the U.S.D.A.?? [sic] At the start of their conservation program, their lands were in worse condition than the Forest lands are today. The White Mountain Apache Reservation is the most encouraging spot on the Salt River watershed. Congratulations and encouragement are in order.

Cleverly, Oliver co-opted the comment for double duty. In a letter to George S. Kephart, BIA Chief of Forestry, Oliver policed the political and environmental boundaries of the Apache homeland with subtle wit: “I sincerely hope that our Tribe deserves these remarks, except perhaps for the one ‘semi-democratic, semi-fascistic,’ whatever that means, and we will continue to use all of our available means to improve our natural resources.” While correcting political misconceptions about the tribal government, he made clear to Kephart that restoration and management work on the reservation exceeded in quality off-reservation efforts, a delineation the Tribe would increasingly employ to defend their sovereignty.

The Tribe also reinforced and created new relationships with federal and state natural resource management agencies. With the new Oliver administration in May of 1954, the Tribal Council renewed the cooperative agreement with the FWS and AGFC concerning the operation of the Williams Creek

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105 Lester Oliver to G.S. Kephart, April 17, 1959, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 339, File #3295-58, Box #17.
106 Ibid.
Fish Hatchery. Under the new agreement, the Apache recommitted the land and water for fish-cultural operations and took on more responsibility for distributing fish from the hatchery to waters on the reservation. Of course, the FWS wanted complete control of restocking efforts, asserting that “any distribution done by the Tribe will be in accordance with schedules and programs prepared by the Service.” Federal paternalism still ruled the relationship between the Apache and the FWS.

Nonetheless, the Apache would receive further technical training from their relationship with the FWS. More specifically, young Apache assistants learned fishery management techniques and Creel census methods for measuring fisher and hunter resource consumption. This training was particularly important because the Tribal Council had assumed the responsibility for determining bag and take limits on the reservation. In this new arrangement, the Tribal Council depended on information from the WMRE on available fish and wildlife. So the WMRE needed accurate estimates of fish and game populations. In the Council’s determinations, Tribal members received first consideration. Any surplus game, without depleting populations, became available to non-Indian recreational hunters. The Council also determined which species non-Indians could hunt; deer, turkey, and the Apache trout, for the most part, remained off limits to non-Indians until the 1970s.

One of the most important fishery management tools taught was sampling fish populations to determine to the extent streams needed restocking. Estimating fish populations involved stunning fish by circulating electricity through streams with a 110 volt A.C. generator. A crew consisted of one person handling the electrodes, another handling the cord, and three others extracting temporarily stunned fish with dipping nets. They typically sampled ten 500 foot stretches of streams, including areas of heavy

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107 White Mountain Apache Tribal Resolution 54-15, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #3940-43, Box #45.
and light activity to determine how fishing intensity affected fish distribution. After measuring and tagging each fish with a unique number, Apache assistants returned rainbow trout and brown trout to the stream. However, they removed desert suckers and spike dace (listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 1984), which constituted the majority of the catch, presumably because they were a source of competition for game fish. Eliminating species that competed with economically important species remained common practice among FWS biologists into the 1980s. In the WMRE and FWS’s efforts to develop the recreational potential of the reservation, they shaped the White Mountain ecosystem in specific ways unnoticeable to the average tourist.

In order to enhance the perception of the reservation as a hunter’s paradise, the WMRE participated in a pronghorn antelope transplant project with the AGFC in 1959. Antelope had all but disappeared from the reservation in the late 1930s, with only occasional sightings of two or three individuals in any year since. Lydo Harvey, Reidhead Cosay, Jim Gilbert, and Pat Johnson, all White Mountain Apaches, along with Jim Sparks, who replaced Si Davis as the manager of the WMRE upon his untimely death from a heart attack in 1958, worked with Paul Webb of the AGFC. They trapped and transported pronghorn antelope from viable populations around Flagstaff, Arizona and reintroduced them to Bonita Prairie on the reservation. Within four years, the transplanted population increased to a size sufficient

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111 According to Joseph Taylor, since the late nineteenth century, fish culturists divided nature into two categories: economically useful and useless. The idea was to simplify systems so as to maximize the productivity of economically important species. In theory to do this fish culturists removed many “useless” predators and competitors, dramatically altering the community structure of streams. Unfortunately this practice led to a loss of freshwater fish biodiversity and genetic diversity within populations of economically important species. Joseph E. Taylor, III, Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1999), pp. 203-236.

112 “To Greener Pastures: Fleet Antelope Trapped for White Mountain Transplant,” The Arizona Republic, October 1, 1959, RG 75 FAIR, File #3940-43, Box #45, CCF 40-56.
enough to allow a limited hunt.\textsuperscript{113} Once again, the Tribe sought means to restore its resource base so as to improve the economic conditions of the reservation.

On top of building relationships with federal and state agencies, the Apache found themselves in a position of leadership among Native American groups concerning natural resource management. The success of the WMRE inspired other tribes to begin similar programs. According to Jack Hemphill, due to “the effective program in progress on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation,”\textsuperscript{114} the FWS experienced a general increase in demand for their services for initiating recreational development programs on southwestern reservations in the late 1950s.\textsuperscript{115} These programs failed to come into fruition until the early 1960s though. The San Carlos Apache began their program in 1963, with the Navajo, Papago, Salt River, Gila River, and Colorado River reservations following shortly thereafter. In 1962, the White Mountain Apache received national attention. The Nez Perce Tribe, based in Idaho, requested a visit from Chairman Oliver and Superintendent Hawley to advise them on starting a recreational program. In subsequent years representatives from another forty tribes, including the Blackfeet and Ute, visited Fort Apache to study the inner workings of the WMRE.\textsuperscript{116}

Conclusion

As the 1950s drew to a close, the WMRE had become a profitable business supplying a growing number of jobs to the Apache people. For the Apache trout, the business provided a temporary safety net. The establishment of the WMRE also represented a modest step forward in the long-term Apache goal of controlling all eco-cultural resources on the reservation. Through the WMRE, the Tribe began

positioning themselves as competent land managers. The WMRE became a tool for expanding control of reservation resources, securing economic security, and establishing political autonomy. Restoration of the landscape and its inhabitants proved an important part of this political exercise. The ecological health of their homeland was imperative to a successful enterprise. If tourists ceased to see primeval conditions and a wealth of fishing and hunting opportunities, the Tribe held no basis for economic and political independence. First, Apache leaders such as Nelson Lupe and Lester Oliver grasped this notion and later, a growing number of tribal members came on board. They realized they needed expertise in Western land and business management techniques, demonstrating the Apache traits of flexibility and adaptation. Resistance to certain Western ideals remained important, but exchange with the dominant society remained a necessity.

As a result of exercising tribal sovereignty, ecological, economic, and political conditions on the reservation slowly improved by the end of the 1950s. However, the Tribe had a long way to go. Although they had gained a modicum of control over management of fish and wildlife on the reservation, the Apache game and fish code remained subject to Arizona state laws. These laws still required non-Indian hunters and fishers to purchase Arizona permits on top of reservation permits, subjected the Tribe to state seasons, and limited tribal flexibility in terms of setting bag limits. In addition, the Apache still lacked sufficient technical expertise. Improvement in this area was evident, but the Apache had very few college-educated tribal members. In terms of controlling eco-cultural resources, the BIA continued to dominate forest, rangeland, and watershed management. Other attempts to create wage labor on the reservation proved less successful than the WMRE. For instance, the Apache Mercantile Company had been largely unsuccessful to this point, creating very few job opportunities and failing to utilize a profitable level of timber. As a consequence, the Tribe still leased most of their timberland to non-Indian timber companies.
Nonetheless, the WMRE created a solid foundation for growth. The road to autonomy still presented many obstacles, but the path forward was more obvious than a decade earlier. The Tribal Council, having learned through its experiences with the WMRE, continued to look for ways to wrest control of eco-cultural resources away from the BIA. Furthermore, after a decade of termination policy, socially and environmentally, the political climate of the 1960s would break in favor of the White Mountain Apache and the Apache trout. As the general American public became more interested in environmental issues and protecting wilderness, the federal government took note. Suddenly, the fate of the Apache trout became a hot topic. And the White Mountain Apache Tribe’s previous restoration work on this species would bring them more political clout and notoriety as efficacious land managers.
Chapter 6

The 1960s: Ecological Restoration as a Mediator between Economic Development and Eco-cultural Degradation

The Apaches will get ahead much faster in the future through hard work, education and economical living, using whatever they can produce from the soil or find in the fields and forests.

Mary Riley, First woman elected to White Mountain Apache Tribal Council

The future of the native trout … of Arizona lies entirely with the Whitemountain [sic] Apache Tribe.

John K. Anderson, FWS Fisheries Management Biologist

Despite White Mountain Apache efforts to protect the Apache trout, the species continued to lose ground. By the early 1960s, genetically pure populations survived only in two headwater streams on Mount Baldy. Coincidentally, the Apache trout’s sharp decline paralleled the fading of White Mountain Apache culture. As the Tribe sought more avenues for economic development, further degradation of their traditional social organization, ceremonies, and religion occurred. This in turn led to greater social problems, including the breakdown of community networks and increased rates of alcoholism and crime on the reservation. Just as economic development threatened Apache trout habitat, it also threatened White Mountain Apache culture.

Nevertheless, in 1959 the Tribal Council published a pamphlet for public consumption boasting of the Tribe’s economic successes. The Council was “proud of the progress” they were making towards

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creating for the Apache people “an economically stable existence.” Tribal enterprises such as the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise (WMRE) proved that “the Indian is capable of thinking and acting for himself.” Perhaps prematurely, the Council advertised that the Tribe’s development of natural resources meant the Tribe was “entirely on [its] own financially, with the Federal Government providing technical advisory assistance.” At the very least, the suggestion reaffirmed their determination to break the shackles of dependency. The Council viewed economic self-sufficiency as an imperative, so that the “White Mountain Apache, collectively, [could] assume a place in this Nation as a full citizen, not only with the rights and prerogatives, but also with all the duties and responsibilities.”

These affirmations were all well and good, but the Tribe had a dilemma on their hands. Economic development brought with it a whole new set of problems, including continued cultural disruption. On the one hand, if they refused to interact economically with the dominant society, poverty and social disenfranchisement would worsen. On the other hand, continued economic development risked further degradation of the “Apache way.” Either way, cultural survival was tenuous at best and isolation wasn’t an option. History showed the Apache that the modern world would overrun the reservation whether they wanted it to or not. Furthermore, the Tribe had become dependent on Euro-American industry for their livelihood. Since returning to the pre-reservation days wasn’t an option, the trick, then, was to assume control of the process, balancing economic development with cultural survival.

This chapter follows two routes that the White Mountain Apache took to strike this balance. First, I explore the role that economic development and ecological restoration played in the acquisition of technical expertise, thus more control of knowledge production on the reservation. Second, I describe how the Apache employed ecological restoration to ameliorate cultural disruption. Through the Apache trout restoration program and the establishment of Mount Baldy Wilderness Area, the Apache demonstrated their ability to manage their own resources and slow the pace of cultural extinction.

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Ecological restoration also became more than a tool to address economic, aesthetic, and recreational values. In the 1960s the Tribe expanded the definition of restoration to include biodiversity and Apache cultural values. Additionally, the Tribe began, for the first time, to circumvent the authority of the BIA by exploiting economic development funds from other government agencies. These efforts not only amounted to the restoration of eco-cultural resources, but showed effective administration of an economy and the efficacious allocation of both human and natural resources. These endeavors also represented experiments in understanding Western science and technology. Moreover, coincident with economic development was a subtle shift in power dynamics on the reservation. Despite the growing cultural crisis, the 1960s saw the significant expansion of tribal authority. Politically, they gained tremendous leverage for future battles over the right to control eco-cultural resources on the reservation. Moreover, the BIA and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), almost imperceptibly, began to lose control of the reigns of knowledge production on the reservation. In essence, the Apache continued to slowly whittle away the paternalistic policies of the BIA.

Facilitating the White Mountain Apache and Apache trout’s quest for eco-cultural survival was yet another shift in the political tide in Indian policy in Washington. After over a decade of termination policy, the Kennedy administration appointed Philleo Nash Commissioner of Indian Affairs, an official whose pro-development and anti-terminationist policies became quite popular with Native American leaders. Upon taking the position, he quickly reestablished policies that assisted Native American aspirations for cultural autonomy and economic-self sufficiency rather than supporting the withdrawal of federal services.\(^5\) A new era emerged as Native Americans began fighting the rhetoric of termination with the rhetoric of self-determination.

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From the Native American perspective, the 1960s represented a transition from the heyday of termination policy to the era of self-determination that culminated in the Indian Education and Self Determination Act of 1975. Fortunately, termination policy never really gained a major foothold. Although Congress terminated over 100 tribes, most were small bands in Utah, California, and Oregon. Larger tribes, such as the Klamath, mixed-blood Ute, and the Menominee, proved exceptions to this general rule. As Native Americans of the time feared, almost all terminated tribes except the Menominee lost title to their lands. According to Charles Wilkinson, a former attorney with the Native American Rights Fund, “Most found themselves poorer, bereft of health care, and suffering a painful psychological loss of community, homeland, and self-identity.” Fortunately, some terminated tribes, such as the Menominee, eventually had their federally recognized status restored. Native Americans forged a trail towards political restoration in the 1960s when a nationwide American Indian rebellion against termination policy erupted, leading to the policy’s official demise.

Termination policy posed a serious threat to treaty rights, tribal sovereignty, and the remaining Native American land base. Since American Indian identity remained closely tied to these fundamental rights, the extinction of hundreds of cultures was at stake. At its very base, however, withdrawal of federal services put into jeopardy the integrity of what was left of tribal homelands and their eco-cultural resources. As a collective, cultural survival depended on fighting for each Native American tribe’s right to exist as a sovereign nation and for the protection of their homelands. Native Americans could not withstand the further erosion of their land base. Essentially, the Termination Era provided Native Americans with the political fuel to fight for self-determination while protecting their cultural and

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ecological assets. The irony of termination policy was that it incited the opposite of what Senator Watkins intended; instead of mobilizing Native Americans towards assimilation into Euro-American society, the policy ignited political activism throughout Indian country. Suddenly representatives from tribes all over the country sought to protect their rights. The emergence of the first generation of college-educated Indian leaders in the 1950s aided this upswing in political activism, providing Indian nations and organizations with the intellectual tools to defend themselves against the whims of the federal government.\(^{10}\)

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), founded in 1944, proved one of the first forums in which Native Americans collectively resisted termination.\(^{11}\) The NCAI passed resolutions objecting to HCR 108 and Public Law 280. Further lobbying efforts led to Secretary of the Interior, Fred Seaton’s repudiation of coercive termination in 1958. However, Seaton’s repudiation failed to address the entire problem, leaving the door open for termination by “consent.” This allowed the “shadow of termination” to persist into the 1960s. Most importantly, under the guidance of Helen Peterson (Oglala Sioux) and Joseph Garry (Coeur d’Alene), the NCAI developed a tri-partite vision of self-determination that many tribes would emulate, including the White Mountain Apache.\(^{12}\) They designed this definition to eliminate any confusion between what American Indians viewed as self-determination versus the federal government’s goals, which often equated self-determination with assimilation into the dominant society.\(^{13}\)

\(^{10}\) Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, p. 86.


\(^{12}\) Lester Oliver and other tribal leaders frequently participated in NCAI meetings. See various Tribal Council Minutes, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56 and CCF 58 – 75, Dec. 54.

\(^{13}\) Cowger, “‘The Crossroads of Destiny.’”
First, the cornerstone of self-determination remained the preservation of treaty rights, thus the legal status of tribal lands and sovereignty. Anything short of maintaining a sovereign status with the right to self-govern would lead to the extinction of Native American cultures. Second, in order to encourage self-governance, the onus was on American Indian nations to establish a government-to-government relationship with local, state, and federal governments. The NCAI saw participation in policy development as essential to gaining recognition as a sovereign nation, a step towards breaking the shackles of paternalism. Third, tribal governments should strive towards economic self-sufficiency. The only way to assure some level of permanency as a sovereign nation and resilience against the whims of the federal government was to become politically and economically independent. This tri-partite vision of self-determination became a guiding principle for many Native American tribes. For instance, the White Mountain Apache implemented all three of these tenets in natural resource related endeavors during the 1950s: treaty rights with the battle of Hawley Lake, the continued relationship with the FWS and Arizona Game and Fish Commission (AGFC), and the establishment of tribal enterprises.

In terms of Native American history, the 1960s are probably more famously known for the rise in Indian activism and the Red Power movements that lead to the occupation of the BIA building in Washington, the sit-in at Alcatraz, the Trail of Broken Treaties, the fish-ins in the Pacific Northwest protesting violations of treaty rights, and Wounded Knee II. Activists groups such as the American Indian Movement garnered much media attention for their travails, thus temporarily bringing Native American issues to the forefront of American political affairs. Many of the Native Americans that participated in these events had been relocated to cities, were members of tribes not recognized by the federal government, or their reservations suffered termination. As a result, overt activism became their

only viable recourse of action.\textsuperscript{16} Several historians claim that the actions of these activists pushed the federal government to advance self-determination legislation.\textsuperscript{17} No doubt this was the case. However, most Native Americans lived on reservations with their leaders pursuing other means of self-determination. For example, no less significant were some of the more mundane political efforts to take advantage of War on Poverty legislation that encouraged economic self-sufficiency and to block legislation that threatened tribal sovereignty and self-determination.\textsuperscript{18}

Some of the most influential economic and educational development programs of the decade came from outside the BIA. For many Native Americans, the opportunity to implement their own community service programs proved far more substantial than the shock tactics of Red Power activism. For instance, tribal leaders found a refreshing philosophical approach towards economic development with the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), a War on Poverty program created by the Johnson administration in 1964.\textsuperscript{19} The OEO offered tangible gains in terms of acquiring technical expertise for economic development on reservations. American Indian tribes forged some of their first government-to-government contracts during this time frame, leaving the BIA out of the loop on significant projects. For tribal governments, the OEO amounted to an opportunity to practice true self-governance. Philip Deloria, a Standing Rock Sioux lawyer, claimed, “The Great Society programs were the first major instance in which Indian tribal governments had money and were not beholden for it to the Bureau of

\textsuperscript{17} Kotlowksi, “Alcatraz, Wounded Knee, and Beyond.”
\textsuperscript{18} One of the more salient battle grounds for defining American Indian self-determination was economic development legislation that targeted Indian reservations, namely, according to historian Christopher Riggs, Stewart Udall’s Indian Resources Development Bill. Many Native American tribes opposed this bill because they believed it threatened the trust status of tribal lands, giving the Secretary of Interior too much power. After all, the overriding authority of the Secretary was one of the main problems with self-governance under the Indian Reorganization Act. The bill, according to Indian critics, would only increase the paternalistic tendencies of the BIA. Riggs, “American Indians, Economic Development, and Self-Determination,” p. 447.
\textsuperscript{19} RG 381, The Records of the Community Services Administration, Office of Economic Opportunity, Job Corps.
Indian Affairs. This created an enormous change in the balance of power on reservations and in Washington.”

The shift in power that Deloria referred to was related to who controls knowledge and expertise on reservations. Previously the BIA had a monopoly on expertise. Tribal governments had no choice but to trust BIA decisions, despite a long history of bureaucratic mismanagement. Additionally, BIA training programs, even the CCC-ID, for the most part only prepared American Indians for low-skilled labor and held very low expectations for Indians. In contrast, the OEO’s philosophy contended that past economic development programs of federal agencies such as the BIA failed because they were strictly paternalistic, top-down endeavors. OEO personnel criticized the BIA for not encouraging Native American participation in the design and implementation of projects, further increasing dependency on the BIA. How could anyone learn to take responsibility and strive for self-sufficiency if someone else always did it for you? This philosophy engendered tension between the BIA and OEO. James Officer, Associate Commissioner of Indian Affairs during this shift in power (1962-1967), witnessed growing hostility of local BIA officials towards OEO programs because they threatened local official’s monopoly over expertise on the “Indian problem.” Historically, most federal agencies deferred to the BIA “as more knowledgeable about Indian ways.” However, this was not the case with “the young, community development-minded representatives of the OEO.” They saw the BIA as the “enemy, privately branding them as anti-Indian, unimaginative, and overly paternalistic.” OEO field workers often disregarded BIA opinions and in many cases didn’t even consult reservation officials before implementing projects.

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Regardless of this tension, Native Americans welcomed the change in philosophy and risked alienating the BIA.\textsuperscript{23}

From the start, American Indians noticed a difference between BIA training programs and the OEO. LaDonna Harris, Barry Commoner’s running mate for the Citizen’s Party in 1980, highlighted, for example, the differences between the OEO and IRA: “Under the Indian Reorganization Act, tribal governments never really functioned. But when OEO was established, tribal governments had the funds to begin Headstart programs and reservation economic development…. OEO taught us to use our imagination and to look at the future as an exciting adventure. It taught us that there are other ways of doing things.”\textsuperscript{24} In essence, the OEO had higher expectations for Native Americans. The purpose of the program was not only economic development but expertise development. Major universities in the West helped train Native Americans with the management and planning skills to implement the community action programs. McNickle, a rare optimist within the ranks of the BIA during the 1940s and 1950s and a charter member of the NCAI, welcomed the effects of OEO programs in the mid-1960s: “The very tasks which over the years the Indian bureau failed to accomplish, explaining away its failure as a reflection of the incapacity or inexperience of Indian leadership, were found not to be insurmountable. Indian communities quietly took control of their own advancements.”\textsuperscript{25}

Amazingly, a positive environment gave positive results. Tribal governments all across the United States began establishing programs on reservations independent of the BIA. Furthermore, technical expertise became more accessible. To be fair, many failures occurred. But the greatest significance of the OEO to tribal governments was that the program helped establish the bureaucratic infrastructure

\textsuperscript{23} OEO programs received a great deal of support from Native American leaders, including Vine Deloria, Executive Director of the NCAI at the time, Alfonso Ortiz (San Juan Pueblo), Helen M. Schierbeck (Lumbee), LaDonna Harris (Comanche), Robert Burnette (Rosebud Sioux), D’Arcy McNickle (Salish), and Philip Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux). See Philp, \textit{Indian Self-Rule}.


\textsuperscript{25} McNickle, \textit{Native American Tribalism}, p. 119.
necessary to deal with federal and state agencies on a government-to-government basis. They acquired the rudimentary administrative and bureaucratic skills necessary to write federal grants, negotiate with federal agencies, and manage tribal human, cultural, and natural resources.

For better or worse, the 1960s saw the rise of tribal bureaucracies. Within the context of predominant federal policy and the capitalist system, building bureaucracies to deal with federal agencies was a necessary evil, a survival strategy and a critical step towards economic self-sufficiency. Many Native Americans criticized this phase of tribal development as continuing and exacerbating the ongoing social and cultural decay on reservations. Unfortunately, cultural erosion proved a temporary by-product of these programs. Robert Burnette remembered people running “over each other to get jobs….They forgot all of the things that they had learned as Indian people.” But he also admitted that the OEO “did a lot of good” and helped train a new generation of effective tribal leaders.26 Ultimately, according to many tribal leaders, the development of tribal bureaucracies gave tribal governments a chance to move towards self-sufficiency. Through OEO programs, Native American governments became legitimate governments in the eyes of federal agencies, moving beyond, according to Philip Deloria, “tribes as an administrative convenience of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, governmental only in Supreme Court esoteric.”27

Building on this logic, White Mountain Apache tribal leaders countered the Apache naysayers of development by arguing that cultural restoration and maintenance could only occur if tribes were economically self-sufficient. Otherwise, the Apache people would remain vulnerable to the assimilationist philosophy of the BIA. Only through self-sufficiency would tribal governments acquire the power to protect tribal homelands. In the following section, I argue that the establishment of White

Mountain Apache governmental bureaucracies to manage tribal resources became essential to the eventual eco-cultural restoration of the Apache homeland.

**Building Expertise and Government-to-Government Relationships**

With a population just over 4,000 and growing in 1962, the White Mountain Apache were coming to the realization they had to create a more robust wage earning economy. This realization was not new, but was reinforced by the fact that their reliance on timber and cattle for economic self-sufficiency had its limitations. By the beginning of the 1960s, the White Mountain Apache Tribe owned three tribal enterprises: the WMRE, the Fort Apache Timber Company (FATCO), and the White Mountain Tribal Herd Enterprise, with a fourth in the planning stages – the Tribal Maintenance and Construction Enterprise. They also contemplated expanding the operations of the WMRE to include a ski resort. Additionally, the Tribe extensively explored options for mineral exploitation on the reservation. They leased land for a marble quarry and asbestos mine in the late 1950s and contracted with industries to survey the reservation for oil, natural gas, and iron ore in the early 1960s.⁸

As a consequence of economic development, the reservation slowly moved towards a wage economy. By 1962, the WMRE permanently employed 35 tribal members, with additional 40 slots filled part-time during the summer months. FATCO employed 53 tribal members. The Tribal Herd Enterprise facilitated the growth of the tribe’s cattle industry, which still supported 50% of the reservation population. Non-Indian timber companies, mainly Southwest Forest Industries, trading posts, mining, missions, and fire-fighting in the summer months provided other major sources of income. Besides with the WMRE, some tribal members found land management work with the BIA and FWS. Forty-six Apache held positions with the BIA, and Albert Lavender became the first full-time Apache employee.

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for the FWS in 1963.\textsuperscript{29} Unfortunately, economic development failed to evenly benefit everyone on the reservation. For instance, the community of Cibecue, in the western, more isolated portion of the reservation, only retained one employee from the WMRE, a game warden (three Cibecue Apache worked for the BIA forestry department).\textsuperscript{30} Most recreational activities, other than hunting and some fishing, occurred on the eastern portion of the reservation. However, this discrepancy was not unique to the WMRE. Relatively speaking, the tribal government neglected the western part of the reservation in terms of economic development, an issue that would continue to plague the Tribal Council into the twenty-first century.

Regardless, unemployment and poverty constituted a major challenge for all members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Because Fort Apache was a recently emerging wage-earning economy, determining the unemployment rate proved difficult. However, the Tribe’s Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP), a product of the Area Redevelopment Act of 1962, estimated that the total labor force on the reservation at 1,300 strong. Of this number, 985 obtained employment, but only 30\% of the employed enjoyed full-time jobs. Essentially, the Tribe estimated the full-time unemployment rate at 77\% in the early 1960s. And the average household, which amounted to 4.6 individuals, earned only $916 per year.\textsuperscript{31}

Most jobs available on the reservation required low skill, promised little earning potential, and offered few opportunities for advancement. Even if good-paying jobs were available, most Apache still lacked the skills to handle such jobs. The BIA offered the Relocation Program, but these training opportunities generally focused on skill sets destined for low-wage jobs: auto mechanic, diesel mechanic, power sewing machine operator, cosmetology, dry cleaning, welding, and practical nursing. Furthermore, the BIA designed this Termination Era program to encourage Native Americans to leave

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Basso, \textit{The Cibecue Apache}, p. 22
\textsuperscript{31} White Mountain Apache Tribe, \textit{Overall Economic Development Program}. 232
reservations to find jobs, thus undermining tribal sovereignty and economic self-sufficiency.\textsuperscript{32} A Harvard study conducted in 1967 concluded that the BIA “has not been willing to sacrifice efficiency in the short term for a long-term creation of skills and responsibility among Indians.” This attitude led to frustration with many of the BIA’s training programs and subsequently their cancellation, reducing training opportunities for Native Americans.\textsuperscript{33} With few viable opportunities, education in technical and management skills remained a major problem on the reservation.

The Apache knew they lacked expertise in business, human resource, and land management. When starting tribal enterprises, they quickly found out they had to depend on educated non-Indians to fill management positions. Initially in 1954 the Tribal Council hired Apaches to run the WMRE, which almost led to its failure. Nelson Lupe, who helped establish this enterprise, became quite frustrated with the inability of tribal members to properly handle money, keep financial records, and manage human resources. He realized that the WMRE would not become a vehicle for self-determination if the Tribe depended on non-Indians to run it. He admitted, “[T]his is where we need education. To take over our business. This recreation [enterprise] is getting to be a pretty big business for the tribe. We need our own tribal members to take responsible positions as managers or clerks or something, to really make it go.” Not until the mid-1960s did Lupe believe “we’re taking hold of the thing that I envisioned” when the Tribe established the WMRE.\textsuperscript{34} Even though the Apache improved their business acumen by the mid-1960s, the Tribe was far from solving the education problem. Mary Riley, a major force behind the establishment of FATCO and the growth of the WMRE, asserted in a speech given before BIA Phoenix Area officials, “We still do not have the education and technical skills in many areas.” Nonetheless, like Lupe, she was under the impression that “[t]he process of learning to do things for ourselves… is

\textsuperscript{34} Cantwell, p. 41.
growing among my people. We do more for ourselves each year, including providing more opportunities for Apache youth to prepare for and attend college and post-secondary school vocational institutions.”

The Tribe took several measures to rectify the expertise problem on the reservation. In 1956 Superintendent Hawley and the Tribal Council started a Summer Youth Camp Program that focused on providing land management skills for teenagers. Profits from tribal enterprises funded the program and technical experts from the various BIA land management departments on the reservation instructed the students. By the early 1960s, the popular program could no longer accommodate all requests. Each summer for eight weeks hundreds of Apache teenagers built erosion control structures, learned juniper eradication techniques, reseeded rangelands, and thinned and pruned young trees. Although these skills weren’t highly technical, the exposure to natural resource work acted as a gateway of interest, leading some young Apaches towards professional training. In 1961 the Tribal Council initiated a scholarship program, providing ten Apache with college scholarships and supporting another eleven participating in post-high school vocational training. The number of scholarships given from year to year depended on the availability of funds, but the program became a permanent tribal service. And 1962 marked the inauguration of the tribal newspaper, *The Fort Apache Scout*. For the first time, the Tribal Council and tribal members had an independent organ to voice opinions, educate the populace about federal policies, and build a sense of community. BIA staff and Tribal Council submissions dominated the early years of the paper. But by the late 1960s, as the first generation of college educated tribal members returned to the reservation, the Apache voice emerged. With the establishment of *The Fort Apache Scout*, the

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37 *Overall Economic Development Program*, p. 8.
White Mountain Apache turned a tool of Euro-American exploitation, the written word, on its head, further empowering the Tribe’s courageous navigation into the Euro-American world.\textsuperscript{38}

The Tribe also applied for federal economic development programs independent of the BIA. Throughout the 1960s, as soon as Congress enacted economic development legislation, tribal leaders shot letters off to the administering agencies.\textsuperscript{39} Lester Oliver, Tribal Chairman from 1958-1966, heavily pushed economic development for the Apache in the 1960s. Having participated in the tribal government since the 1930s, he also witnessed a political evolution in the Tribal Council:

> The progress of the Tribal Council as such was at a slow pace during the first ten years, as this was something new to them. They had never had to make serious decisions for themselves or for the tribe on any major issues. The Bureau of Indian Affairs who acted as a guardian and trustee for the Tribe had always made decisions for them. Nevertheless the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council has come a long way in the second ten years, even though they had to overcome many factors such as tribal beliefs, tribal customs and traditions and have learned to operate as a business council and as a democratic body.\textsuperscript{40}

Oliver’s characterization only partially rang true. The Tribal Council of the 1960s depended far less on the BIA than in its early years. But Oliver’s dismissal of tribal culture reflected a simplistic view - prevalent among BIA personnel and many pro-development tribal leaders at the time - that Native American traditions impeded economic progress.\textsuperscript{41} A new generation of tribal leaders would eventually purge that attitude in the late 1960s as they innovatively worked to combine Apache cultural values with economic development.

\textsuperscript{38} On Native American empowerment through the printed press, see McNickle, \textit{Native American Tribalism}, p. xxi.

\textsuperscript{39} Lester Oliver to Eugene P. Foley, November, 1965, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 70, File #12552-61, Box #8. Fred Banashley to Eugene P. Foley, January 19, 1966, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 70, File #12552-61, Box #8.

\textsuperscript{40} Lester Oliver, “Progress of the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council,” \textit{The Timberline} 8 (April, 1961): 2, 4.

In the mean time, in contrast to Oliver’s views, positive economic experiences with the WMRE in the 1950s proved more important to the evolution of the Tribal Council than the outright dismissal of tribal culture. Based on this experience, the Council felt comfortable exploiting multiple avenues of economic development in the 1960s. They worked with Area Redevelopment Administration (ARA), Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Accelerated Public Works Program (APWA), and the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). Mirroring the pattern at the national level, the White Mountain Apache circumvented the authority of the BIA, instituted tribal bureaucracies, and learned how to operate as a government.

In a variety of ways, these federal programs contributed to the development of natural resources on the reservation. President Kennedy’s APWA, a smaller-scale version of the New Deal Era’s Public Works Administration, provided 150 temporary jobs for Apaches with the BIA’s Branch of Land Operations and the Forestry Division in the early 1960s. A large number of these jobs involved range and forest restoration and management: juniper eradication, brush control, forest improvement, cottonwood control, construction of cattle guards, and stock tank sealing. In 1965 the Tribe started a Head Start program, a Neighborhood Youth Corps, and a Job Corps program, which Nelson Lupe along with Raymond Kane organized, with OEO funds. The Neighborhood Youth Corps, like the APWA, provided experience for 450 young Apache between the ages of 16 and 21, many of whom worked on forest and range restoration projects. In 1966 the OEO gave the Tribe another $100,000 grant to employ tribal members in WMRE improvement projects.  

More importantly, however, these economic development programs helped the White Mountain Apache gain a measure of independence from the BIA. For example, the EDA funded a sorely needed

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forest inventory, which hadn’t been conducted since 1952, that created more jobs on the reservation and allowed the Tribe to predict “accurate long-range utilization of the Tribe’s vast forest resources.” The grant allowed the Tribe to hire a private consulting firm to conduct the inventory, independent of the BIA, to get a second opinion on how to manage their forests. These sorts of independent assessments would eventually lead the Tribe to more overtly and authoritatively question the BIA’s management history. Overall, these programs pleased the Apache people. Mary Riley pointedly described the OEO programs to BIA officials at a Phoenix Area Office meeting as “the most wonderful programs we have had on the White Mountain [Fort Apache] Reservation in many years.” For the first time the Apache people held the reigns of administration for their own community service and economic development programs.

By administering these programs, tribal leaders assumed greater confidence to take matters into their own hands. Tribal officials learned to lobby directly to local Congressman, Representative George F. Senner and Senator Carl Hayden, for additional economic development funds. The Alchesay National Fish Hatchery, a second reservation hatchery, was a product of these efforts. Fishing demands increased dramatically on the reservation in the late 1950s as the Tribe created more lakes and the WMRE gained more notoriety with the public. Williams Creek Hatchery couldn’t keep up with the pace; consequently the Tribe requested a second federal hatchery. The FWS and the Tribe completed Alchesay, which became the second largest hatchery in the state of Arizona, in October of 1962. Similar to the relationship the Tribe maintained with the FWS for Williams Creek, the FWS agreed to allocate two-thirds of the fish produced at the hatchery to the Apache in return for the use of the land. The hatchery

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also provided game fish to other Arizona tribes and the surrounding national forests. Originally, the Tribe wanted to name the hatchery in honor of Hayden, who was integral in obtaining funds to finish the project. Hayden, who failed to show up for the dedication, humbly suggested that the Apache should name the hatchery in honor of his “long-time friend” Chief Baha Alchesay, the last White Mountain Apache hereditary chief who had passed away in 1952. The new hatchery officially began operations in January of 1963 with the transplant of six tons of rainbow trout to its breeding ponds.  

Often frustrated with BIA bureaucracy, tribal leaders also sent letters to Senner and Hayden to shake up the BIA when requests became mired in red tape. In one letter Chairman Oliver wryly surmised about a long-lost request to Hayden: “I assume that our original request [for a mineral survey] of a year and a half ago has been routed through the proper channels for action. However, it would seem that in this length of time we should have been advised as to the status of our request.” Another avenue of protest was to bypass normal BIA channels and direct requests directly to Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall. In 1964 Chairman Oliver sent a long letter to Udall detailing infrastructural, educational, housing, and economic needs, politely highlighting the government’s neglect of trusteeship on the reservation. One of the most surprising areas of neglect was that the Fort Apache Indian Reservation still lacked an accurate cadastral survey of their lands and the reservation boundary. Non-Indians were beginning to build homes near the reservation boundary, raising questions of rightful ownership of land. Oliver diplomatically closed the letter by clearly stating the deficiencies in no way comprised “complaints but barriers to our future development.” Perhaps attempting to incite interagency competition, Oliver also

47 Lester Oliver to Carl Hayden, December 4, 1964; Lester Oliver to Carl Hayden, November 30, 1964; Charles P. Corke to George F. Senner, January 25, 1965, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 77, File #6700, Box #8.
48 Oliver to Hayden, November 30, 1964.
noted that the Tribe had successfully worked with the OEO.\footnote{Lester Oliver to Stewart Udall, December 29, 1964, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 77, File #6700, Box #8.} Clearly, by the mid-1960s, the Tribe showed obvious signs of overt political engagement, rather than an obligatory dependent relationship.

Despite the relative success of the White Mountain Apache and their willingness to exploit multiple pathways of development, tension between the “Apache way” and Western science and technology continued to fester. The tribal government and the Apache people struggled with the implications of economic development. While most Apaches, especially the younger generation, wished to move out of wickiups into modern housing, experience the benefits of modern medicine, and earn a comfortable living, they also understood the potential consequences of adopting a capitalist economic system. Tradeoffs, they came to realize, were a part of all adaptations. And as the Apache adapted to their new circumstances, their social life would change forever.

The rise of the wage economy on the reservation had profound implications for Apache social organization and cultural traditions. Prior to the 1950s, family clusters living in close proximity to each other worked together to support themselves. Family clusters represented a sedentary remnant of the mobile local group that characterized Western Apache life before the reservation days. When hard times fell on one or several families, the better off would supply those with what they needed to survive. As wage labor more permanently infiltrated the Apache economy in the 1950s, the unit of economic subsistence devolved into the nuclear household. This unit generally consisted of a married couple, their children, and sometimes other close relatives living in dwellings within a few feet of each other. Older Apache, witnessing a break from traditional practices, complained about wage earners not sharing their wealth. Nuclear households began accumulating material goods when others suffered. Keith Basso, an anthropologist who earned the respect of the Apache and worked with them for over thirty years, captured this change through one of his elder informants living in Cibecue in the 1960s:
When I was growing up I lived at Oak Creek and there were about ten *gowa* [households] shared with each other. If some of those people had no food they could get it from another *gowa*. One time in the winter the men went hunting. But they had bad luck and didn’t kill any deer. The next day it was the same way. The same again, the day after that. Then all those men went out again. All except one had bad luck. The man that had good luck killed four deer—all at the same place. It took him all day to butcher them. That night, he took the meat from three deer and went around with it to all those other *gowa*. He gave meat to the people who were hungry. Some were not his relatives, but he gave it to them anyway because he knew they were hungry…. Today some of these *gowa* in Cibecue have money. Some of them own lots of cattle and have good jobs. But they keep their money and don’t share it. If they gave it away, they say, their babies would starve, but they could spare some of it. I know that.⁵⁰

Because of the breakdown in Apache social organization, Eva Watt, another Apache elder, believed “[t]here’s lots more fighting nowadays. People get jealous of each other, jealous of what they own, and they get mad and say mean things and then they want to fight.”⁵¹ This sort of resentment towards wage earners would also play a major role in the Tribe’s ability to start businesses. In fact, the cultural value of reciprocity has remained one of the main reasons why most entrepreneurial endeavors continued to be tribally owned. Almost all Apache individuals who have attempted to start a business have failed.⁵²

The tribal government and the Apache people saw the breakdown of social organization and cultural traditions as a major problem. They understood that the preservation, restoration, and integration of Apache cultural values into the economic development plans of the reservation remained paramount to the Tribe’s survival. Part of the solution lay in restoring a sense of place for tribal members, reconnecting them to their traditional relationships with the homeland. Fortunately, even with the intensification of economic development on the reservation, the 1960s saw the Tribe move towards eco-cultural restoration, going beyond preparing natural resources solely for material consumption. First, however, before instituting a plan for cultural restoration, the Tribe had to take back lands they “lost” during the Indian New Deal, the Mount Thomas and Black River Roadless Areas.

Resistance: Not your Wilderness, But our Wilderness

The White Mountain Apache established the Fort Apache Timber Company (FATCO) in 1961, which signaled the beginning of the end for outside exploitation of the reservation forest ecosystem. FATCO experienced two iterations of existence before finally settling as a successful enterprise. The first manifestation, the Apache Mercantile Company, and the second manifestation, Fort Apache Wholesale Lumber Company, proved un-profitable. Nonetheless, decisions associated with these businesses solidified the Apache’s determination to control their forest resources. In 1959 the Tribal Council voted against a pending contract with Western Forest Sales Corporation to construct a plywood plant on the reservation. Essentially, the Council feared that all forest resources on the reservation would end up in the hands of two non-Indian companies: Western Forest Sales Corporation and Southwest Lumber Mills. Their production operations combined would leave nothing for the Tribe’s budding timber company. Chairman Oliver believed that only through controlling their own resources and through “pride and ownership” would his people “have a greater opportunity to develop and to gain experience in management and know how.” Eventually, the operations of FATCO reached the capacity to efficiently and profitably develop all timber resources on the reservation. By the 1970s, the Tribe no longer needed the revenue from non-Indian timber contracts and ended all leases with other timber companies. The growth of FATCO was paramount to the Tribe’s quest to control their forest resources. However, this wouldn’t have happened if they hadn’t challenged the federal government and a growing wilderness movement to regain control of the roadless areas on Fort Apache.

In the late 1950s, the Tribe worked to declassify the roadless areas on Fort Apache “in view of the good market conditions and the need for revenue by the tribe.”\(^{56}\) On the surface, such an action seemed to counter attempts to protect the Apache trout and compromise the “wilderness” qualities of the reservation that attracted so many tourists. But the motivation for declassification wasn’t entirely economic. While economics played a role, tribal control of reservation resources played a bigger role. Wilderness advocates’ inclusion of Mount Thomas (Baldy) and Black River Roadless Areas on an early version of the federal wilderness system bill (S. 4028) aroused Apache concerns over resource control. In fact, almost all tribes with roadless areas established under Secretarial Order 486 during the Indian New Deal, except the Arapaho and Shoshone on the Wind River Reservation and the Ute Mountain Utes, opposed this bill. Lester Oliver, like other tribal leaders, worried about the potential for increased federal oversight on reservation lands. Essentially, tribal leaders across the nation saw the bill as a threat to tribal sovereignty. Under Secretarial Order 486, tribes could use timber resources within the bounds of a roadless area if dire economic circumstances required it. In contrast, the wilderness bill eliminated this option.\(^{57}\)

In 1958 Oliver testified at a Wilderness Bill Congressional hearing held in Albuquerque. He stated that if the federal government designated national wilderness areas on reservations, the rules governing their management required flexibility and consideration of the special economic conditions of Native Americans. The White Mountain Apache couldn’t afford to lose access to what amounted to 14% of their timber resources (approximately 897 million board feet).\(^{58}\) While not necessarily opposed to the

\(^{56}\) White Mountain Apache Tribal Council Resolution 56-26, June 5, 1956, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 54, File #9990-49, Box #6.

\(^{57}\) For a detailed analysis of Native American resistance to the Wilderness bill, see Diane L. Krahe, “Last Refuge” (Dissertation, Washington State University, May 2005), Ch. 5.

\(^{58}\) Prior to the delisting of Mount Thomas and Mount Baldy, the Tribe had access to approximately 619,000 acres of timber. The addition of the roadless areas to this pool added another 178,150 acres of which only approximately 100,000 acres were commercially harvestable, for a total of 719,686 acres. To calculate the percentage of forested area the roadless areas constituted, I used data from “Master Forest Management Plan,”
idea of wilderness areas, they needed assurance that they would have control over the resources within the boundaries of wilderness areas designated on their reservation. Oliver added, though, that perhaps “as a possible solution to this problem we could, as the old saying goes, give it back to the Indians.” 59

Even though a subsequent bill, S. 1123, included the language of tribal consent, momentum for declassification overwhelmed any hope of including tribal lands in the legislation. 60 Oliver’s latter suggestion prevailed. Almost all affected tribes still asked for the declassification of roadless areas on their reservations. In response, Congress dropped reservation roadless areas from later versions of the bill. Commissioner Emmons supported the Indians and funneled their request to Secretary of Interior Seaton. The DOI delisted Black River in 1959 and Mount Thomas in 1960, claiming that “[t]he respective tribes requested the elimination of these areas to facilitate the economic development of the areas.” 61 The support of the BIA and DOI was not surprising given their pro-development stance during the Termination Era. Prior to the delistings, the BIA had already allowed tribes to exploit resources in roadless areas.

As early as November 1951 the Tribal Council on Fort Apache requested permission from the Central Office to open up Black River Roadless Area to logging. To justify their position, they cited the provision in Secretarial Order 486 that stated logging was prohibited unless “the requirements of fire protection, commercial use for the Indians’ benefit or actual needs of the Indians clearly demand

60 Statement of Lester Oliver, Representative of the White Mountain Apache, in Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, National Wilderness Preservation Act: Hearings on S. 1123, 86th Cong., 1959, 448-449.
61 “Elimination of 325,000 Acres on Black River Area from List of Roadless Areas,” Federal Register 24, 64 (April 2, 1959): 2559-2560; “Elimination of 105,000 Acres on the Yakima Reservation Known as Goat Rocks Roadless Area, 130,000 Acres on Fort Apache Reservation Known as Mount Thomas Roadless Area, and 48,000 Acres on Yakima Reservation Known as Mount Adams Wild Area,” Federal Register 25, 183 (September 20, 1960): 9002-9003; see Krahe, “Last Refuge,” pp. 180-205.
otherwise.” They also concluded that logging “would not materially detract from the scenic value of the area, and the limited logging trails necessary to harvest the timber would greatly facilitate protection of this and adjacent areas from fire.” Commissioner Dillon Myer denied their request not on the grounds of protecting the wilderness qualities of Black River, but for legal and administrative reasons. He felt the additional work load would stress the “small forestry staff” on Fort Apache. Furthermore, the staff had yet to complete a comprehensive sustained-yield management plan for the reservation, thus jeopardizing the legality and economic potential of further timber sales. And lastly, the sale of timber would compromise the status of the contract with Southwest Lumber Mills, Inc. for the Maverick logging unit just north of Black River. Southwest Lumber Mills had built the only roads that could feed into Black River. So advertising the Black River unit would prove difficult because either a new lumber company would have to finagle a way to use roads built by Southwest or the new contract would automatically go to Southwest, which again presented legal issues. Myer concluded his remarks by reassuring the Apache and Superintendent Crow that “[w]hen you can cover the above points with sufficient clarity and in sufficient detail, we will be glad to give further consideration to the proposed Black River timber sale.” Ultimately, inadequate BIA staffing caused the denial of the request; thus holding back the economic progress of the Apache.

Eventually in 1956, under Commissioner Emmons, the BIA and DOI allowed logging operations to ensue in the Black River Roadless Area. Eliminating roadless areas fell in line with termination policy, chipping away at federal control over Native Americans and as some critics would argue, free up tribal resources and land for the exploitation of Euro-American industry. The BIA position at the time, after

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64 White Mountain Apache Tribal Council Resolution 56-26; H. Rex Lee to Frederick M. Haverland, September 6, 1956, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 54, File #9990-49, Box #6.
all, maintained that economic development would hasten assimilation and reintroduce the notion of private property on reservations, which historically led to the diffusion of tribal land to Euro-American entrepreneurs and investors. 

To legally justify the declassification, Emmons conveniently referred to IRA, which as whole was rejected by the termination-minded DOI and BIA as a valid policy. He used the fact that John Collier and Robert Marshall failed to consult tribal councils upon establishing roadless areas, thus violating the basic premise of IRA of including tribal governments in the decision-making processes concerning their lands. John Collier, incensed by the action and a staunch critic of termination policy, felt “invoking of that Act [IRA] to justify its hurried destruction of the roadless areas was ignorant if not insincere.” In a letter to George Marshall, Robert Marshall’s brother and an advocate for a national wilderness system, Collier admitted that he did not consult tribes and regretted that they didn’t have the chance to do so because “the consent [of a tribal council] would have had a persuasive value; and the educational effort… would have been all to the good.” He claimed, however, that such an exercise wasn’t feasible at the time because they “literally were drowned, hemmed-in, sometimes crushed, by hundreds of jobs which were technically necessary.”

Furthermore, he remarked that Secretarial Order 486 had been exhaustively vetted through the DOI’s Solicitor’s Office and was found not to be in violation of IRA (see Chapter 2). Ultimately, because the consultation wasn’t legally necessary and constituted one more burden in an already over-burdened agency, Collier and Marshall sacrificed it. Later in the letter, Collier reversed Emmons’s accusation and insinuated that the BIA, under the auspices of Commissioner Emmons, encouraged the tribes to fight the

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65 On the tendency of private property to end up in the hands of Euro-Americans see, for example, Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins*; Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*; Parman, *Indians and the American West*; Fixico, *Termination and Relocation*.

wilderness bill. In the end, however, tribal governments involved in the battle viewed Collier’s implementation of roadless areas as paternalistic and un-democratic. They came to resent the designations and used the wilderness bill as an opportunity to air their grievances. In addition to past issues with roadless areas, Native Americans at the same time were reacting in general to the DOI’s paternalistic propensity to withdraw federal services from tribes without consultation. The battle over roadless areas on reservations came on the heels of the forced termination of several tribes, a move that most Native Americans saw as paternalistic because Congress passed the legislation without tribal consent.

Regardless of the legal haggling between opposing BIA administrations, American Indians remained adamant about the declassification of roadless areas for economic and political reasons. Neither Collier nor Emmons had the best interest of Native Americans in mind. They were too busy defending the legacy of their policies. For Collier’s part, claiming Emmons coerced tribes into breaking up the reservation wilderness system denied American Indians agency in their own affairs. On the same token, Emmons used the fact that Collier didn’t gain tribal consent as a justification to eliminate one policy, while pursuing another policy without tribal consent, demonstrating a lack of respect for the political will and intellect of Native Americans. In both scenarios, American Indians became political dupes. Wising up to such ploys, Native Americans took matters into their own hands. They learned to use the system to their benefit. For them, a national wilderness system imposed on reservations meant more federal control over tribal resources; clearly, a political and economic reality tribal governments didn’t

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69 On the tendency for Native Americans to see forced assimilation as another form of paternalism see Parman, Indians and the American West, pp. 146-147.
desire. Lester Oliver and other tribal leaders recognized this. Even though the official reason for delisting published in the Federal Register stated economic liberalization of resources, ultimately threats to tribal sovereignty played a greater motivating role for Native Americans.

Even though Emmons supported the declassification of roadless areas because it ostensibly corresponded with termination policy, tribal governments co-opted his support to reassert tribal sovereignty. Forced termination reawakened their awareness of the economic and cultural importance of maintaining a land base through treaty rights. Tribal governments capitalized on the opportunity to remove federal policy from the books that inhibited their autonomy. In addition, they failed to exploit the roadless areas according to Emmons’s expectations. Many tribes began logging operations, but not to the maximum extent possible. And some tribes left these areas alone. The Shoshone and Arapahos on the Wind River Reservation never asked for the declassification of their roadless area. And several other tribes, including the Salish and Kootenai and the Yakima, eventually reestablished wilderness areas on their reservations. Almost as soon as the DOI declassified the Mount Thomas roadless area, the White Mountain Apache initiated a five-year feasibility study on creating a primitive area on Fort Apache.

The White Mountain Apache became the first tribe to put aside land for wilderness protection that the BIA designated as roadless areas under Secretarial Order 486. Unlike during the Indian New Deal, the Tribe defined the terms of the designation. In 1966 the Tribal Council set aside 7,400 acres of what was formerly the Mount Thomas Roadless Area (Fig. 12). The Tribe significantly reduced the size of the new wilderness, but its establishment marked another political victory for the Apache. The Tribal Council reaffirmed Mount Baldy (Mount Thomas) as a sacred site for tribal members on the assurance that “all resource advisors have agreed that non-use of this specific area will not detract from the development of timber or other resources or otherwise conflict with the management of the Fort Apache

Fig. 12 – Map of the Mount Baldy Wilderness Area – shaded area adjacent to Apache National Forest (Courtesy of National Archives).
Timber Company during the period specified.” Asserting tribal control over this resource, the WMRE and its tribal game wardens assumed jurisdiction for management and protection of the wilderness area.

The Apache’s further illustrated their new-found control by reaffirming their cultural connections with the wilderness area. Instead of having the land defined by outsiders, they developed their own definition of wilderness. The Tribal Council considered multiple values when studying the possibility of reestablishing a “wilderness” area on the reservation. Besides Mount Baldy’s wilderness quality, three other values influenced the Tribes decision: biodiversity, economics, and religion. First, although the Tribe failed to articulate their reasoning in the vernacular of biodiversity, their efforts to restore the Apache trout clearly demonstrated their concern for biodiversity loss. Mount Baldy remained the last refuge for the Apache trout. Having already limited fishing and camping along streams in the wilderness area, they more recently had erected fish barriers to prevent the migration of the non-native rainbow trout into Apache trout habitat. Creating Mount Baldy wilderness area provided another layer of protection, buffering the trout’s habitat from timber and grazing activities.

Second, as was evident from the Tribal Council resolution that established Mount Baldy, economic concerns delineated the extent and duration of the wilderness area. The approximately 100,000 acre reduction in size from the original roadless area resulted from the Tribe’s determination of the economic value of timber resources in the Mount Thomas area. Even as the Tribal Council passed the resolution, some tribal members, such as Councilman Ronnie Lupe, questioned the wisdom of restricted use of timber resources when a majority of tribal members lived in poverty. Furthermore, the Tribal resolution was temporary. The Tribal Council would revisit the status of Mount Baldy Wilderness area.

in five years. In essence, if economic conditions required it, the Tribe could still vote to reopen the area to logging. Besides timber, the WMRE stood to benefit from the wilderness area. Even though the Tribal Council made the wilderness area off-limits to non-Apache except under special permit, Mount Baldy constituted a reservoir for much of the game that attracted hunters and wildlife watchers to the reservation. James Sparks, Manager of the WMRE, and tribal land managers held out hopes that if the Apache trout restoration proved successful, someday people might travel to the reservation because it remained the last location in Arizona one could angle for the state’s only native trout. As early as 1959, the Tribe advertised in public relations pamphlets that the “wily Arizona native trout” had its “last stronghold in the high wilderness areas” of Fort Apache.\footnote{“Apaches Help Native Trout in Fight for Survival,” \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 4 (December, 1965): 3; “Anglers Harvesting Fish on Christmas Tree Lake,” \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 8 (October 1969): 1, 3; White Mountain Apache Tribal Council, \textit{White Mountain Apache Indians}, p. 23.}

Finally, the Apache religion perhaps played the strongest role in the decision. The “White Mountain,” as it is known by the White Mountain Apache, had long been a sacred site – the “home of the wind” and spirits important in Apache religion. The mountain also provided a source of medicinal and ceremonial plants and contained a number of shrines, burial sites, and natural features of religious importance. Mount Baldy, to the White Mountain Apache, was, and still is, somewhat analogous to a Christian church as a place of worship. When the Tribal Council established the wilderness area, they intended to restore for some and preserve for others a place of spiritual song and prayer. From her Tribal Council seat, Mary Riley pushed for the protection of the “White Mountain.” Believing in its sacredness and its symbolism of Apache cultural persistence, she was “always stingy with the White Mountain,” drawing the line against the pro-development faction of the Tribe. For Riley, the preservation of Mount Baldy symbolized the cultural survival of the Tribe. She certainly advocated for economic development, but she also insisted that development proceed through the “Apache way.” She felt that the mountain
humbled and reminded her to “pray [and r]emember in the Apache way, there is someone bigger than we are. Never forget God, and remember the White Mountain, and all that is sacred.”\(^{75}\)

In 1970 the Tribe once again voted to “maintain and manage” Mount Baldy as a “Primitive Area.”\(^{76}\) More importantly, this resolution added ecological integrity to their list of values. New language in the resolution clarified the ecological importance of the Mount Baldy watershed: “[D]evelopment and disturbance in this area could have detrimental effects on wildlife, water resources, stream flow and cause severe erosion problems.”\(^{77}\) This statement reflected the Tribe’s move towards ecological principles as a guiding management philosophy, which affirmed Mount Baldy’s connection to the rest of the reservation. The health of tribal herds, timber, and recreational resources all started with the comprehensive management of the reservation watershed. Fred Banashley, Sr., Tribal Chairman from 1970 to 1974, claimed, “Who more than the Apache should be a fervent ecologist? The Apache knows from history how important the environment is for survival. Who more than the Indian should understand that exploitation, no matter how great the need, does not have to mean spoliation.”\(^{78}\) So the designation of Mount Baldy wilderness area was an extension of a larger plan attempting to integrate cultural, economic, and ecological concerns. Ecology didn’t mean walking lightly on the land; the term had a broader meaning for the Apache. The early 1970s marked the time when the Tribe began to cognizantly combine Western ecological principles with their pre-reservation tradition of active management of their homeland, a pattern that would become more evident in the future. The cultural meaning of Mount Baldy continued to diversify as the White Mountain Apache gained more control over reservation resources.

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\(^{75}\) “After 20 Good Years, Riley Leaves Political Arena,” *Fort Apache Scout* 17 (April 21, 1978): 8, 11.

\(^{76}\) White Mountain Apache Tribal Resolution 70-193, December 9, 1970, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 54, File #346-67, Box #7.

\(^{77}\) White Mountain Apache Tribal Resolution 70-193.

Later in the 1970s, the restoration of mental and physical health of tribal members became a focal point of the sacred mountain. Leroy Lupe, director of the Alcoholism Rehabilitation Program on the reservation, revived yearly pilgrimages up the mountain as a measure to address the alcohol problem among tribal members. He wanted “to show people that there is more than just hanging around Whiteriver waiting to get drunk.” Lupe believed alcohol rehabilitation involved re-building a sense of place – for too long the culturally disruptive forces of Western society had physically, spiritually, and emotionally alienated the Apache from their own lands even though they still lived on them. Poverty and cultural disruption dissolved community ties and stability, thus respect for the land and oneself. Lupe remarked that “[t]he most precious feeling one cherishes is the feeling of being wanted, welcomed and being at home. This is how it should be for all the Apache Tribal members … for them to enjoy what we have here on our reservation, and not to be deprived of the things which are theirs. … They should be made to feel proud of their beautiful reservation.” Not only did the preservation of the “White Mountain” embody a spiritual restoration, but it also became a tool for the restoration of health among the Apache.

The establishment of Mount Baldy Wilderness Area foremost was an act of resistance, but it also contained elements of exchange. The action represented the Tribe’s continued quest to culturally, politically, and physically define boundaries. These boundaries, however, remained fluid and porous, reflecting the Apache propensity for adaptation. A shift in power relations changed the process by which the hybridization of Apache and Western values occurred. Instead of the historical pattern of imposition of Western values, which required the Apache to react and resist, political actions such as the designation of Mount Baldy signaled a preemptive, controlled acquisition of Western values. Mount Baldy also symbolized the restoration of Apache health and cultural and spiritual values, while

simultaneously embracing the Euro-American values of wilderness and economic development. Its new incarnation represented the possible coexistence of both social worlds. The continued restoration of the Apache trout, whose efforts intensified in the 1960s, further exemplified this political spirit.

**Exchange: Apache Trout Restoration**

Despite the closing of Apache trout streams to fishing and camping in 1952, their populations continued to decline, suggesting passive restoration wasn’t the solution; clearly, other factors besides overfishing caused the demise of this species. The White Mountain Apache and FWS biologists had long known that overfishing led to a restriction in the Apache trout’s distribution, but other environmental forces inhibited the recovery of these remaining populations to their original range. Logging and grazing had destroyed habitat, hybridization with rainbow trout had compromised the genetic integrity of the species, and competition with the larger introduced game species for food and microhabitat that offered protection from predators had further reduced their former geographic range. This realization led the White Mountain Apache to two important political decisions that proved significant to the Apache trout in the 1960s; first, the creation of Mount Baldy wilderness area, which included the headwaters that amounted to the last refuge for the species; and second, their decision to solicit the FWS for technical assistance in the restoration of the species.

The political impetus to save the Apache trout came from the White Mountain Apache. However, a fortunate turn of events on the national scale aided their decision to consult with the FWS: working with endangered species became in vogue. Previously, the FWS showed limited interest in the Apache trout. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s when the Tribe worked to preserve the Apache trout, the FWS played an advisory role. After the proposal in the early 1940s to turn Williams Creek Fish Hatchery into a breeding ground for the struggling species died, the FWS’s financial support for the Apache trout

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waned. Over the next twenty years, their conservation effort consisted of the discontinuance of stocking headwater streams on Fort Apache, preventing “further contamination of waters containing the native trout with other species that may hybridize or otherwise dilute this pure strain.”

In general, despite the FWS’s brief flirtation with endangered species during the New Deal, World War II and relatively a conservative Congress after the War discouraged further concentrated interest in endangered species until the 1960s. The revived concern closely tracked with the American public’s new-found concern about non-game species threatened with extinction. Furthermore, research conducted by academic ecologists and zoologists emphasizing the complexity of ecosystems, and the importance of non-game species garnered more attention from FWS personnel at this time. The confluence of increasing scientific support for the urgency and importance of protecting non-game species and the growing public concern drove Congress and the FWS towards a more active role in the recovery of endangered species. To kick this initiative off, the FWS created the Committee on Rare and Endangered Wildlife Species in 1964, which published the first official list of endangered species in the United States, including the Apache trout. Eventually, the FWS capitalized on the “headline value” of endangered species as a useful ploy to increase the agencies funding opportunities. For their part, politicians began accumulating political capital by investing time in promoting and seeking funds for endangered species restoration projects. Relative to the Apache and the efforts of the WMRE, the FWS

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and politicians came late to the game. All of the sudden, partly out of legitimate concern and partly out of political expedience, the Apache trout received unprecedented levels of attention.  

In December of 1964, Congressman George F. Senner, Jr., a Democrat from Arizona, noticed “considerable interest had been generated regarding” the preservation of the Apache trout. He announced through a press release, without knowing the details and history of past Apache work to save this species, that the FWS, the White Mountain Apache, and the Arizona Department of Fish and Game (ADGF) planned to work together to save the Apache trout. Lamenting the trout’s predicament, he pointed out the precipitous decline of the species from its former distribution of 360 miles of streams down to two streams on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. He stated with alarm, as if the information were new, that “[o]fficials of the Bureau of Sports Fisheries [FWS] have warned the rare trout are in danger of being wiped out and that a single forest fire could destroy all trace of the high-spirited fish.”

The DOI also rushed to gain positive press through the project. In a news release titled “Program Speeded to Save Rare Arizona Trout,” Interior officials gave the impression that the FWS was on top of the matter. The news release claimed that in the summer of 1964 the White Mountain Apache Tribe asked the FWS to recommend a program to save the Apache trout. If someone didn’t know better, the news release made it sound as if the effort to save the endangered Apache trout had just begun. Hidden from the reader was the long history of the Tribe’s struggle to convince the FWS that rescuing the Apache trout was a worthy endeavor.

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87 John S. Gottschalk to George F. Senner, January 15, 1965, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 931, File #2602, Box #45.  
Science also confirmed what had long been suspected by local land managers and Apaches that had closely worked with the Apache trout: the Apache trout and the Gila trout were separate species. Prior to the 1960s, the Apache trout had a muddled taxonomic history. In the 1940s, Robert Miller, a zoologist from the University of Michigan, took on the unenviable job of straightening out the taxonomy of western trout species. No zoologist before him had attempted a comprehensive taxonomy of southwestern trout. Miller admitted that the historic extent and “notorious variability” of southwestern trout species “may never be securely clarified” due to poor records, lost specimens, overfishing, introduction of non-native trout, and habitat destruction. Despite numerous reports since the late nineteenth century indicating that a species of trout endemic to Arizona existed in the White Mountains, Miller “tentatively referred all Arizona trout” to the Gila trout.  

“Official” confusion about the status of the Apache trout began clearing up in 1964, when Dan Regan, a graduate student at Colorado State University, studied what he assumed were a number of Gila trout populations, one of which was from Ord Creek on Fort Apache. He discovered significant morphological differences among the study populations. The Fort Apache population had shorter fins, proportionally smaller bodies, and fewer and larger spots than other Gila trout populations. Regan concluded that the Fort Apache population might be a separate species. Consequently, this information led the FWS to consider the Apache trout a separate species. Later studies would uncover genetic differences between Apache trout and Gila trout populations. However, not until Robert Miller published a paper in *Copeia* in 1972 did the Apache trout

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91 Dan M. Regan, “Comparison of Morphometric Measurements for Gila Trout and Ord Creek Trout” (Report Fed. Aid Project F-22-R, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, 1964).
officially receive its new scientific name, *Salmo apache*, in honor of White Mountain Apache efforts to save the species.\textsuperscript{92}

The “new” taxonomic status of the Apache trout made protecting it all the more imperative. No longer a subspecies of the Gila trout, which the FWS also considered threatened with extinction, the Apache trout “officially” had a sudden reduction in its geographic range.\textsuperscript{93} Around the same time Regan made his morphometric measurements, the FWS, WMRE, and the ADGF conducted a population survey that revealed that the Apache trout only inhabited two streams on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation: Ord Creek and East Fork. Because of these surveys and with the encouragement of the FWS, in 1962 the White Mountain Apache asked the ADGF for assistance in an experimental propagation program. The federal hatcheries on the reservation, which had their hands full raising game fish, hadn’t been allocated any funds for experimental work with endangered species. For the time being, the state had to handle any research on Apache trout propagation.\textsuperscript{94} The state quickly agreed to cooperate with the Tribe. Subsequently, tribal game wardens helped the ADGF collect breeding stock from Ord Creek for transfer to Sterling Springs Hatchery, a state facility, near Flagstaff. Within a year, the ADGF successfully raised a brood and planted a population in North Canyon in the Kaibab National Forest, which incidentally was outside the historic range of the species. ADGF biologists chose this site because of its proximity to the hatchery and because fisheries managers had never introduced non-native trout to this stream. In 1965, after this population persisted for two years, the state began a vigorous breeding program, which over

\textsuperscript{92} Miller, “Classification of the Native Trouts of Arizona,” p. 403.


\textsuperscript{94} “Memorandum: Region 2 – Report of Activities,” Garlick to Director.
the next forty years would introduce 486,000 pounds of Apache trout into thirty-five streams, with most reintroductions occurring within the species historic geographic distribution.\textsuperscript{95}

The success of the state propagation program, however, lay in the hands of the White Mountain Apache. The only existing genetically pure strains of the Apache trout survived on Fort Apache. If these populations perished, saving the Apache trout would become a futile exercise. In 1964 the Apache, with the support of the ADGF, once again requested technical assistance from the FWS to design a restoration plan for the disappearing trout. The FWS complied and dispatched John K. Anderson, a fishery management biologist from their Springerville operation, to assist the Apache. Anderson had helped conduct creel censuses on the reservation for the past few years, so he was familiar with the reservation landscape. He completed his assessment in September of 1964 and submitted it to the Tribal Council. Reflecting the tentative taxonomic status of the Apache trout, Anderson entitled the report “Preliminary Management Proposals for \textit{Salmo Gila} (the Gila Trout) on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.” Still referring to the Apache trout as the Gila trout, he reaffirmed what had been known by the Apache for over decade, “It appears that the future of the Gila Trout is more in doubt than was earlier surmised.”\textsuperscript{96} In an odd parallel with federal bureaucrats concerned about the White Mountain Apache’s dire socioeconomic conditions, Anderson stated the obvious: the survival of the Apache trout was in peril. Only in this instance, ironically, the federal government focused on restoring pure populations of the species, rather than encouraging assimilation. Unlike with federal plans for the White Mountain Apache and other Native American tribes, the complete assimilation or annihilation of one species for the sake of economic gain had become ethically untenable. The Apache effort to save the


\textsuperscript{96} Anderson, “Preliminary Management Proposal for \textit{Salmo gila}.”
Apache trout spoke to this hypocrisy. The Tribal Council adopted the plan “in principle” by a vote of 9 for and 0 against through Tribal Resolution on November 10, 1964. And by agreeing to “protect and preserve the native trout for future generations,” the Apache implicitly drew a connection between their fate and that of the Apache trout. Seeing the project as an investment in the future, the Tribal Council decided to fully fund the restoration project and directed the WMRE to carry out the restoration.97

Anderson recommended both short-term and long-term goals. In the short-term the Tribe should continue to close Ord Creek and the East Fork of the White River to fishing. The Tribe should also construct fifteen-foot vertical barrier dams on the lower reaches of these streams to prevent the migration of rainbow trout into the upper reaches of these streams. In order to reduce competition and the potential for further hybridization, Anderson suggested the removal of all non-native trout. The Tribal Council rejected a fourth recommendation on the grounds that it would compromise tribal sovereignty: the inclusion of the tribal regulation to close Ord Creek and East Fork in the Arizona Game and Fish regulations. The long-term goals entailed a geographic expansion of the short-term goals. Anderson went on to recommend the exclusion, with barrier dams, and removal of non-native trout from the entire Bonito Creek Drainage, including Hurricane Lake, upper Big Diamond Creek, and upper Paradise Creek. Lastly, he recommended the Tribe construct a lake at the confluence of restored Apache trout streams. This lake would function to protect and enlarge the breeding population of the species. Furthermore, the lake would become a source of eggs for hatchery propagation. Anderson left the Tribe

97 The complete text of the resolution is “Whereas, the Salmo Gila (Arizona Native Trout) is considered to be a rare and endangered species, and Whereas, this fish is found only in the headwaters of certain streams on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, and Whereas, the White Mountain Apache Tribe wishes to protect and preserve the native trout for future generations. Be It Resolved that the [preliminary management plan] … be adopted in principle, and Be It Further Resolved that the White Mountain Recreation Enterprise Board of Directors be authorized to designate closed and open streams or stream sections in the implementation of the plan.” Resolution of the White Mountain Apache Tribe No. 64-123, November 10, 1964, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 931, File #2602, Box #45.
with the hope that someday “limited fishing may and should be permitted by horseback and back pack fishermen,” thus emphasizing the potential economic benefits of the project.\(^98\)

In a show of responsibility and tribal sovereignty, the Tribal Council decided to construct the barrier dams and Christmas Tree Lake with tribal funds. The OEO also kicked in some funds to hire labor through the Job Corps program. These individuals received on-the-job technical training from Anderson, Branch of Land Operations officials, and WMRE game wardens.\(^99\) Work began in 1965, with the crew first tackling Ord Creek and the East Fork of the White River. Then they moved on to Bonita, Sun, and Moon Creeks. The WMRE and Branch of Land Operations constructed the breeding lake in 1965 at the confluence of Sun and Moon Creeks, which filled with water by spring of 1967. The Tribe named the reservoir Christmas Tree Lake, after the blue spruce the Tribe had harvested from that location for Lyndon B. Johnson as the Nation’s Christmas tree in 1965.\(^100\)

After the lake filled, tribal game wardens, including Lydo Harvey, and volunteers from the Arizona Flycasters Association made trips on horseback into the Mount Baldy Wilderness Area to capture brood stock from Ord Creek and upper East Fork. They temporarily stunned the fish with “electro fishing devices,” collected them with dipping nets, and placed the fish in old-fashioned milk cans for transport down the mountain. Reidhead Cosay, who had worked for the WMRE since 1958, had the difficult job of keeping the pack horses calm as they descended the mountain with milk cans full of Apache trout draped over their backs. From there, a “fish truck” transported the captured Apache trout to Christmas

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\(^{98}\) Anderson, “Preliminary Management Proposal for *Salmo gila.*”


Tree Lake. Once the transplanted population had a chance to grow, the ADGF transported many of these fish to the state propagation program at the Sterling Springs Hatchery. By 1972, the ADGF and WMRE had reintroduced the Apache trout into eleven stream systems, nine of which were part of their historic range in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Tonto National Forest, and Fort Apache, and two of which that weren’t within their historic range, Kaibab National Forest and Coronado National Forest. According to subsequent surveys, eight of the eleven plants persisted through at least 1983. And further work on the reservation allowed for the spread of “natural populations of pure” Apache trout into an additional twelve streams on the reservation and the easterly adjacent Apaches-Sitgreaves National Forest.

On the federal level, in 1967 the FWS listed the Apache trout as endangered under the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966, the first formal federal act to mandate the conservation, protection, restoration, and propagation of endangered species. This Act represented a significant step towards preserving endangered species, but it contained major flaws. Early critics of this act considered it “toothless” because it failed to limit the taking of endangered species and offer any significant incentives for habitat protection. In many ways, the Act proved only a symbolic gesture to the public’s growing concerns about endangered species. Nonetheless, the limitations of the Act didn’t define the White Mountain Apache’s restoration program. Their efforts exceeded the mandates of the Act. Both closing Ord Creek and East Fork to fishing and establishing Mount Baldy Wilderness Area demonstrated the Tribe’s serious interest in restoring the species. The Tribe was under no legal

102 After the enactment of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the ADGF were prohibited from introducing Apache trout outside its historic range. FWS, Arizona Trout (Apache Trout) Recovery Plan, pp. 4-7.
obligation to adhere to the FWS’s recommendations, but they implemented them anyway. And despite
the Tribe’s relatively impoverished condition, they chose to fund the Apache trout restoration project.
As with the development of the WMRE, the Tribe rejected short-term gains for what they perceived as
long-term economic and moral benefits. This act of self-determination also paid political dividends for
the Tribe in future battles over reservation resources with the state and federal governments.

By the end of the 1960s, the Apache trout had come a long way from its once restricted range of two
streams on Fort Apache. Christmas Tree Lake opened for the first time to fishing in September 1969 for
two weeks. Three hundred twenty seven anglers from Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and
Indiana descended on the reservation for the opportunity to cast their lines for the rare Apache trout. On
the first day Emmon T. Wright of Phoenix caught a state-record-sized Apache trout at fifteen inches and
one pound, five ounces. However, the record failed to persist long, several hours later another lucky
angler caught a one-pound, six-ounce fish.105 Of course the fact that the opening of Christmas Tree Lake
offered the first opportunity to fish for the Apache trout in three decades didn’t hurt one’s chances to
break a record. The opening generated great press for the Apache because Christmas Tree Lake became
one of the few places in Arizona fishers could find the increasingly prized Arizona native.

As early as 1965, praise for the Tribe’s work began to appear in the primary newspaper in Phoenix,
the Arizona Republic. John Horne, a reporter who enjoyed fishing exclaimed, “Now, perhaps in the nick
of time, the Apache Indians have embarked on a program designed to save and preserve this beautiful
fish.”106 On the national level, the Apache received the DOI’s Conservation Service Award in 1970.
Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel singled out Nelson Lupe, Sr., Lydo Harvey, and Mary Riley for their
historic efforts to save the Apache trout. Hickel also acknowledged that the Tribe began restoration

105 “Anglers Harvesting Fish on Christmas Tree Lake,” Fort Apache Scout 8 (October, 1969); 1, 3.
efforts as early as 1952 through the WMRE and applauded “the wise use of limited numbers of these fish in the Reservation’s fishing program.”

Despite this positive attention, fresh trouble lay on the horizon. The White Mountain Apache’s mounting prestige in the conservation world would soon take a turn for the worse. Their seemingly good relationship with the FWS would be tested with the enactment of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973. And likewise, as the tribal government continued to fight for more control over fish and game management on the reservation, a jurisdictional battle with the state would ensue. When the FWS formally listed the Apache trout as an endangered species in 1973, this action foreshadowed bigger troubles to come. This new listing carried with it greater restrictions than the old listing under the 1966 Act. Most importantly for the recovery of the Apache trout, the ESA prohibited the taking of the species for sports fishing and bureaucratically hampered the propagation program. Under the ESA, the state and the WMRE had to seek special permits to proceed with a program that had been successful for a decade. Suddenly, not only did the Act halt the main means for reestablishing the species, it also curtailed any economic benefits the Apache might derive from their restoration efforts.

Although a minor event, the Apache trout situation would foreshadow major problems with potential critical habitat designations as the Tribe and FWS discovered large numbers of endangered species on the reservation in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Fortunately in the current instance, the FWS saw the irony in their decision to list the species as endangered. The AGFD and the Apache convinced the FWS that the endangered status was counterproductive towards the species’ recovery. The cooperative efforts between the Apache and the AGFD had already restored large numbers of natives to their former distribution. In 1975 the FWS downlisted the trout’s status to threatened, thus facilitating the cooperative propagation program and allowing the possibility of limited fishing on the reservation. With

Apache trout listed as threatened under the ESA, sport fishing became acceptable when employed to control overpopulation. In addition, the FWS no longer required special permits to handle specimens for the propagation program.109

Conclusion

The White Mountain Apache efforts to save the Apache trout, the establishment of Mount Baldy Wilderness Area, and the growing economic strength of Apache enterprises created the political gateway through which they assumed greater control of their eco-cultural resources. This pathway wasn’t without its troubles and the struggle remained far from over. Economic opportunities unevenly benefited the reservation population, Apache social and cultural values endured further disruption in the wake of intensified economic development, and the BIA still partly controlled range, forest, and watershed management on the reservation.

These troubles would continue to persist into the 1970s and 1980s, but the White Mountain Apache deliberately and methodically persevered. Restoration and economic development projects in the 1960s gave the Tribe future political leverage to take on the federal and state governments. Furthermore, although economic development furthered cultural and social disruption among the reservation population, restoration work modestly began to reverse the trend. Entering the 1960s, cultural uncertainty plagued the White Mountain Apache’s social and political milieu and taxonomic uncertainty obscured the Apache trout’s existence. Both, in their own ways, were enduring a crisis of identity. By the end of the 1960s, however, their respective identities began to re-solidify. The Apache, through efforts like the Apache trout restoration project, found greater political footing with state and federal government, increased control over knowledge production on the reservation, and discovered the

rudiments of cultural restoration. The Apache trout acquired recognition as a rare and endangered species. Together they continued recreating a new and viable way of life. The Tribe established a favorable reputation as natural resource managers and the Apache trout became a valuable ecological and economic asset. In this way, the Apache people and the Apache trout endured as co-agents of survival.
Chapter 7

Elk Restoration and Management: The Battle to Control Knowledge Production on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation

Making headways doesn’t really mean that you are on an easy street… That means we have technical people, management, people with certain abilities and qualifications. These are not easy to come by, and it’s a big challenge we have here. I guess our tribe has to keep aggressive in modern times, but we have to still hang onto the Apache point of view, rather than the melting-pot point of view. We want to maintain our identity for centuries to come. We’d like one day to establish Apache as one of the predominant languages in the world, one of the predominant societies in the world, not an elimination type, as some people have envisioned.

Ronnie Lupe, Tribal Chairman (1979)\(^1\)

Elk is a prominent character in the White Mountain Apache story “The Maiden from Whom They Disappeared into the Water: Inside Elk’s Belly.” This story takes place in a time when all animals “talked as we do now.” It is about the first time sickness spread among the Apache people and the actions they took to avoid it. To avoid the sickness, the “head man” said the people must move away from their homeland, dziłna· hodile (northeast of the White Mountains), to find “a different country where we will live as long as life exists.” Before leaving, however, the “head man” insisted that one family must leave a daughter behind. No family adhered to the request, so out of urgency, he decided to leave his daughter. The people packed all their belongings and began the journey. When they reached a river, they told the girl they had forgotten her toys. So as she returned to the camp to retrieve them, the river water rose, revealing a trail. The people followed the trail, disappearing under the water.

When the girl returned to the edge of the river, she found no evidence of where her people went. She desperately searched for tracks on both sides of the river to no avail. From this time on, though, the “girl had good luck because she was left behind and God looked after her.” Unaware of her “good luck,” she

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began to cry. This is when Elk found her, at which time he offered to help her cross the river. To transport her, Elk told her to crawl inside his belly through his anus. Fording the river killed Elk, but the girl survived and used Elk’s body for food and protection. She later encountered Coyote searching for food. Luckily at this time she turned into a porcupine, which afforded her protection from Coyote. Nonetheless, Coyote still harassed her for food. Losing her patience, she killed Coyote with Elk’s hip bone. From then on she was safe and happy.²

Elk in this story is a symbol of protection and sacrifice. In a modern story that originated in the 1970s, Elk would again help the Apache cross another barrier. Elk would become a significant player in the White Mountain Apache’s restoration of sovereignty over their homeland. The restoration of this species would also generate a significant source of income for the Tribe through the development of a world-class trophy elk hunt program.

The 1970s signified a time of exploration for the White Mountain Apache, exploration of what it meant to be a sovereign Native American nation. Tribes across the country tested the extent of tribal sovereignty through legislation, the courts, and cooperative agreements with federal and state authorities. In addition to these routes to political autonomy, the White Mountain Apache also explicitly challenged Western methods of knowledge production. In the Apache quest to control game and fish management on their homeland, they claimed that the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s (AGFD) management practices proved ineffective. If this was the case the Apache asked, then why do the AGFD have the authority to interfere with Apache game and fish regulations and management strategies? As part of the Apache’s strategy to control game management, the 1970s marked the first time that the Tribe articulated a division between Apache knowledge production and Western knowledge production.

² I paraphrased the story told by Bane Tithla in Goodwin’s, *Myths and Tales of the White Mountain Apache*, pp. 116-119.
During the 1970s and 1980s, however, the Apache employed this rhetoric more as a political tool than as an actual application of Apache knowledge in restoration work. At this time, the notion of Apache knowledge remained vague. Western land management philosophies and techniques still predominated on the reservation. Nonetheless, while delineating between Apache and Western knowledge, Apache leaders and land managers worked towards rediscovering and reinventing the meaning of Apache knowledge. Nevertheless, this early expression of Apache knowledge would set the stage for later conflicts with federal and state agencies concerning water rights, watershed restoration, endangered species, and fire management. The most important land management issue during this period remained controlling knowledge production on the reservation, rather than clearly articulating the content of Apache epistemology. In short, the Apache recognized a clear connection between controlling knowledge production on the reservation and restoring sovereignty.

This chapter focuses on the Apache’s relationship with the state of Arizona, outlining how the federal Indian law of the 1970s and 1980s influenced this relationship. How did tension with the AGDF affect White Mountain Apache efforts to restore and manage wildlife on the reservation? How did the Apache use this battle to control knowledge production on the reservation? In essence, I argue that the battle with the AGFD over the development of the trophy elk hunt program and the restoration of elk not only solidified White Mountain Apache sovereignty, but also legitimized Apache control over knowledge production on the reservation. This incident also presented the first obvious instance of the Tribe publicly defining the “Apache way” in conjunction with science. For the Apache, controlling knowledge production on the reservation proved a necessary hurdle to realizing self-determination and re-legitimating Apache knowledge.

Political momentum for self-determination and assertion of tribal sovereignty that had built up in the 1960s reached a visible climax in the 1970s. Suddenly with high profile events such as Alcatraz, Wounded Knee II, and the occupation of the BIA building in Washington, D.C., Native American rights and plights came to the public forefront. The President and Congress paid more consideration to American Indian affairs at this time than any time since the Indian New Deal. Despite all this attention, as we have seen and Philip Deloria observed, “Indians did not discover they were Indians in the early 1970s. We were not reborn: we were simply noticed.” Nonetheless, Native Americans experienced a time of unprecedented change.

A Department of Labor report to Congress in 1969 stood as a prime example of the profound change in attitude among government agencies towards Native Americans in the late 1960s. The report indicated Department of Labor officials “grew to admire the Indians tremendously as a group, to marvel at their courage and dignity even in the midst of abject poverty.” The report went on to say “[w]e realized what a tremendous loss to mankind would be the obliteration of this culture…We became strong partisans of the belief that the Indians should be encouraged and helped to preserve their culture.” Far from an assimilationist stance, the Department of Labor declared support for the cultural revitalization and self-determination of the American Indian people. In his last year of office, President Johnson delivered a rousing message to Congress that gave cautious hope to many Native Americans.

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Reprinted in the *Fort Apache Scout*, Johnson outlined the federal government’s responsibility to move American Indian nations towards self-sufficiency and political autonomy. Most importantly, governmental assistance, he asserted, “means partnership – not paternalism.”

Native Americans renewed their skepticism of the federal government with the inauguration of Richard Nixon in 1969, as he served as Vice President under Eisenhower, a supporter of termination policy. They were pleasantly surprised to find Nixon quite receptive to Native American concerns. During his tenure, Nixon supported a large number of Indian initiatives, starting with the return of Blue Lake to the Taos Pueblo in March of 1970. He also attempted to squelch any doubts about his sympathy for Native Americans in a message to Congress on July 8, 1970. With an uncharacteristically stirring call for compassion, he repudiated the deplorable history of the United States relationship with Indian nations. Nixon charged that forced termination “produced considerable disorientation among the affected Indians and has left them unable to relate to a myriad of federal, state, and local assistance efforts.” Demonstrating an understanding that what lay at the root of past failed Indian policy was the disruption of Indian culture, he stated that Congress should seek “to strengthen the Indian’s sense of autonomy without threatening his sense of community.” Nixon finished with a statement of strong support for tribal sovereignty. Clarifying what his administration meant by self-determination, he directed Congress to support tribal independence of “federal control without being cut off from federal concern and federal support.”

Clearly politicians and bureaucrats had heard the outcries of Native Americans. The content of these messages accurately reflected their needs, but now it was time to follow through. Thus began the Self-Determination Era, a period to this day that has generated an unprecedented amount of pro-Indian

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legislation and court decisions. As for Native Americans, Indian-drafted legislation and Indian-initiated legal challenges became the two-pronged strategy employed to further solidify sovereignty and gain more control over affairs on reservations.

In many ways, the courts proved the major battle ground for Native American rights from the 1970s on. Native Americans needed resolution on long-standing jurisdictional, natural resource management, and water rights issues caused by years of misguided, negligent, and exploitative Indian policy. Arguably, court cases proved more important than legislative gains at the time. The period saw an “emerging litigation capability” not seen before in Indian country, with the number of American Indian lawyers increasing from twenty five in the late 1960s to over one thousand by the 1990s. Once again an OEO program, legal support services, aided the Native American cause. The OEO funded legal offices on reservations that provided much more advice and support than had ever been available. This program led to the establishment of effective national advocacy groups such as the Native American Rights Fund.7

For our purposes, one of the most significant cases involved the fishing rights battle in the Pacific Northwest. This struggle led to a series of major federal court cases that outlined Native American access to fish and wildlife on and off reservations. Perhaps the most famous case was United States v. Washington or more commonly referred to as the “Boldt decision.” Much to the chagrin of the fishing industry, in 1974 Judge George Boldt of the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington ruled that Native Americans living in the Pacific Northwest had rights to 50% of fish on and off their reservations.8 This decision, which Boldt based on long-standing treaty rights, failed to settle all jurisdictional matters, since state authority over reservation fish and wildlife remained

ambiguous. The White Mountain Apache were involved in a series of cases that settled the fate of that situation in the late 1970s and early 1980s.⁹

On the legislative front, the Taos Pueblo of New Mexico signaled a change in how Congress constructed Indian legislation with the Blue Lake Restoration Act of 1970. Like Mount Baldy for the White Mountain Apache, Blue Lake held significant religious meaning to the Taos Pueblo. Unfortunately, the federal government dispossessed the Taos, who trace their ancestry in the region back 12,000 years, from their sacred place of worship for conservation purposes in the early twentieth century. The Taos official ownership of Blue Lake ended when Teddy Roosevelt designated the land surrounding the lake part of the Carson National Forest in 1906. The Pueblo’s fight for Blue Lake began in the early 1920s with the help of John Collier and ended with Richard Nixon signing the Blue Lake Restoration Act into law, returning 48,000 acres back to the Taos. Now, other than special tribal firewood collection permits and use for religious ceremonies, the Pueblo manage the site according to the terms of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The return of Blue Lake ushered in an era when Native American nations as a whole have seen a 15% increase in their land base.¹⁰

The legislative onslaught continued with the formulation of the Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act of 1975. Native Americans played a major role in writing this legislation, with its provisions reflecting their contemporary needs. Within the body of this Act, Congress clarified the federal government’s role in Indian affairs, specifically mandating the BIA to implement a self-determination policy. Congress found, “the Indian people will never surrender their desire to control their relationship both among themselves and with non-Indian governments, organizations, and

¹⁰ The Native American land base in the lower 48 reached a low of approximately 50 million acres in the 1930s. Since then the land base increased to 58 million acres. R.C. Gordon-McCutchan, The Taos Indians and the Battle for Blue Lake (Santa Fe, NM: Red Crane Books, 1995); Dabney Otis Collins, “Battle for Blue Lake: The Taos Indians Finally Regain their Sacred Land,” American West 8 (September, 1971): 32-37.
persons.”\footnote{11}{The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, 25 U.S.C. 450 [a] [2].} In this statement Congress implicitly recognized ongoing tribal resistance to assimilation policies. And because of this resistance, they admitted that assimilation policy would never work. Instead, Congress believed the best way to move forward involved reestablishing the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the United States first outlined in treaties and reaffirmed by \textit{Worcester v. Georgia} in 1832. Only through self-determination, and ultimately self-governance, would tribes become self-sufficient.

In theory, the Self-Determination Act diminished the BIA’s power over Native Americans from a role of paternalistic oversight to one of technical advisor.\footnote{12}{Robert A. Nelson and Joseph F. Shelley, “Bureau of Indian Affairs Influence on Indian Self-determination,” in \textit{American Indian Policy in the Twentieth Century}, Vine Deloria, Jr., ed. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), pp. 177-196.} The major provision in the Act designed to encourage Native American self-governance mandated contracting the administration of federal services, including BIA schools, to willing tribes. These became known as 638 contracts – named after the public law designation of the Act, PL 93-638.

Although the Act failed to explicitly address the management of natural resources, self-governance implied that tribes should have control over all affairs on their reservations. And through this Act many tribes have moved closer to eco-cultural self-determination, including final approval rights on all land management activities on reservation lands.\footnote{13}{Wilkinson, “Filling in the Blank Spots on Powell’s and Stegner’s Maps”; Rebecca Tsosie, “Tribal Environmental Policy in an Era of Self-determination: The Role of Ethics, Economics, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge,” \textit{Vermont Law Review} 21 (1996): 225-336.} For instance, a number of tribes used 638 contracts to assume control of timber management on their reservations. The Quinault of the Olympic Peninsula of Washington did so in the 1970s and have since gained recognition as running one of the most ecologically responsible timber companies in the western United States.\footnote{14}{Gary S. Morishima, “Indian Forestry: From Paternalism to Self-Determination,” \textit{Journal of Forestry} (1997): 4-9.} Similarly, in the mid-1980s
the White Mountain Apache began incrementally taking the reins of forest management from the BIA through 638 contracts.\footnote{\textquotedblleft Contract Thinning Program Offered to Tribal Members,	extquotedblright \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 23 (August 3, 1984): 1, 8-9; Dallas Massey, Sr., \textquotedblleft Chairman’s Vision: 638 Programs for the Continuance of Growth of our Forests and Natural Resources,	extquotedblright \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 39 (March 9, 2001): 2.}

Over the next thirty years, the Self-Determination Act’s clarification of federal trust responsibilities and government-to-government relations also led to a large number of legislative acts concerning the restoration and management of Native American eco-cultural resources.\footnote{For a review of Native American eco-cultural legislation see Tsosie, \textquotedblleft Tribal Environmental Policy in an Era of Self-determination	extquotedblright; Wilkinson, \textquotedblleft Filling in the Blank Spots on Powell’s and Stegner’s Maps.	extquotedblright} Starting with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the federal government recognized the legitimacy of Native American religions and their access rights to sacred and spiritual sites on federal lands. Subsequent legislation protected burial grounds on federal land and returned Native American cultural artifacts and skeletal remains that public and private museums, universities, and historical societies had previously confiscated.\footnote{See the National Museum of the American Indian Act of 1989 and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, 25 U.S.C. 3001 \textit{et seq}.} Congress also enacted a number of laws concerning the restoration and management of Native American fisheries, wildlife, forests, and agriculture. All of these laws had provisions for technical training and mandated cooperative efforts between tribes and federal agencies as a means to increase the level of Native American expertise on reservations.\footnote{See for example the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990, 25 U.S.C. 3101 \textit{et seq}.} Lastly, Tribes saw the enactment of a whole slew of water settlement acts that abided by the \textit{Winters Doctrine} and once and for all outlined favorable water rights for many tribes, including, finally, the White Mountain Apache Tribe in 2008.\footnote{White Mountain Apache Tribe Rural Water System Loan Authorization Act of 2008, PL 110-520. See also the Arizona Water Settlements Act, PL 108-451. For a general assessment of water settlement acts, see Daniel McCool, \textit{Contemporary Indian Water Settlements and the Second Treaty Era} (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2002).} None of this legislation is perfect and much of it is underfunded, but at the very least, this legislation represented Native American societies taking control of their own affairs. Instead of well-meaning, ill-
informed outside interests, or as often was the case, interest groups with ulterior motives writing legislation for them, Native Americans began writing their own legislation.

Since the early 1970s Congress has remained faithful to self-determination policy. The federal courts have for the most part followed suit as well, with only a few exceptions. Even during the Reagan years, with budget cuts to job training programs and the Indian Health Service, Congress and the courts stayed the course. Unfortunately, the impacts of assimilation and termination policies would continue to scar Native American communities, while serving as disconcerting reminders of why Native American nations had to remain vigilant. Nonetheless, from the 1970s until present, American Indians have experienced the longest and most consistent national policy of self-determination and self-governance in their history under federal trusteeship. This only happened through strong leadership though. The next section examines the emergence of two important White Mountain Apache leaders in the late 1960s and the early 1970s: Ronnie Lupe, who became Tribal Chairman in 1966 and remained in the position for the better part of the next thirty years, and Phil Stago, Jr., the first White Mountain Apache director of the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise (WMRE).

**Transition in Power on Fort Apache**

While many tribes went down the path of inviting industry onto reservations to solve their unemployment problems in the 1960s and 1970s, the White Mountain Apache mostly focused on

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20 See *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe* 435 U.S. 191 (1978) for an example of a case that challenged the sovereignty of Native American nations. In this case tribal police officers arrested a non-Indian (Oliphant) and charged him in tribal court. Oliphant challenged the tribe’s jurisdiction and eventually the Supreme Court heard the case and ruled that the Squamish did not have jurisdiction over non-Indians on their reservation. For more on this case see Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*, pp. 253-255. See also *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protection Association* 485 U.S. 439 (1988), which compromised Native American religious rights to protect sacred sites from development on federal lands.

developing their own enterprises.\textsuperscript{22} In fact, the White Mountain Apache went in the opposite direction, ending long-term relationships with non-Indian timber companies to focus on the growth of the Fort Apache Timber Company (FATCO).\textsuperscript{23} This led the White Mountain Apache down a different path of self-determination than most tribes. For instance, when Congress enacted the Self-Determination Act in 1975, the Tribe didn’t immediately seek 638 contracts. They already partly controlled the management of their resources through tribal enterprises. Also, to a certain extent, the Apache handled technical education through the enterprises, for that fulfilled one of the primary reasons for their establishment. And although the education of children would remain a problem for years to come, they maintained their relationship with the public school system, BIA schools, and mission schools, preferring to alter educational philosophy through that framework. In essence, the Tribe worked towards self-sufficiency and self-governance through their business enterprises. The WMRE and FATCO would become the focal point of sovereignty challenges for years to come.\textsuperscript{24}

Vine Deloria, who equally criticized Native Americans and the federal government, was quite complimentary of the White Mountain Apache in the late 1960s. In a \textit{New York Times} article and in \textit{Custer Died for Your Sins}, he pointed to the tribally-owned enterprises, especially the WMRE, as the major reason for their relative success.\textsuperscript{25} The Apache’s initiative, ability to adapt, and strong tribal cohesiveness set them apart from many other American Indian nations at the time:

Concern among the Apaches is…tribal. There is little sense of a “lost identity.” Apaches could not care less about the anthropological dilemmas that worry other tribes. Instead they continue to work on the massive plans for development which they themselves have created. Tribal identity is assumed, not defined, by the reservation people. Freedom to choose from a wide variety of

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\item \textsuperscript{22} On the trend in encouraging non-Indian companies to locate on reservations, see Iverson, “\textit{We are Still Here},” p. 166.
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paths of progress is a characteristic of the Apaches; they don’t worry about what type of Indianism is “real.” Above all, they cannot be ego-fed by abstract theories and hence unwittingly manipulated.26

So according to Deloria, the White Mountain Apache were relatively self-assured and didn’t waste time worrying about what adopting large development projects said about their “Indianness.” They knew who they were, with their leadership at the time reflecting this confidence. In fact, the Apache harnessed an age-old Apache cultural trait of adaptability to successfully navigate the twentieth century. Accepting of the inevitability of change, they concerned themselves more with the economic stability of the Apache community and the ecological health of the land they depended on for survival. This meant cautiously appropriating Western science and technology, resisting federal policies that might hinder their path towards economic self-sufficiency, and maintaining political autonomy.

Because of their focus on reservation affairs, the Apache also didn’t involve themselves with the high-profile Native American protests and occupations of the time. Even though these events played a larger role in national affairs, they received little play on Fort Apache.27 In fact tribal leaders actively downplayed the contribution of national Indian movements to White Mountain Apache success. Contrasting Apache progress with the high-profile political movements, Lafe Altaha, a Tribal Council member in the 1970s, pridefully explained that the Apache people achieved great economic strides “without a single demonstration [or] marching on anybody.” He went on to say, “We don’t believe in things like that. The Apaches don’t believe in violence.”28 Indeed, the Tribe accomplished success through hard work, deliberation, persistence, and networking with politicians and bureaucrats. However, their pathway to self-sufficiency also eventually involved strong political rhetoric and actions from tribal leaders.

26 Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, p. 84.
27 I surveyed the entire run of the *Fort Apache Scout* (1962 – present) and only found two articles on Native American activism in the 1960s and 1970s.
Ronnie Lupe’s assumption of Tribal Chairmanship in 1966 marked a major transition in tribal politics and attitude toward the BIA. When Lupe took office, the BIA was already reeling from the effects of federal agencies such as the OEO on their control over tribal governments. Adding insult to injury, Lupe told the BIA that they no longer could attend Tribal Council meetings unless invited. Lupe also ended the BIA practice of opening Tribal Council member’s mail.\(^29\) Lupe meant business and wanted to distance himself from the Oliver administration’s policies concerning the BIA. He felt that Oliver was an apologist for the BIA, historically demonstrating a “lack of leadership,” which allowed the BIA and other agencies to “completely control and dominate” him.\(^30\) In essence, according to Lupe, Oliver’s close relationship with BIA officials hindered the Tribe’s progress.

Oliver took a very diplomatic approach towards asserting tribal rights, often seeking BIA approval before proceeding with controversial plans such as the development of Hawley Lake. His campaign platform in 1966 consisted of maintaining a cooperative relationship with the BIA and other federal agencies. He claimed that Apache progress wouldn’t “have been possible had it not been for the fine working relationship the Tribal Council has with the BIA.”\(^31\) This to a certain extent was the case, but the BIA hadn’t always made decisions in the best interest of the Tribe. On the natural resource front, tribal members began questioning the efficacy of some of the BIA land management projects, such as the Cibecue Watershed Project, that Oliver defended and promoted over the years.\(^32\) Oliver also tended to downplay the importance of Apache culture in tribal affairs, even at times emphasizing that his people actively worked towards being “assimilated in our great American society.”\(^33\) He seemed out of touch


with the frustration building among the Apache people towards his large-scale economic development initiatives. The “Apache way” remained important to the people, and although Oliver achieved economic progress during his eight year chairmanship that would facilitate some of Lupe’s cultural restoration goals, neglect of the cultural consequences of economic development perhaps wore thin with the Apache people by 1966.

In contrast, Lupe tapped into his people’s tension with modernization. He didn’t position himself as a traditionalist rejecting modernization. Instead, he acknowledged that “much to our dismay…our slow transition from the Reservation life, as we know it, to ‘modern times’ with introduction from the outside of new scientific development and technology, further complicates our otherwise simple home life and community.” He went on to characterize the Tribe’s current predicament where “confusion has set in and our behavior shows attitudes of defiance and depression.” Lupe presented himself as a moderate leader who could guide the Apache people through the transition, insisting that modernization required proper supervision so as to avoid the elimination of “age-old traditions, customs and Apache language.”

For Lupe, modernization was necessary, but the maintenance and restoration of Apache culture remained integral to Apache survival as well. Furthermore, the path to Apache self-determination required independence from the BIA. From here on out, the Tribe had to reduce the BIA’s role in tribal affairs to that of a technical advisor.

In 1966 Lupe won “one of the hottest Tribal political races” in years by a slim margin: 810 to 714. The results reinforced the reality of divided tribal feelings towards economic development. Nonetheless, Lupe would solidify his role as a prominent tribal leader in the years to come. He served as Tribal Chairman for the better part of the next forty years (1966-1970, 1974-1986, 1990-1998, 2006 – present), establishing unprecedented political stability for the Tribe. Lupe’s assumption of office marked

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a trend towards cultural revitalization, which his political discourse reflected. He deeply appreciated the historical and cultural context of the American Indian people. Unlike Oliver, who diplomatically protected Apache sovereignty, Lupe asserted tribal rights and refused to wait for permission from the BIA to proceed with controversial endeavors. He forcefully and intelligently took hold of White Mountain Apache affairs.

Thirty-six when he first took office, Ronnie Lupe’s life in the western, more conservative part of the reservation shaped his perspective. He could relate to his people’s anxiety about modernization because as late as 1963 his family lived in a wickiup. However, being the son of Nelson Lupe, who pioneered the establishment of the WMRE, probably had a major influence on his political views concerning the introduction of science and technology to the reservation community. Another significant influence on his views was his service with the Marines in the Korean War. After serving in the military, Lupe went on to receive extensive training in the Business Administration program at Arizona State University. He furthered his administrative experience in 1964 when he won the Cibecue district Tribal Council seat. At the same time he served as the director of the reservation’s Neighborhood Youth Program, another OEO program that focused on developing skills in young people.36

Lupe was well aware of the problems that faced his people. When he took office, the unemployment rate still stood around 50%, with many of the employed holding low-paying, part-time jobs. And non-Indians occupied most management positions within the tribal enterprises. Lupe believed that the best way to solve these pressing issues was increasing tribal control over eco-cultural resources on the reservation. Initially he pushed for greater control of timber resources through FATCO. He led a movement on the reservation to discontinue long-term timber contracts with non-Indian companies.

36 The biographical information on Ronnie Lupe was taken from a number of articles from the 1960s and 1970s in the Fort Apache Scout.
modernizing and increasing the capacity of FATCO to handle the entire annual allowable cut.\textsuperscript{37} Also he followed through on earlier plans to build a ski resort on Mount Ord, increasing the recreational potential of the reservation.\textsuperscript{38} Both of these actions led to more jobs. Eventually he would tangle with both the state of Arizona and the federal government to increase control over natural resources on the reservation. On the state level, the Tribe challenged the AGFD over whether the state had the right to require state permits on the reservation. On the national level, Lupe battled the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) concerning the impediment critical habitat designation had on economic development. He also led the way and took most of the heat from local non-Indian communities when the Tribe decided not to renew Euro-American homeowner leases around Hawley Lake.

For Lupe, controlling resources constituted only one facet of the problem. The Tribe needed homegrown expertise to manage these resources. They would only curtail BIA mismanagement and inefficient use of tribal resources when Apaches assumed management positions within tribal enterprises. The tribal enterprises had benefitted from the expertise of several well-meaning and dedicated non-Indians, but to maximize benefits to the Apache people and minimize exploitation, the Tribe had to master Western science and technology. They had to be proficient in both Apache and Western ways of thinking. According to Lupe, the educational system on the reservation failed to address this bi-cultural need; thus education as it currently stood represented an impediment to progress.\textsuperscript{39} A 1968 survey revealed a disturbing trend on the reservation. Apache college students


experienced an extremely low success rate, with only 3% of the reservation population completing some formal college training. The scholarship program started in the early 1960s had not yet paid dividends. On this matter, Lupe believed tribal members needed to take educational opportunities more seriously, because for them, unlike non-Indians, education “might very well men survival or oblivion.”

Stressing education had been tribal policy since the late 1950s, but what Lupe added to the conversation was an emphasis on culturally appropriate education. At the root of the problem in Indian education, he believed, was the marginalization and subjugation of White Mountain Apache heritage and traditions. Education for Native Americans “must be related to the child’s own world. The educator must know something about that world and he must become involved in the Indian community life … must learn something about and learn to appreciate the Indian heritage and culture….INDIANS, as a rule, are very proud of their heritage and culture. This pride must be developed to give the Indian child self-confidence and confidence in his ability to meet the demands placed upon him during his school years.” In essence, if a child grows up learning that his culture is inferior to American culture, then the child will lack the self-esteem required to succeed. The foundation for progress lay with restoring cultural pride through the bi-cultural education of students. To survive, the Apache needed to learn from the best of both worlds. The establishment of a permanent Education Coordinator’s Office, which provided guidance to students with college aspirations, fulfilled a major goal of Lupe’s first four years.


40 One has to believe that this survey was an underestimate. It surveyed less than 50% of the adult population. And we know that some tribal members had completed college by that time (i.e., Lester Oliver). The survey did focus on the reservation population. So any Apaches receiving a degree and choosing to live off the reservation would not have been counted in the survey. Even though the survey missed the few Apaches with college degrees, it reflected the expertise problem on the reservation. Benjamin J. Taylor and Dennis J. O’Conner, *Fort Apache Reservation Manpower Resources* (Tempe, AZ: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Arizona State University, 1969).


42 Ibid.
His focus on education proved worthwhile, as approximately 100 Apaches enrolled in college by 1970. Perhaps the most influential natural resource manager in the history of the Tribe, Phil Stago, Jr., was part of this wave of college-educated Apaches.

Much of Lupe’s success in regaining control over reservation eco-cultural resources wouldn’t have come without the help of Stago. The son of Phil Stago, Sr. a forester that worked with Harry Kallender on the reservations prescribed burn program in the 1950s and 1960s, Phil Jr. became the first White Mountain Apache manager of the WMRE. He graduated from Northern Arizona University in 1974 with a BS in Recreation Land Management and a minor in Anthropology. Right off the bat he tackled tasks that non-Indians avoided or ignored. A man proud of his Apache heritage, Stago was an innovative force. Early in his tenure, he laid the groundwork for a trophy elk hunt program. In doing so, he reduced the number of non-Indian hunters allowed to hunt elk on the reservation, thus creating a healthier herd for his people and more demand from non-Indian hunters. He believed that by reducing the number of non-Indian hunters, the Tribe could restore the health of the elk herd and eventually raise more revenue for the WMRE. However, this meant challenging state game and fish law and state jurisdiction over reservation wildlife resources. Like Lupe though, he refused to wait for permission. He established the program first, believing that federal law would support the sovereignty of the White Mountain Apache to manage wildlife as they saw fit. By 1977, tension between the Apache and AGFD had escalated. After a few “run-ins” with state officials and AGDF attempts to hamper the trophy elk hunt program, the Tribe took the state to court. The rest of this chapter deals with the legal battle over whether the state had authority over game and fish management on Fort Apache. But in order to understand the legal struggle in full, we need to review the history of elk management on the reservation prior to the 1970s.

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43 Lupe, “Election Candidates Statements.”
The History of Elk on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation

Elk had a similar story to the Apache trout in that the species experienced a serious decline in the late nineteenth century at the hands of Euro-American hunters and cattlemen, as well as Mexican squatters and sheep herders. In fact, they collectively extirpated Merriam’s elk (*Cervus elaphus merriami*), the sub-species native to Arizona, from the White Mountains by 1906. ⁴⁶ Although historically, Native American groups participated with Euro-American market hunters and sportsmen in causing the near extinction of large ungulates, several lines of evidence indicate that the White Mountain Apache had little to do with the demise of Merriam’s elk. ⁴⁷

First, the White Mountain Apache hunted elk, but the species was secondary in importance to deer as source of food, clothing, and tools. By most accounts of hunters, naturalists, and Apaches that visited or lived in the region in the late nineteenth century, deer remained very common. Because the Apache’s primary game flourished, they probably didn’t hunt elk any more extensively than before Euro-Americans began settling the region in the 1870s. ⁴⁸ Further, elk became less significant as a source of food by the 1900s, when a number of Apaches fell ill from eating the meat. From that point until late in

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⁴⁷ For example, some of the more famous instances include the many Eastern groups pulled into the deer economy during the 18th and 19th centuries or the Plains tribes and the slaughter of bison in the 19th century. White, *Roots of Dependency*; Andrew Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

the twentieth century hunting elk remained taboo.\textsuperscript{49} Second, Arizona Territory remained relatively unexplored and isolated in the late nineteenth century, so the Apache had little incentive to kill elk for money. Third, by 1871, all Western Apache groups had been corralled onto reservations, restricting their movements; however, White Mountain Apache strayed off the reservation, much to the consternation of the Army. And on the reservation, they occasionally served as guides to hunters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Aside from occasional guide work, though, the Apache rarely participated in the Merriam’s elk hunting economy.\textsuperscript{50}

Very few reliable records exist of Merriam’s elk, but purportedly it was significantly larger, with a more massive skull and broader nasals, than other subspecies.\textsuperscript{51} Edward Nelson, the renowned zoologist and naturalist, first described Merriam’s elk in a 1902 paper in *The Bulletin of American Museum of Natural History*. He based his description on a specimen he collected at the head of the Black River in the White Mountains in 1886. He even claimed that the elk living in the White Mountains (and all along the Mogollon Rim) were a separate species from other North American elk due to the animal’s unusual size, coloration, and skull structure.\textsuperscript{52} The stature of Merriam’s elk made it a highly desirable trophy for those who could afford a treacherous long journey to the isolated realms of Arizona Territory, even before it’s recognition as a separate species. M.E. Morford, a hunter from the East, arranged a special trip into the “rugged” White Mountains in 1875 when he presumptuously believed he “should certainly kill a dozen elk.” Alas he was “somewhat annoyed” when failed to drop a single elk, but his companion “Lieutenant B” fell two – including a “four-pronged buck” that would have “run over” Morford if the

\textsuperscript{49}I am not certain when Apache began eating elk again. Tribal members began hunting elk again as early as the 1960s because the game code set limits for tribal members at that time. See for example, “1966-67 Tribal Hunting Regulations,” *Fort Apache Scout* 5 (July, 1966): 2. On Apache historic use of elk, see Buskirk, *The Western Apache*, p. 213.

\textsuperscript{50}See for example Morford, “White Mountains of Arizona.”


\textsuperscript{52}Later taxonomists revised the status of Merriam’s elk to a subspecies of *Cervus elaphus*. Nelson, “A New Species of Elk from Arizona.”
Lieutenant hadn’t shot it first.\textsuperscript{53} Such adventures became common lore of the White Mountains, drawing hunters from the East to the region.

At the time of Morford’s adventure, elk still “were very plentiful and could be found in large bands in the White Mountains.”\textsuperscript{54} However, John Rope, a Cibecue Apache working as a scout with the U.S. Army in the late nineteenth century, noticed a decline in elk in the Mogollon Mountains just east of the reservation by 1880. On an expedition to track down the “renegade” band of Warms Spring Chiricahua, Rope witnessed at least four elk, but deplored upon seeing a “mother elk” and her calf that “[t]here used to be lots of elk over at the Mogollon Mountains.”\textsuperscript{55} Pressure coming from the east would soon impinge upon the elk population on the reservation. But in the 1870s and 1880s, sports hunters remained relatively rare and probably had less of an impact on elk than the migration of cattlemen, sheep herders, and Mexican squatters into the region. The exact cause of the extirpation is unclear, but Edward Nelson surmised that competition for forage with cattle and sheep along with subsistence hunting from local residents “levied heavily upon all large game in the White Mountains.”\textsuperscript{56}

By 1902, Arizona Territory had implemented game laws to protect elk, but due to the remoteness of the species’ range the law was “more nominal than real.” For Edward Nelson, the fact that “the last of the large game mammals of America to become known to science [was] already on the verge of extinction” was disturbing.\textsuperscript{57} So much so he even proposed that the region should serve as a national

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} Morford, “White Mountains of Arizona.”
\item \textsuperscript{55} Rope in Basso’s Western \textit{Apache Raiding and Warfare}, p. 122. At this point, Fort Apache and San Carlos Reservations were still one large reservation until 1897 when the DOI divided them along the Black River
\item \textsuperscript{57} Nelson, “A New Species of Elk from Arizona,” p. 1.
\end{itemize}
game preserve. Much of the region was already part of the Black Mesa Forest Reserve (the precursor of Apache, Tonto, and Sitgreaves National Forests that currently surround Fort Apache) and held “probably the best game country in Arizona,” abounding with wild turkey, black-tailed deer, “Arizona white-tailed deer,” black bears, “silver-tipped” bears, mountain lions, wildcats, timber wolves, and coyotes. However, in terms of elk, “it is now [1902] a question whether any survive or not” in what was once their “favorite summer country.” He believed a few still survived in the upper elevations of Mount Thomas and Mount Ord, but unfortunately, according to Nelson, this land resided in “the most serious menace to successful preservation of game,” the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

Troubled by the Apache practice of setting fires to round up game, he claimed that they “kill large numbers of breeding deer, and at the same time destroy considerable areas of forest.” The only way to save the game from “these destructive inroads” was to extend the boundaries of the forest reserve to include “Ord and Thomas peaks.”

The possibility that the best game habitat in Arizona had something to do with the Apache use of fire eluded Nelson. His reasoning can’t even be reconciled with his own research findings. Several times in his own published works he noted that game, including Merriam’s elk, was more abundant along the border of and inside of the reservation. Other accounts said as much.

Clearly prejudices of the “savage Indian” common in his day infiltrated his thought process. The fact that he wanted Mount Ord and Mount Thomas (Mount Baldy) included in his proposed game preserve

58 Nelson, “Forest Reserves as Game Preserves,” p. 386.
undoubtedly further played into his criticism and perhaps exaggerations of Apache hunting practices. His game preserve proposal never came to fruition, but it wouldn’t be the last time a Euro-American wanted to control the management of game on the reservation or take the most “beautiful” part of Arizona from the White Mountain Apache.

By 1913, most naturalists and sportsmen had given up any hope of finding Merriam’s elk in the White Mountains. The occasional unsubstantiated sighting failed to give avid elk hunters in the region much reason to believe that elk would return without intervention. In response, the Winslow Elk’s Lodge #536 translocated eighty-six Rocky Mountain elk, a different subspecies (C. e. nelsoni), from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, to Cabin Draw in Sitgreaves National Forest, just north of Fort Apache. This restoration effort, unbeknownst to the Apaches, planted the seeds for a battle for state control over fish and game management on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. The newly established Arizona Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) closely monitored this herd and by 1935 the elk population reached sufficient numbers in the White Mountains to allow a limited hunt. Naturally, as elk populations increased, they migrated onto Fort Apache where they became a “menace” to Apache cattlemen because they commenced “eating all the grass.”

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64 White Mountain Apache Tribe, “Minutes to the Regular Council Meeting,” October 6, 1941, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 54, File #00-41, Box #5.
Nelson Lupe made this accusation in 1941 at a Tribal Council meeting. In order to rectify the situation, Lupe proposed selling twenty permits to non-Indian residents of the reservation - Apache still had an aversion to hunt elk at this time - to cull elk from the Cibecue range.\footnote{Ibid.} Even though the Tribal Council had the right to regulate game on the reservation through IRA, Superintendent Donner advised against the measure.\footnote{Prior to IRA, non-Indians had to get permission from the Superintendent to hunt on Fort Apache.} He admitted that in most cases the Tribe had the authority, but because elk weren’t “generally native to the reservation,” the Council couldn’t issue permits for elk hunts. Only the AGFC had jurisdiction in this situation. The elk currently migrating onto the reservation originated from herds reintroduced by the AGFC and private hunting lodges, thus the state owned them. To mitigate the situation, Donner arranged for the AGFC to issue permits.\footnote{William Donner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 11, 1941, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 54, File #00-41, Box #5.} Not much came of this first attempt to control the elk population, with records not indicating whether the Tribe followed through with their request.

Nevertheless, Donner was wrong about state jurisdiction in this case. He likely misunderstood what was meant by “state-ownership.” In federal and state law, state-ownership implied that the state had the right to control the taking of wildlife, but in no way meant the state owned “that which belonged to no one in particular, but was common to all.”\footnote{In 1896 the Supreme Court defined state authority to regulate wildlife in \textit{Greer v. Connecticut}, 161 U.S. 519. For more information on state jurisdiction of wildlife, see Bean and Rowland, \textit{Evolution of National Wildlife Law}, pp. 7-15.} Even if the state actually “owned” the elk, then that ownership would technically cease when the elk crossed into the reservation. The situation on Fort Apache was no different than if elk migrated into New Mexico. Arizona would no longer lay claim to the elk in this instance. Unfortunately, very few BIA officials at the time understood that tribal sovereignty was legally on par with state sovereignty, a problem that would plague Indian governments...
for the next forty years. It remains unclear if anyone corrected Donner on this matter, but it would not be the last time that outside interests used the state-ownership argument in an attempt to control elk on Fort Apache – this argument reoccurred in the 1970s.

In October, 1946, under a new superintendent, R.D. Holtz, the Council diverged from Donner’s advice. In Tribal Resolution #176 the Council opened the northwestern portion of the reservation to the general public and the southeastern portion only to non-Indian reservation residents and employees. The resolution required Arizona residents hunting in the northwest to have only a state license, but the Council required reservation residents and employees to acquire both a state and reservation license. Requiring reservation residents to have tribal permits went against the state-ownership argument. This precedent went relatively unnoticed as the state never objected to the permits and Walter Woehlke, an assistant commissioner now, approved the resolution. The Tribal Council, however, still abided by state law and required state permits along with coordinating hunting seasons with the state agency, but at the same time asserted its authority to collect permit fees.

In 1947 Holtz convinced the Tribe that they should develop an official tribal game code for tribal members that covered all game species. He believed a game code was necessary for two reasons. First, the Tribe for the first time had allowed non-residents to hunt on the reservation. Second, elk had become “quite a problem,” requiring “a more efficient method of controlling animal numbers” than outlined in Resolution #176. Even though various FWS and BIA land managers had suggested a comprehensive game code since the early 1940s, the Council had yet to implement one. Because they believed religious practices regulated hunting and that prior to 1947 they reserved all reservation game for tribal members,

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70 Resolution of the White Mountain Apache Tribe no. 176; Walter Woehlke to Fred Larzelere, Chairman, November 27, 1946, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #35419-43, Box #45.
71 R.D. Holtz to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 22, 1947, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #35419-43, Box #45.
the Council didn’t feel a comprehensive code was necessary. Up to this point, the Council had regulated
game in a piecemeal fashion, authorizing closed seasons for reservation residents or special permits for
outsiders when deemed necessary. This time, however, the Tribe heeded Holtz’s advice and submitted a
game code proposal for BIA approval. In this proposal, the Council boldly advanced the claim that
Arizona residents hunting on the reservation should be subject to tribal courts for game code violations.
This assertion opened up a whole new can of worms: did the Apache have the right to regulate non-
members? The answer at this point, according to the BIA, was “no.”

A variety of officials from the Central Office down to the Phoenix District Forester vetted the
legality of the proposed game code. L.D. Arnold, the Director of Forestry for the BIA, concluded,
“Since non-Indians are not subject to tribal laws and can be apprehended only for violation of state and
federal laws, it is suggested that the tribal regulations conform closely to the fish and game laws on
white-owned lands. If the tribal regulations are made to conform to state laws, much confusion would be
eliminated in the minds of both hunters and law enforcement officers. It should make law enforcement
easier for Indian police who can eject white violators from Indian lands.” Raymond Bitney, Phoenix
District Forester, more specifically pronounced his objections. He claimed that the “Tribe would not
have the authority to set up certain rules and regulations in conflict with Arizona state laws …because
members of the Tribe have certain treaty rights they cannot extend to non-members.” He also took issue
with “repeated references” in the code that subjected non-Indians to the tribal court for fish and game
violations. He asserted, “Frankly, I consider this a bad thing and one that will lead to further trouble and
confusion.” Instead of advocating for the White Mountain Apache, both Arnold and Bitney worried
about “confusion” that might complicate the lives of Euro-American hunters and the BIA. As was

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72 Raymond H. Bitney to William H. Zeh, April 14, 1947, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #35419-43, Box #45.
74 Raymond H. Bitney to William H. Zeh, April 14, 1947.
typical of the time, the Tribal Council backed off on passing a game code that submitted non-Indians to the tribal court. Like with Resolution #176, the Council divided the reservation into two hunting jurisdictions due to limited tribal resources; the AGFC would administer the northwestern half and tribal game wardens would enforce the tribal game code and state law on the southeastern half. The Council required reservation employees and residents to obtain a separate elk permit above the state requirement but didn’t require this of Arizona residents hunting in the northwest.75 Once again though, the BIA provided bad advice.

Either because BIA officials conveniently cherry-picked or were ignorant of Indian law, they founded this bad advice on a common “misinterpretation” of the time that the legal status of Indian trust lands equaled federal lands.76 By that analysis, Arnold and Bitney followed the general rule that states, not the federal government, regulated fish and game on federal lands. In reality Indian land was not federal or state land, but land set aside for Indians held in trust by the federal government either under treaty or executive order. Although the legal infrastructure for such a distinction had been in place since 1832, it wouldn’t be until the 1980s that the Supreme Court would review the special circumstance of jurisdiction over fish and game on Indian lands, rendering a decision that tribal governments have the

75 Resolution of the White Mountain Apache Tribe no. 222, September 29, 1947, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #35419-43, Box #45.
76 Most Native American lawyers and historians believe it was both ignorance and deliberate misinterpretation of Indian law. Philip Deloria did a study of two different editions of Felix Cohen’s A Handbook of Federal Indian Law (1942 and 1958), known as the ultimate authority on Indian law, and found that the DOI (they initially commissioned the study under the Indian friendly administration of John Collier) had deliberately changed, among other things, the word “sovereignty” to “quasi-sovereignty” in the 1958 edition. Consequently, Native Americans and lawyers follow the earlier edition. For more on deliberate BIA violations of Indian law, see V. Deloria, Custer Died for Your Sins; V. Deloria and Lyttle, The Nations Within, and a very funny but serious speech given by Philip Deloria at the 2nd Indian Town Hall Meeting in Arizona in 1974, ACIC, Sovereignty and Inter-governmental Relations with Arizona Indian Tribes: A Report on the 2nd Indian Town Hall (Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs, 1975), pp. 41-48. On state wildlife laws and federal lands, see Bean and Rowland, Evolution of National Wildlife Law, pp. 7-15.
right to regulate fish and wildlife on reservations independent of state law; thus obtaining the legal authority to subject non-Indians to reservation game laws and courts.\(^{77}\)

Although tribal officials invited Arizona hunters onto the reservation, as of 1950, they failed to come in sufficient numbers to diminish the elk over-population problem. Elk numbers consistently hovered around 1,000 individuals during the late 1940s early 1950s, and most elk concentrated in grazing lands in the northwest corner of the reservation.\(^{78}\) According to tribal members in this area, elk continued eating crops, knocked down range fences, and competed with cattle for forage. Ironically, the Tribal Council noted, “[W]e have killed a lot of wild horses to make room for more cattle, instead they are just making room for the elk.”\(^{79}\) The problem persisted, but after the establishment of the WMRE in 1952, the Tribe initiated a public relations campaign that would boost the number of hunters visiting the reservation. Also with the founding of the WMRE came greater tribal control over wildlife on the reservation, including elk. In August, the Tribal Council authorized Nelson Lupe to inform the AGFC that the Tribe no longer required their assistance with the northwest half of the reservation. The Council declared the entire reservation a “separate zone for elk hunting,” now requiring Arizona hunters to obtain a tribal elk permit.\(^{80}\) R.D. Holtz, now the Area Director, once again advised against issuing a tribal permit on top of the state permit, doubting that elk hunters would willingly pay an extra fee.\(^{81}\) Against Holtz’s advice, the Tribe required an additional permit for Arizona elk hunters to help support WMRE programs, which contrary to Holtz’s belief, didn’t dissuade elk hunters from coming to the


\(^{78}\) Annual Forestry and Grazing Reports, Fort Apache, 1946-1950, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 31, Box #2.

\(^{79}\) Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting, October 16, 1950, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 54, File #10197-46, Box #5.


\(^{81}\) Holtz to Crow, March 21, 1952, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 40-56, Dec. 931, File #35419-43, Box #45.
reservation. WMRE game wardens also assumed responsibility for patrolling the entire reservation. However, at the behest of the BIA, the Tribal Council still required a state license and administered game regulations that closely mirrored state regulations.

From the establishment of the WMRE until 1960, reservation visitation rates dramatically increased. By the 1960s, the reservation had become a very popular hunting ground. The Tribe had expanded the number of species one could hunt on the reservation. They sold a large number of relatively inexpensive elk permits during this period (i.e., 700 permits at $30 each in 1968) along with permits for javelina, bear, antelope, dove, waterfowl, quail, predatory animals such as mountain lions, and small game.82 As the popularity of Fort Apache increased, tribal wildlife populations began to suffer, calling into question the sustainability of offering so many permits. When Phil Stago assumed control of the WMRE in 1974, he addressed this issue with the establishment of a controversial trophy elk program, which sparked a jurisdictional battle between the state and the White Mountain Apache Tribe.83

**Resistance: The White Mountain Apache Tribe vs. Arizona Game and Fish Department**

The White Mountains of Arizona are gentle mountains. They rise through gentle morning mists, and pull the sun down behind them in the rich rosy red glow of the day’s last light. In the spring gentle slopes and flat cienagas are resplendent with grass, ferns, flowers and beautiful weeds. Soft winds blow through the forests, intoxicating the senses with the scents of pine, juniper and earth-born spores breaking the sylvan carpet of last year’s fallen leaves.84

By the early to mid-1970s, portrayals of the Fort Apache landscape such as the one above became common fodder for travel magazines, hunting and fishing magazines, and the travel sections of national newspapers. Features on the WMRE appeared in *Outdoor Life, Sports Illustrated, Desert Life, Arizona Highways, Field and Stream, Arizona Wildlife and Sportsmen, Western Outdoors*, the *New York Times*,

83 For a more condensed version of this political battle see Stephen Kent Amerman, “‘This is Our Land’: The White Mountain Apache Trophy Elk Hunt and Tribal Sovereignty,” *Journal of Arizona History* 43 (Summer, 2002): 133-152.
the Wall Street Journal, the Chicago Tribune, the Christian Science Monitor, and the Arizona Republic among numerous other lesser-known publications. Representatives of the WMRE would visit civic clubs, hunting clubs, and go as far as Southern California to attend travel shows to advertise the “primitive flavor” of Fort Apache. For example, in 1973 Lafe Altaha, Assistant Manager of the WMRE, spoke to a crowd at a civic club about recreational development of the reservation. In the spirit of active management, he claimed that Indian reservations contained “all of the diverse ingredients that attracts travelers and tourists.” These landscapes were “primed and ready for development …and ready for use and enjoyment by an appreciative public.” He went on to warn the crowd of the negative environmental consequences of “overdevelopment,” under planning, and development without proper steps being taken to protect the environment.” But Altaha reassured the audience that the Apache people were making sure this didn’t happen to their homeland, the “last frontier of beauty and golden opportunities.” This also meant fighting for the right to manage fish and wildlife without state and federal interference.

The exposure paid off as every spring droves of hunters, fishers, hikers, wildlife lovers, boaters, horseback riders, sight seers, and campers got “the gypsy urge to get away from tensions, pressures and the unending challenges of everyday realities” and sought “serenity and fishing” in the “cool White Mountains.” Celebrities visited the reservation as well, including of all people John Wayne, the star of

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87 Carlson, “Summer is Born of May.”
many Westerns denigrating to Native Americans. Despite this, the Apache greeted him with a pit barbecue, put on an exhibition of Apache Crown Dancers, and declared the day he visited “John Wayne Day.” This didn’t prevent him from jesting in front of a crowd of White Mountain Apache “that he had killed so many Apaches in his films that he was fearful of visiting the Reservation for fear of being scalped.” An editorial in the *Fort Apache Scout* later pointed out, insensitive remarks aside, if Wayne had his “Apache lore” correct, he would have known that “Apaches respected a brave and courageous warrior.” Nonetheless, he left without incident, promising that he would return.

The Apache had tolerated worse. Encouraging Euro-Americans to visit the reservation also involved dispelling misconceptions, stereotypes, and myths about their culture. They could only hope that as the Tribe gained more exposure that the cultural disconnects would dissipate. Fortunately for their business, non-Indian attraction to the “primitive flavor” of the reservation only grew. Branch of Land Operation’s recreational use statistics indicate a rapid rise in tourist activity in the 1960s. In 1960, when detailed recreation statistics were first taken, the records show 104,000 man-days of fishing and hunting with an estimated 326,000 people visiting the reservation. By 1969, these numbers had risen to 356,000 and 1,541,900 respectively. WMRE revenue almost tripled in the same time period, starting at $543,000 in 1960 and increasing to $1,585,175 in 1969. During this decade, the Tribe invested heavily in the reservation’s recreational infrastructure. As of 1969 one could find 1,277 campsites, 760 picnic areas, 744 cabin sites, 3 boat ramps, and 3 boat marinas. The WMRE also built an additional 19 lakes in the

90 Most of the articles written about the Apache contained some stereotypical reference about their transformation from a warlike culture to modern business people. One article refers to the pains Apache representatives had to go through at a southern California Travel Show to convince people the reservation was safe. See Cook, “You Ought to See What the Apaches are up to Now.” The subtitle to the following article gives an example of the warrior stereotype: “Once a pale face entered Apache country at great risk. Today this happy hunting land is open to him.” Robert M. Hyatt, “Apacheland Welcomes White Man,” *American Legion Magazine*, March, 14-15, 38-39.
1960s, increasing the total to 26.\textsuperscript{91} All of this activity provided many full-time and part-time jobs. In 1968, the WMRE employed 130 Apaches year-round and another 75 during the summer. The increase in tourism also necessitated the expansion of retail stores and gas stations on the reservation. And in 1969, when the Tribe finally secured funds to build the Sunrise Ski Resort on Mount Ord, they decided to divide the WMRE into two divisions. The WMRE remained in charge of game and fish regulation and the maintenance of recreational facilities, while the Tribe created the White Mountain Apache Enterprise to handle the retail businesses.\textsuperscript{92}

As the WMRE expanded and Fort Apache became a popular vacationland for Euro-Americans from all over the United States, tension between the state and tribal governments heightened over issues of sovereignty. The efficacious operation of the WMRE in many ways depended on the White Mountain Apache maintaining and enhancing tribal sovereignty, especially in terms of asserting their water rights and control over fish and game regulation. In the early 1970s, with the backing of the federal government, the Apache and other Arizona tribal governments intensively explored and attempted to augment their political autonomy. This meant challenging state control over a number of jurisdictional issues, including the state’s right to tax reservation businesses, enforce state laws, control liquor, access water, and regulate fish and game. States in general were less enthusiastic than the federal government about Native American self-determination, especially Arizona, which had the largest Native American population in the United States.\textsuperscript{93} Indian Town Hall Meetings, initiated by the Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs (ACIA) in 1973, provided a release valve for this building tension. The Arizona legislature established the ACIA in 1953 to facilitate dialogue between the state government and tribal...

\textsuperscript{91} The recreation data came from a series of Agency Annual Reports: Branch of Land Operations Range and Wildlife Management, 1960 – 1969, RG 75 FAIR, CCF 58-75, Dec. 31, Box #’s 1-3. According to the reports, the definition of “man-days equals eight hours spent by sportsmen,” not including tribal members.
\textsuperscript{92} Altaha, “Reservation Recreation Enterprise Plays Important Role.”
\textsuperscript{93} The exponential growth in the number of court cases between American Indian tribes and states in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s is evidence of this trend. See also, Wilkinson, \textit{Blood Struggle}, pp. 241- 252.
governments. The Indian Town Hall meetings, usually held on reservations, brought together tribal leaders, state officials, and federal officials from the BIA and Department of Interior on an annual basis.  

The first meeting in 1973 appropriately took place at the newly opened Sunrise Ski Resort on Fort Apache and focused on water rights, an issue near and dear to the WMRE and the White Mountain Apache Tribe. With Arizona’s growing population, the state’s desire for Indian water never ceased. With the construction of the Central Arizona Project looming, Indian concerns about water rights heightened. The impacts of the project on Arizona tribes’ water rights and their equitable access to additional water generated by the project remained unclear.  

Ronnie Lupe pointed out that the Bureau of Reclamation conducted an impact statement on “wildlife, on birds, on fish, on vegetation …on fishermen, and wildlife fanciers… [but no] statement on what the project impact will be on the Navajos, and the Hopis, and the Pimas, and the Apaches.” He followed this observation by asserting, “[L]et’s not allow the lawyers and the land operators and the politicians and the bureaucrats the kind of atrocities on Indians that used to be left to the cavalry.”  

According to Lupe and many other tribal leaders, clarification of the issue before Congress funded the project was paramount to avoiding injustice. Of course Lupe and the White Mountain Apache were thoroughly familiar with water rights struggles, as the SRVWUA unsuccessfully continued to pressure the Tribe through state courts to curtail the WMRE’s lake building program.

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94 ACIC, Sovereignty and Inter-governmental Relations with Arizona Indian Tribes: A Report on the 2nd Indian Town Hall (Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs, 1975).
95 Federally approved in 1968, the Central Arizona Project involved the construction of a canal to deliver Arizona’s water allocation from the Colorado River to Phoenix and Tucson. Some Arizona tribes worried that they would be left out of the allocation, while others hoped it would relieve pressure on their water supplies. The White Mountain Apache fell in the latter category. ACIA, Report on: Arizona Indian Water Rights Conference (Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs, 1974).
In 1974 hostilities between the state and tribal governments remained evident during the second Town Hall meeting. As tribal leaders, state officials, and federal officials debated the meaning of tribal sovereignty, two definitions of self-sufficiency and sovereignty emerged: one the state defined and one the tribal governments defined. The state’s vision of self-sufficiency, evident in Governor Jack Williams’ opening remarks, remained far from an endorsement of tribal sovereignty. Their definition of self-sufficiency contained overtones of assimilation. Almost sounding resentful, perhaps due to eight years of dealing with water rights issues and an increasing number of jurisdictional challenges, Williams’ speech was pedantic and condescending. With patriotic vigor, he counseled tribal leaders,

In your quest for a definition of Indian Sovereignty never forget that you live in the only Sovereign Nation in this world that goes to every extreme to protect personal freedoms and to afford the opportunities of equality. If you equate your definition of sovereignty to the formation of a Nation, you have not only chosen the wrong political goal – but the wrong goal in every sense of responsibility to the Indian people to whom this Town Hall is dedicated. You already have citizenship in the greatest republic which the world has ever known… Don’t ever let anyone mislead you into believing that culture and heritage are only inherent to the American Indian people. The great Nation was peopled by waves of immigrants who brought their own special culture and heritages…[Furthermore], do not let the glamour of the word sovereignty snare you in a semantic mesh that prevents your continual progress towards the goals of equal opportunity in the fields of employment, education, and economic development.  

His comments were tame relative to the terminationist rhetoric of the 1950s, but the code words of assimilation inhabited the message. References to full American “citizenship,” “personal freedoms,” “equal opportunity,” and “economic development” that compromises sovereignty, had long been catch phrases employed by anti-Indian factions. Moreover, his philosophical attempt to equate Native Americans to later immigrants offered a veiled suggestion that Native Americans should join the “melting pot” of America like everyone else. These insinuations weren’t missed by the tribal leaders present. Daniel Peaches of the Navajo nation detected that the “Siren song of assimilation is loud and

97 ACIA, Sovereignty and Inter-governmental Relations with Arizona Indian Tribes, pp. 4-5.
persuasive.” And he reminded everyone, “We have learned to survive, however, by learning to ignore that song and to listen instead to an older song which runs through our heritage.”

For the Arizona tribes, the definition of sovereignty depended on the size of the tribe and their economic resource base. The smaller tribes, such as the Ak-Chin with a population of around 100 individuals, conceded that their size necessitated sharing resources with the state. They simply didn’t have the manpower or economic recourse to fully maintain a tribal police force, run schools, and provide a full complement of social services. Regardless, tribal leaders emphasized that out of mutual respect, an invitation for shared jurisdiction from the tribe should be a prerequisite of good inter-government relations. They further asserted that an agreement with one tribe did not give the state blanket authority on all affairs on a reservation or a non-participating reservation.

According to Daniel Peaches, for the larger tribes like the White Mountain Apache, San Carlos Apache, Navajo, and Papago (currently the T’ohono Odham), “[t]he shortest way to state the Indian’s position on the Indian-state relationship is that there should be no state control over Indian reservations.” Referring to the vast amounts of land Native Americans had relinquished through treaties in exchange for services such as “health, education, and public safety,” Jacob Escalante cautioned Arizona officials that the state doesn’t have “the right to tax and collect money from our people to pay for services that our people had paid in full, many times over.” Explaining why sovereignty was too important to compromise for any old economic development project, Ronnie Lupe instructed, “We the Apaches claim, and always have claimed, that no money in the world will ever buy this land from us. It’s …priceless. It’s worth a lot more than anyone can offer us, because we live and breathe every piece of air on our land. The grass, the valley, the rivers is [sic] a part of us, is a part of our

98 Ibid., p. 16.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., p. 14.
101 Ibid., p. 17.
unique ways.”¹⁰² So unlike Williams’ European immigrants, the Apache people’s identity and culture had long been tied to the land. Without a homeland, the Apache people and their culture would cease to exist. At the same time, contrasting the state’s long history of disrespect towards his people, Lupe stated that the White Mountain Apache had always honored “your land, your ways.” He stipulated that in return the state should “respect our rights and respect our ways.”¹⁰³

This request included a whole slew of jurisdictional issues where the state either taxed businesses or required permits under the auspices that the state provided tribes with significant social and environmental services. In terms of game and fish management, the White Mountain Apache, San Carlos Apache Tribe, and the Quechan, ran into trouble with state permit requirements, issuing tribal permits, and prosecuting non-Indian violators of tribal game and fish codes.¹⁰⁴ Buck Kitcheyan, a San Carlos Apache, complained, “We tried to enforce these [tribal game codes] on non-Indians who… destroyed our land resources… [but w]e are told [by the state] we cannot enforce our laws on the violators.”¹⁰⁵

Shortly after that Town Hall, Phil Stago assumed his post as director of the WMRE. In the midst of such jurisdictional controversies, he almost immediately tested the bounds of White Mountain Apache sovereignty. At the same time, he also worked to protect tribal sovereignty on the federal and tribal fronts. With the FWS, he made sure the Tribe remained a central player in Apache trout restoration work as various state and federal entities formulated the recovery plan. The role of the Apache in early drafts was ambiguous, prompting him to assert that the Tribe “will be the contact for research conducted on

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 1.
¹⁰³ Ibid.
¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 2. On the Quechan situation, see page 22. In the 1960s, they actually won a court case that conferred they had the right to detain non-Indians hunting without a tribal permit. In the early 1970s, the White Mountain Apache established in their tribal law and order code that they could prosecute non-Indians in tribal court.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 20.
tribal lands.”

He also took on the Tribal Council when they passed a resolution extending the deer season for tribal members without consulting the WMRE. Concerned about recent game ranger observations indicating that deer populations had decreased, Stago chastised the Council: “Good game management recognizes the need to allow wildlife the opportunity to repopulate itself under natural conditions. This extended season interferes and overlaps into the initial stages of the breeding season … [resulting] in a decrease of next year’s fawn crop.”

Stago brought to the fore something the White Mountain Apache never experienced since it undertook fish and game management: an Apache scientific expert in a leadership role.

Stago’s expertise made a big difference in terms of defending Apache natural resources, thus tribal sovereignty. James Sparks and Si Davis, the first two managers of the WMRE, both honorably served the White Mountain Apache, but they remained outsiders who could never fully understand the significance of defending tribal sovereignty. They weren’t fighting for the survival of their culture and the ecological integrity of their homeland. In other words, their vested interest only went so far. As Ronnie Lupe knew and vigorously worked towards in the late 1960s, it would take Apache experts assuming leadership roles in Apache enterprises to truly achieve tribal self-sufficiency. Almost immediately, the investment in Stago’s expertise proved Lupe right. Stago recognized quickly that although the WMRE had been profitable, the business lacked measures to sustain that profitability. Most importantly, he noticed that proper monitoring of game species hadn’t taken place in over fifteen years.

The Branch of Land Operations, the division in the BIA that provided technical support for the WMRE, ceased quantitative surveys of game in 1959. That year they estimated that 800 elk resided on the reservation. Later reports contained qualitative assessments derived from casual field observations. Observations on species fell into four categories: “animal not found, very few animals, commonly seen, 

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many animals seen every day.” Field agents generally considered deer and elk as common. However, Stago noticed otherwise. Both deer and elk populations showed signs of decline. For instance, the 1974 hunting season saw an extremely low elk hunter success rate. Of a total of 349 permits issued in that year, hunters only killed 34 animals. Stago believed many factors played into the low success rate. Unfortunately for the hunters, BIA forestry conducted prescribed burns coincident with the hunting season, creating an abundance of smoke that obscured visibility. A major storm also moved through the area, limiting the time one could hunt. But ultimately Stago felt that a lack of field surveys and that no requirement existed for hunters to check in or out made it difficult to determine “which way our elk herd is going.” With the increase in recreational use of tribal resources over the previous fifteen years, Stago emphasized the need for “research so we can do some planning.”

Along with conducting more game surveys, Stago had another idea: sponsoring trophy elk hunts. After observing that people traveled to Fort Apache from all across the United States to hunt trophy-sized bull elks, he intuited that the Tribe could probably generate more money from hunting permits than the $30 per elk permit they had been issuing. He piloted the program with a couple of special guided hunts during the 1975 hunting season. The WMRE limited the special hunt permits to twenty at $750 each. They only filled eighteen applications in the first year, but that would be the last time that happened. More importantly, utilizing the local knowledge of Apache guides, the hunters had a 100% success rate. Success was paramount to building demand for a trophy elk program. Ever since, with hunters coming from as far away as Europe and New Zealand, the popularity of the program required

the WMRE to institute a waiting list. The next year the WMRE raised the permit to $1500, continuing to raise the fee in subsequent years. Currently the fee is $17,000 per permit.\footnote{The Tribe eventually created a trophy hunt for pronghorn antelope in the 1980s and big horn sheep in the 1990s. They also have an auction for a couple of bids a year that bring in as much as $40,000 each. In total, trophy hunts bring in close to half a million dollars a year now. For more on permit fees see the White Mountain Apache Tribe Outdoor and Recreation website, \url{http://www.wmatoutdoors.org/new%20trophy%20elk.shtml}}

Stago reasoned that the trophy hunt would restore the health of the elk herd in two basic ways. First, obviously fewer hunters would mean less pressure on the population. Second, bull-only hunts wouldn’t affect the breeding potential of the herd. According to Stago, “after reaching an age where they [bulls] can no longer fend off the younger bulls the older bulls are driven away from the cows and either drift around by themselves or join other bulls who are unable to hold together a harem of cows.” As further support for his hypothesis, he reported that one of the bulls killed in the 1975 excursion had very few teeth left, thus reducing its chance of surviving the winter. He believed that most individuals taken during trophy hunts wouldn’t live until the next breeding season anyway.\footnote{“Elk Hunt Hailed as Very Successful.”}

Even though the guided hunts proved prosperous, the regular hunt continued to yield poor results. News circulated that elk populations on the reservation were in decline. As a consequence, the WMRE sold fewer permits than the previous year. A 1975 WMRE survey supported this notion, reporting that the population size was “fair” but smaller than in previous years. The survey also indicated that wild horse numbers had increased, meaning that the horses possibly competed with the elk for forage. Because of the Wild Horse and Burro Protection Act, the WMRE, for now, couldn’t cull the horse population.\footnote{“W.M.R.E. Completes Summer Elk Survey,” \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 14 (July, 1975): 10.} With this survey information in hand, Stago convinced the Tribal Council to raise hunting and fishing fees in general, reduce the number of hunters allowed on the reservation, and permanently support the trophy elk hunts. The WMRE needed to raise more revenue to properly manage fish and wildlife populations: “[I]f the outdoorsmen want to continue enjoying the reservation’s fishing, hunting
and camping they are going to have to pay a little more, or lose the privilege of using this outdoor paradise. The Tribe just cannot afford to finance the program for them.”114 By implication, the tourists, hunters, and fishers had been receiving a bargain. Stago wanted to explore the true recreational “value” of the reservation. He believed if the Tribal Council increased camping, fishing, and hunting fees, outdoor enthusiasts would still come, and they did.

Stago justified the hike in fees and reduced number of permits on several other grounds as well. Other than the technical support provided by the BIA, which the Tribe often partly paid for out of the tribal coffers anyway, the WMRE received no federal or state aid. Unlike the AGFD, the WMRE was ineligible for Dingell-Johnson Act money for fisheries management or Pittman-Robertson Act funds for game management and restoration.115 He also defended the reduced number of permits at higher prices on the grounds that his game warden staff remained too small to properly enforce the game code. If fewer hunters roamed the reservation, the game wardens increased their chances of catching any violations. Lastly, recent escalation in hunting and fishing pressure degraded the reservation’s ecosystems. Restoring populations and habitat entailed reducing the number of individuals attempting to take fish and wildlife - either that or institute closed seasons. But Stago submitted that no one wins in the latter option, plus “this is wasteful and not good game management as many of the animals would not survive [the winter] anyway.”116

Predictably Stago encountered resistance from hunters, fishers, the press, and the AGFD. The hunters and fishers were the least of his worries, though, with many conceding that the price hike was

115 These acts provide states with funds derived from federal taxes on hunting and fishing gear to protect and conserve game and fish species.
justifiable.\textsuperscript{117} The bad press was unpleasant, but it failed to affect business; however, it served to create tension between Arizonans and the Apache. The main instigator was Ben Avery of the\textit{ Arizona Republic}, whose opinions about the WMRE had long vacillated back and forth depending on the extent the Tribe presented a threat to what he perceived as state resources.\textsuperscript{118} In an editorial in the spring of 1976, soon after the Apache released their new hunting and fishing regulations, he incorrectly applied the “state-ownership” argument in defense of the AGFD’s position, a position the AGFD didn’t even bother to take. He invoked the Winslow Elk’s Lodge introduction of Rocky Mountain elk in 1913 as evidence of state jurisdiction over the game. He also accused the Apache of creating a “private… fishing and shooting preserve.” He went on to question the legitimacy of tribal sovereignty by asking, “when you get serious, who is an Indian? There are millions of us of mixed Indian blood of varying degrees.” However, what the permit issue boiled down to was a threat to state sovereignty. Using scare tactics, Avery implied that the Arizona tribes strived to take everything away from Arizonans. “In recent years both the courts and the Congress are doing drastic things,” Avery wrote, “Now Sen. Ted Kennedy has introduced a bill that would give all of Arizona’s water to Indians.”\textsuperscript{119}

Also sensing this threat, the AGFD immediately challenged the efficacy of the trophy elk hunt program. The AGFD by law had no recourse against the tribal permit fee, but they objected to two other aspects of the program. First, the program violated the state’s mandatory three-year waiting period for elk hunters. Under state rules, a hunter would have to wait another three years before participating in the program again. But Stago wanted repeat business from those who would pay the WMRE’s fee. On


\textsuperscript{118} Avery had been writing about the White Mountain Apache in the Outdoor section in the\textit{ Arizona Republic} since the 1950s. He was highly critical of the Tribe’s efforts to build Hawley Lake (see chapter 6). However, he later praised the Tribe’s entrepreneurship and was particularly enamored with Lydo Harvey. When Harvey died, he wrote a very complementary piece on him. He certainly wanted the Apache to succeed, but not at the cost of non-Indians. He saw economic development as a pathway towards assimilation.

March 7, 1976 he met with the AGFD and after a “heated discussion,” they granted a waiver for the three-year wait. The second issue would result in a protracted court battle. Stago informed the AGFD that the WMRE no longer required a state permit for hunting and fishing on the reservation, thus challenging the state’s authority to enforce their regulations. Although the state hadn’t directly challenged the fee hikes and the reduction in the number of permits, Stago believed that the state’s requirement for non-Indians to possess a state permit violated the Tribe’s sovereignty. Moreover, state permits represented a lingering threat to more important aspects of game and fish management. If the state “has the power,” maintained Stago, “we wouldn’t have any control. The state could tell us when to have our seasons, how many permits to issue, and what to charge.” To quell any doubts, the Apache had to extinguish all extensions of AGFD’s authority, state permits included.120

The stakes were high for the Apache. They saw the issue as a battle for the sovereign right to control eco-cultural resources on their homeland. For the state, the stakes seemed equally high. For the past fifteen years their jurisdiction had been whittled away through similar battles with the Navajo, by the federal government through the Endangered Species Act, and by local judges failing to enforce state game laws.121 The AGFD also stood to lose financially. Permits from the thousands of hunters and fishers visiting Fort Apache generated a lot of revenue. They argued the costs could be devastating if all the reservations in Arizona went the way of Fort Apache and Navajo. Indian reservations constituted more the 50% of the land area and much of the prime hunting and fishing spots in Arizona. Although the financial loss claim proved to be an exaggeration, the AGFD decided to draw the line in the fall of 1977.

As part of the trophy elk fee, the WMRE agreed to ship trophy racks (antlers) to participants traveling great distances. The AGFD got wind of a set of antlers the WMRE sent to a customer in Texas via train through Show Low, Arizona. They confiscated the antlers, claiming the hunter that killed the

121 Amerman, “‘This is Our Land,’” pp. 144-145. See also Barnes’ talk in ACIA, Control of Natural Resources, pp. 23-29.
animal had done so illegally without a state permit. However, shortly thereafter the Navajo County court ordered the AGFD to return them to the Tribe. This action led the White Mountain Apache Tribe to file suit against the AGFD for interfering in the Tribe’s jurisdiction in the Federal District Court. The White Mountain Apache’s attorney, Kathleen Rhir, also argued on the grounds that the WMRE was self-supporting, receiving no state funds to enhance recreational infrastructure or manage fish and game. Therefore, the state didn’t have the right to regulate game and fish on the reservation. The Tribe also provided evidence that since they forced the state’s hand and took full control of management on the reservation, the condition of the reservation ecosystem had improved. The new game policy resulted in larger and healthier big game herds, reduced the trampling effect caused by large numbers of elk hunters, and a diminished the level of poaching.122

Besides asserting tribal authority, Stago and the White Mountain Apache also delineated cultural and scientific boundaries. In a deposition given for the District Court, Chairman Lupe answered doubts about whether the Tribe was capable of managing their own resources. He claimed that the White Mountain Apache had “always practiced conservation.” He went on to explain, “It’s an Apache philosophy that we rely upon game as our livelihood. Since time began we look upon game as part of our life, our everyday life. We are mindful of the existence of game being very important because it does provide food, it does provide existence to the White Mountain Apache Tribe.” When asked about why the Tribe reduced the number of permits for “whites,” Stago informed the Court that the policy had nothing to do with excluding or limiting “non-Indians.” First and foremost, the purpose of wildlife management on Fort Apache was “for the Tribal members.” Fish and game provided a livelihood for the

reservation population in two ways. First, the WMRE provided jobs and revenue for the reservation economy. Second, fish and game remained an important source of food for some tribal members. Ultimately, Stago reminded the Court that tribal members “invite people on the reservation to hunt as long as the game population will permit.”

In June of 1978 the U.S. District Court of Arizona ruled in favor of the AGFD and determined that non-Indian hunters had to purchase a state permit to legally hunt on Fort Apache. The District Court side-stepped the sovereignty issue and claimed that the Tribe failed to demonstrate financial hardship resulting from state regulations. Rhir and Stago claimed they weren’t surprised by the decision. As a consequence, the White Mountain Apache almost immediately appealed the case in the United States Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Rhir believed the case would probably end up in the Supreme Court unless one of a number of similar cases reached there first. In particular, the Tribe had their eye on *New Mexico v. Mescalero Apache Tribe*, which at the time was being heard at the district level as well. This case also challenged state interference with tribal game management. The Tribe also had another case pending in the Supreme Court that would weigh in on the sovereignty issue. *White Mountain Apache Tribe v. Bracker* turned on the issue of whether the state of Arizona had the right to tax an independent logging company contracted by FATCO to do work on the reservation. In 1980 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Tribe because it determined that the state didn’t provide any regulatory services that would warrant taxes. In general the case provided a framework for judging “preemption” battles (in the

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123 Although tribal members had to adhere to bag limits and seasons, the Council didn’t require them to pay for permits until 1989.
125 *White Mountain Apache Tribe v. State of Arizona, Department of Game and Fish*, 1277.
AGFD case, whether the court had the right to stop Arizona from requiring state permits) between states and tribal governments, giving weight to “the tradition of Indian sovereignty over the reservation.”127

In the meantime, however, the White Mountain Apache had to deal with the AGFD case. Stago stood his ground, asserting that the “1976 code will be honored.” With the backing of the Tribal Council, he instructed the game wardens not to check for state permits and refused to let state officials on the reservation. He also demanded that the state “honor” the Tribe’s trophy elk hunting season, which didn’t necessarily coincide with the state elk hunting season. Emphatic about his position, Stago cautioned that if “the state insists on creating problems … it may become necessary to close hunting (but not fishing) to non-Indians.” The issue clearly went beyond money for the Tribe. They stood to lose $75,000 alone from the trophy-elk hunt if the state interfered.128 The state retreated; instead implementing the strategy of waiting off-reservation to apprehend any violators of the state permit law. Eventually, Stago backed down on the permit issue so as to not cause any problems for their trophy elk clients, paying the required state permit fees in protest.

While the White Mountain Apache worked on their appeal, in 1979 another face-off between the AGFD and the Tribe occurred at the Ninth Indian Town Hall Meeting held at the Sunrise Ski Resort. In the presence of AGFD officials and a number of tribes (the San Carlos Apache, Navajo, and Hualapai all had trophy hunts by now) dealing with similar jurisdictional issues over game and fish, Stago made his intentions clear. He came prepared to battle. Anticipating the tension in the audience while playing the role of moderator in a session on “Game and Fish Management,” Stago opened with a joke: “It is pretty lucky that you have all just about finished eating now, because what I am going to say may upset you or

128 “Federal Judge Rules Against Tribe in Suit,” p. 9. The Tribe wouldn’t discontinue fishing due to the fact that both the state, through Apache trout propagation, and federal government contributed significant funds for restocking reservation streams.
ruin your appetite.”

He followed the joke with some welcoming remarks but quickly dove into the thick of the matter, claiming “[i]t has been recorded in history that we are the kind of people that cannot be pushed around. We have fought many people of different races, throughout the years; we have been in many Indian wars, and even fought in World War I.”

He went on describing the sacrifices of his fellow Apache who fought and died in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and “if necessary Iran” to protect what “they loved… their origination, the point of origination from the sacred Mountain [Mount Baldy].”

After emphasizing the lengths to which his people would go to defend their homeland, he rehashed the status of the court battle with the AGFD. Conceding that they had lost the “first bout,” he reassured everyone that the Tribe would do “[w]hatever is necessary, whatever it takes” to restore their sovereign right to manage tribal resources.

Tom Barnes, Game Branch Supervisor of the AGFD, followed Stago. He admitted to being “apprehensive” about giving his presentation in front of tribal officials who whole-heartedly disagreed with his agency’s position. Nonetheless, he diplomatically reasserted the state’s position: that state wildlife laws applied on Indian reservations. Expressing the AGFD’s frustration with the standoff, he claimed, “if things were any more confused or if Department and tribal relationships deteriorate any further on some reservations, both sides might as well give up and start over.” Barnes believed the root of the problem lay with the segregationist policies of the tribal governments. Until “we, as a people, decide that we are one nation… willing to establish one law that is equally applicable to all people without respect to race, sex, or creed,” no solutions to the problem will emerge. After admonishing tribal game wardens for misinforming non-Indians about state permit requirements on reservations, he made an emotional appeal to the predominantly Native American audience: “I would like to express my love

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130 Ibid., p. 23.
131 Ibid.
and appreciation to the Indian people. I can sincerely do this because I, as a Mormon, firmly believe the Indian people are a choice people in the eyes of God and that you are presently preparing yourselves to fulfill a major responsibility in His behalf.” Although what he said probably came “from the heart,” Barnes, like so many before him, underestimated the importance of sovereignty to Native Americans.132

After Barnes’s appeal for brotherhood, William Lavell, the Solicitor for the DOI, took the podium. Lavell essentially backed the tribal government’s position, predicting that the Supreme Court would eventually weigh in on the White Mountain Apache case along with the Mescalero Apache case. Once there, he believed, the sovereign right of the Indian nations to regulate fish and game without state interference would be upheld. Given that probable outcome and that it would take several years to resolve, he suggested that the state immediately find ways to “coordinate and cooperate” with tribal governments. Belittling the state’s position, he accused them of being petty, fighting for a miniscule amount of permit revenue and the authority to control “a few [trophy elk] hunts that don’t coincide with the state season.”133 In a historical role reversal, the situation looked quite grim for state rights. The Native Americans for once seemed to have the upper hand, and they planned on capitalizing on it.

Besides restating their legal position, the White Mountain Apache had a few other boundaries to regulate as well. Having long been dependent on the expert knowledge of the AGFD, BIA, and FWS, Stago and Chairman Lupe sought to reestablish the White Mountain Apache intellectual contribution to natural resource management and restoration. They wanted the audience to know that governmental experts weren’t the only people capable of managing public resources. They also presented themselves as experts working within their own “Game and Fish Department” on par with or better than state and federal land managers. In Chairman Lupe’s opening remarks, he pointed out that the game wardens “are

132 Ibid., pp. 24-29.
133 Ibid., pp. 29-33.
very well in tune with the reservation’s topographic terrain, and very intelligent.”

In his closing remarks, Stago boasted about the Tribe’s ability to manage the elk herd: “I will bet with my right arm,” he wagered, “that 50 years from now, or maybe 100 years from now, there will be elk, and I predict also that there will be wildlife on these mountains here on the reservation.” And of course this would happen because he was “a professional man… highly trained as a game naturalist, along with being a biologist.”

Stago also explained that as a White Mountain Apache connected to the land through heritage, it obligated him to protect Apache resources. His responsibility and allegiance was to his people just like the state was responsible for their land. In the long run, the Apache homeland was better served by the local knowledge that came with being a White Mountain Apache. Therefore, in no way did Stago “need the [Arizona] Game and Fish people to tell me how to do things or what to do.”

Stago’s assertion of expertise ran deeper than the right and ability to produce legitimate knowledge. While criticizing the efficacy of state management techniques, he leveled a philosophical challenge to the foundations of Western science. He revealed problems with knowledge production and application from afar. First, Stago claimed that the AGFD issued more permits than appropriate, which exerted too much pressure on game populations. Responding to earlier AGFD claims that the jurisdictional squabbles may “result in harm to wildlife resources,” Stago replied, “If you really love and care for wildlife, you don’t sell thousands and thousands of permits.” According to Stago, the source of the AGFD’s management problems arose out of their fundamental belief in a universalist, top-down mode of knowledge production:

They have to consider what’s out there in the woods. You can be a biologist down in a Phoenix Game and Fish Office, with a Ph.D. in biology, and make all kinds of decisions… but you also have to know what is going on in the mountains. You don’t learn that from a book, believe me. That is where we [AGFD and the Tribe]… differ. We see it and we live it every day by being out

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134 Ibid., p. 2.
135 Ibid., pp. 33-36.
in the field… You have to have wildlife control now in this day and age, otherwise…it is going to be gone forever.

While drawing a distinct philosophical line between the management ethos of the Tribe and the AGFD, he maintained, “We have better and more wildlife on this reservation than any place in the southwest, because we do not over-kill, we do not have excessive hunters and everything is controlled.” His essential message contended that the formula of mixing White Mountain Apache wisdom and local knowledge with training in the Western sciences made for a superior management philosophy. Employing the delineation between Apache knowledge and Western knowledge as a political tool, he attempted to turn the relationship between the AGFD and the WMRE on its head, by implying that the AGFD had something to learn from the “Apache way.”

Gaining respect for White Mountain Apache expertise became a long-term project, but Stago and Lupe had taken the first step. The act of pronouncing that Apache’s could understand and apply Western knowledge created an epistemological foundation from which the Tribe could continue to legitimize Apache knowledge in the eyes of Western science. At this time, the notion of Apache knowledge remained vague. According to Stago, it simply entailed a mix of intimate knowledge of their homeland, “ancient” Apache land management traditions, and Western science. Although this mix of epistemological standpoints lacked clear definition, the 1979 Indian Town Hall meeting embodied the political pathway of a rediscovery process. Since the late 1960s, Stago, Lupe, and the rest of the Apache were experimenting with expressions of Apache identity. This meant relearning, then applying their history, ancestral knowledge, ethical frameworks, and technologies in a variety of eco-political contexts to reassert their cultural identity and tribal autonomy. Throughout the next thirty years, the Apache would continue to experiment with the notion of Apache knowledge as they assumed control over knowledge production on the reservation.

136 Ibid.
In the meantime, the federal courts finally rendered a decision on the jurisdictional battle in 1983, which furthered the Apache’s quest to control resources and knowledge production on Fort Apache. In 1980 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held *White Mountain Apache Tribe v. AGDF* in abeyance until the Supreme Court handed down the decision on *New Mexico v. Mescalero Apache Tribe*. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Mescalero Apache, affirming that New Mexico’s fish and game department had no jurisdiction over the Mescalero Apache Reservation. Furthermore, the Court decided that the Mescalero Apache could prosecute non-Indian violators of their game code in tribal court. Based on this decision, on October 24, 1983 the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona decreed that “the application of Arizona’s hunting and fishing laws to the Fort Apache Indian Reservation… interferes with Tribal self-government” and that the AGFD lacked the authority to “manage or control” game and fish on the reservation. The Court also ordered Arizona to pay the Tribe $9,029.56 in court costs, $45,000 in attorney’s fees, and $27,656 plus interest that the Tribe paid under protest to the AGFD for state licenses for hunters participating in trophy elk hunts from 1977 through 1983. Shortly after the White Mountain Apache ruling, the AGFD changed its policy to generally reflect the findings of the White Mountain Apache case. As of spring of 1984, it no longer required the purchase of state permits to hunt on any reservation in the state.

**Exchange: Return to a Frontier Hunter’s “Paradise”**

The court victory allowed an already successful recreational program to flourish. The trophy elk hunt was particularly in demand. The revenue generated by the trophy hunt increased every year. By

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137 *New Mexico v. Mescalero Apache Tribe.*
1983, the WMRE charged $5,000 for a five day permit and $7,000 for a seven day permit.\textsuperscript{140} The Tribe invested these funds back into the WMRE, which influenced the nature of ecological restoration in two relevant ways. In essence, the Tribe’s battle to define sovereignty also was in part a battle to define restoration. First, the elk hunt helped staff the WMRE with college educated, non-Indian, wildlife biologists. Despite Lupe and Stago’s claims at the 1979 Indian Town Hall, expertise remained in short supply among tribal members. Under the wings of Phil Stago, these biologists trained White Mountain Apaches in increasingly sophisticated wildlife management and restoration techniques. Second, the trophy elk program provided - for a privileged portion of the hunting population - a taste of the past, a past where big game hunters such as Teddy Roosevelt ventured into the “wilderness” to test their character and bring home legendary kills. In other words, the WMRE restored a sense of rugged individualism and the wilderness experience for the wealthy sport hunter.

In terms of building expertise, the trophy elk hunt meant a great deal. In the 1970s, Stago relied on the CETA Manpower Program, a product of the Self-Determination Act of 1975, to train game wardens. However, by the 1980s, Reagan-era budget cuts considerably diminished the effectiveness of this program.\textsuperscript{141} Because significant numbers of Apache youth still weren’t pursuing college degrees in wildlife management, Stago had no recourse but to continue training his game wardens through informal means. The trophy elk hunts created enough revenue to begin adding college-educated wildlife biologists to his staff. In return for on-the-job experience that would propel their careers, non-Indians helped the WMRE develop more sophisticated management techniques and train Apaches.

For instance, in 1982 John Caid and John “Punt” Cooley (both went on to careers in the AGFD), Euro-American wildlife biologists employed by the Tribe’s Game and Fish Department (now a division

\textsuperscript{140} “Elk Survey Provides Game Management Information,” \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 22 (June 10, 1983): 1. 8-9.
\textsuperscript{141} ACIA, \textit{Indian Self-Determination and Barriers to Realization”: The 9\textsuperscript{th} Annual Indian Town Hall Report, October 28-30, 1981} (Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs, 1982), pp. 60-61.
of the WMRE), helped introduce a radio telemetry elk-tracking system on the reservation.\textsuperscript{142} They also trained tribal game wardens in the techniques used to carry out the program. Prior to this method of monitoring elk, the Tribe relied upon less accurate game warden sightings and helicopter herd censuses. The monitoring system involved trapping elk, taking a blood sample, tagging the ear, and placing a color coded collar or numbered transmitting collar around the elk’s neck. The blood samples allowed the Department to determine the health of the herd. The transmitting collars permitted tribal game wardens and biologists to track the movements of individuals. Knowing more about their movements gave specific information about habitat requirements, the home range of individuals, and migration patterns. Cooley, the game wardens in turn used this information to assess potential problems, targeting areas for restoration. The tags helped determine the survival rate, age distribution, and sex ratio of the reservation population, which they applied to make inferences about future trends in the elk population.\textsuperscript{143} For example, in the late 1980s, the surveys revealed that cow elk numbers had decreased on the West End, creating a high bull-to-cow ratio, which indicated that this population would continue trending downward. To rectify the situation, game wardens Victor Larzelere and Roland Ethelbah and wildlife biologist Joe Jojola trapped thirty young cows in the northeastern portion of the reservation, where they remained abundant, subsequently releasing these cows in the West End.\textsuperscript{144}

Other training opportunities presented themselves through habitat restoration. In particular, the Game and Fish Department with the aid of the BIA Forestry Department, which employed mostly White Mountain Apache, conducted controlled burns to restore the grazing capacity of elk habitat.\textsuperscript{145} Prior to

\textsuperscript{142} Cooley in particular had a vested interest in the ecological health of the Fort Apache landscape. He was one-eighth Apache, but according to tribal rules failed to qualify as a tribal member. Nonetheless, he grew up in McNary and felt a sincere attachment to tribal lands.

\textsuperscript{143} “Elk Survey Provides Game Management Information,” \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 22 (June 10, 1983): 1, 8-9.

\textsuperscript{144} “Cow Elk moved as Part of Game Management,” \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 28 (June 16, 1989): 6.

the fire suppression policies of the BIA and the Forest Service of the early twentieth century, natural and man-induced fire shaped the Ponderosa pine ecosystem, creating large open spaces of lush grass between mature pines.\footnote{Peter Friederici, ed., 
Fire, Native Peoples, and the Natural Landscape (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2002).} Increasing elk forage was part of a larger reservation-wide prescribed burn program, which attempted to restore forest and range damaged by past BIA fire suppression and grazing policies. The Game and Fish Department also subjected juniper and piñon pine, which also benefitted from fire suppression policies, to eradication projects that also aimed to expand the foraging capacity of the reservation.\footnote{Game and Fish Department, “Wildlife and Fire,” 
Fort Apache Scout 29 (June 1, 1990): 12; Rolan Hartzell, “You can’t See the Forest for the Trees,” 
Fort Apache Scout 29 (March 23, 1990): 1, 5.} As a result of these restoration efforts, by 1989, the reservation elk herd became so large, that the Game and Fish Department had to institute a cow elk culling program. The tribal government began receiving complaints from neighboring ranchers about elk moving into off-reservation winter habitat, where they damaged range and farmland.\footnote{“Council Approves Tribal Member Hunting Fees, Cow Elk Hunt,” 
Fort Apache Scout 28 (June 30, 1989): 1, 7.}

All of this restoration work contributed to the growth of one of the most prestigious trophy elk hunts in the United States. Over the years the hunt has drawn celebrities such as Jack Nicklaus, George Strait, Dale Earnhardt, and Kurt Russell. Other clientele consisted of wealthy, white male executives of large corporations like Coca Cola. A fair number came from royalty in Europe as well.\footnote{Punt Cooley, “The Many Faces of Maverick,” 
Fort Apache Scout 40 (March 22, 2002): 7; “Sealed Elk Hunt Bids Awarded,” 
Fort Apache Scout 27 (April 7, 1989): 18.} In short, the participants have been privileged, white, male hunters, a breed not so different from those who started the Boone and Crockett Club in the late nineteenth century. In a sense, the White Mountain Apache offered, and perhaps even restored, a past way of life – that of the Progressive Era adventurer sportmen. From recreating elk herds with record setting bulls, to maintaining a wilderness setting, to providing
White Mountain Apache guides, cooks, and skinners, the Tribal Game and Fish Department (formerly the WMRE) sparked the romantic imaginations of the rugged individualist.  

Like in the late nineteenth century with the wealthy easterner M.E. Morford who sought the perfect elk in the White Mountains, once a year since 1975 the Apache have sponsored a select group of rich hunters embarking on their own adventures into the wilds of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. In the early days of the trophy program, a hunter came from California claiming, “This has been my dream.” He had never seen elk so big. His previous experiences in Colorado paled in comparison. The elk there “were not like this!” Another hunter marveled in the fact that on his first day, “I saw twenty five elk that most hunters would be proud to have taken. I could have gone on a hunt in Colorado for ten days and never seen that.” A CEO from a textile manufacturer in Mexico City saw Fort Apache as a way “to get away from everything.” Another hunter from California characterized the reservation as “one of the best places in the country to hunt, relax, and enjoy the beauty.”

As of 1999, Jack Nicklaus, who opted to bow hunt, participated in the program five times. He liked the isolation of the reservation, being able to spend a few weeks out of the limelight: “I don’t have to shoot anything. I come up just to have fun and enjoy the outdoors.” All the participants had one thing in common, a desire to escape the confines of civilization.

Hunter success has been a required part of the trophy-elk program experience as well. To augment this success, the Game and Fish Depart maintained elk populations that steadily yielded trophy-caliber bull elks. In most years, hunters experienced a 70-80% success rate, with many of them passing up sure

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kills because they would rather wait for a chance at a record-sized elk. The actual height and weight of
the animal wasn’t what determined a record. They sought elk with unblemished six- to eight-point
antlers, of which one hunter claimed that Fort Apache had more “than anywhere else in the world.”
Essentially, most participants only killed bull elks that would land them in the Boone and Crockett
record book. As of 1987, fifty two record-sized bull elks had been taken on Fort Apache. Currently,
the Tribe claims over a hundred kills from Fort Apache have landed in the Boone and Crockett record
book. Although the hunters benefitted from some modern conveniences, they in a sense experienced a
hunting opportunity not available since the late nineteenth century. The staff of the Fish and Game
Department worked endlessly to recreate the abundance of six-point “monster elk” that roamed the
White Mountains prior to the arrival of hunters, ranchers, sheep herders, and the military in the 1870s.
They couldn’t bring back Merriam’s elk, but perhaps they brought back the “ideal” elk.

Conclusion

Stago’s challenge to the state of Arizona offers an example of how earlier successes with restoration
and natural resource management endowed the White Mountain Apache with political leverage to win
battles for the right to manage resources for the benefit of the tribe. Without these early demonstrations
of management capabilities, the Tribe would have experienced more difficulty substantiating claims that
they could manage fish and wildlife without the state’s interference. Stago’s overt politicization of
science also played a vital role in establishing Apache sovereignty over their eco-cultural resources.
Even before the movement to resurrect the legitimacy of traditional ecological knowledge emerged in
the 1990s, he drew a line between Western knowledge and White Mountain Apache knowledge. Stago

155 Bennett Cosay, “While the Rest of Us Hustle and Bustle through Our Daily Lives, Somewhere Up in the
Mountains a Small Group of People are Having the Time of Their Lives,” Fort Apache Scout 33 (October 14,
156 “Trophy Elk Hunt.”
challenged the validity of the philosophical foundation of Western science, the efficacy of the distant “detached observer” to manage natural resources. In so doing, he reinstituted Apache control over knowledge production on Fort Apache. The fact that the Apache trout and elk restoration and management projects yielded positive results made his distinction all the more powerful. At the very least, non-Indian land managers had little choice but to acknowledge the Apache voice in the world of wildlife management.

Reestablishing sovereignty over fish and game meant that non-Indians had to contend with the existence of a newly legitimized form of local knowledge. The power of local knowledge, as Stago articulated it, was that it incorporated the eco-cultural concerns of the Apache community, a group of people who had long been dismissed as irrelevant to the larger society in which they were embedded. This is something that organizations such as the AGFD could never accomplish from its universalist perspective. Its mission focused on the protection of Arizona resources for the benefit of its citizens, a mission that regularly failed to address the needs of the Apache people. But beginning in the 1970s, the Apache reasserted their culture’s relevancy.

Although the WMRE (Tribal Game and Fish Department) and the Tribe borrowed heavily from Western science and technology to fulfill their natural resource management goals, they were beginning to develop their own brand of knowledge, a hybridization between the “Apache way” and the Western way. Even though the “Apache way” of managing eco-cultural resources remained vague, the fact that Stago and other Apaches articulated the rebirth of this knowledge in their political dialogues with non-Indians furnished the “Apache way” with a substrate from which to grow. In its early form, Apache knowledge simply comprised local knowledge of the reservation, intimate understandings of its natural history, animal behavior, plant distributions, and environmental idiosyncrasies. In time though, Apache

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knowledge incorporated past traditions, including philosophical dispositions towards land management, land management techniques, stories that contain history of the White Mountain landscape, cultural relationships with non-human nature, and moral frameworks that tell people how to live on the land. But the evolution of Apache knowledge also involved the appropriation of Western science for the benefit of the Apache people. In essence, Apache knowledge is simply local knowledge produced by the Apache people for the benefit of the Apache people, regardless of the cultural origin of the techniques.

In the next chapter I examine how White Mountain Apache knowledge production moved beyond vague assertions of past practices and critiques of Western science. Ronnie Lupe’s message to Apache students in 1983 serves as an example of how Apache knowledge production would grow:

White Mountain Apache students might question why we, as Tribal elders, stress the need for education. It does not mean that we want you to join the mainstream. On the contrary, we want you to remain White Mountain Apaches, retain the beautiful songs that replenish your spirit and maintain our strong way of life. But we know that as the world changes so must the weapons we use to defend ourselves and preserve our cultural identity and homeland. The weapons of today and the future are first acquired within your Tribal culture and are then honed in the classrooms of the schools and universities.  

In essence, delineating between Western and non-Western knowledge was part of the recovery process, but cultural exchange remained integral to the recovery process as well. As the Tribe began rediscovering their landscape, customs, and stories, they attempted to integrate this knowledge into restoration projects. As a result, the Apache notion of local knowledge became more robust, sophisticated, and unique. In other words, the Apache voice rang progressively more clear as they continued to appropriate Western science and technology for their own benefit.

Chapter 8

The 1990s: Moving Towards an Epistemological Restoration

There’s lots of Apaches in there and all they were doing, so you can see what happened to them and know what they were thinking. It’s like their tracks, lots of tracks. Those stories are like those people’s tracks.

Eva Watt, 2004

Although Eva Watt was speaking about Apache history, her thoughts on this subject are highly relevant to the restoration of Apache knowledge. Apache stories contain Apache knowledge. As she stated, these stories are her people’s “tracks” – their mark on the world. In Don’t Let the Sun Step Over You, a collection of Watt’s memories from her life on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, she criticized most Euro-American historians for not including Apache stories in their representations of Western Apache history. By doing this, these historians created knowledge from afar (universal standpoint), leaving the impression that “everybody was just lying around doing nothing, just waiting around for rations.” These histories, especially histories of military conquest, reinforced the notion of the “vanishing Indian.” On the contrary, Watt asserted, “Lots was going on. See, people were busy every day – going here, going there, doing this, doing that. They had to ‘cause those rations don’t last very long… It’s not in those books, though. Lots is missing in those books ‘cause there’s hardly no Indians in there. You can’t see hardly nothing in there about how we used to live.”

In a sense, Watt’s collection of stories constituted a work of epistemological restoration. Through her stories, she beckoned future historians to include Apache knowledge in the forefront of Apache histories: otherwise these histories would fail to legitimately represent the Apache people. History

2 Ibid., p. xvi.
3 Ibid.
wasn’t the only act of knowledge production that maintained a universal standpoint on the reservation. Historically, the BIA, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) subjected the White Mountain Apache to paternalistic land management and bureaucratic schemes that failed to fully account for their needs. From the Apache standpoint, these schemes suffered from a lack of local knowledge, either ignoring or actively denigrating Apache knowledge. Some land management projects even erased Apache knowledge from the landscape through the destruction of culturally important places. From the application of New Deal projects until the late 1980s, the Apache struggled to reassert their voice in management decisions concerning their homeland. By the 1990s, they had assumed almost full control of reservation eco-cultural resources, prepared to defend themselves against further assault. The coincidence between the restoration of Apache eco-cultural resources and Apache knowledge wasn’t an accident.

The connection between eco-cultural restoration and history became obvious to the Apache. Reviving Apache history went hand in hand with restoring the Apache homeland. It also spoke to the importance of controlling knowledge production on the reservation. The White Mountain Apache learned that reclaiming knowledge production meant revitalizing their past, not only the ecological aspects of the past, but also the cultural aspects. Because Apache culture is deeply embedded in the land through stories and legends, restoration of the physical landscape also meant restoration of Apache knowledge – local knowledge that tied together the moral, social, political, and cultural framework of the Apache people.⁴

The White Mountain Apache spent the greater part of the last seventy years struggling to reach the point where they could adapt all knowledge production - whether Apache or Western - to the needs of the Apache people and the local environment. The focus of restoration work in the 1990s strived towards this goal. The process of resistance and exchange facilitated this goal, serving as a filter that

partitioned Western knowledge into categories delineating what was useful and irrelevant to the Apache people. The Tribe’s cultural appropriation of ecological restoration embodied this dual political function. Apache resistance to the foibles of Western society delineated legal and cultural differences, reasserted cultural identity, reestablished cultural autonomy, and helped maintain tribal sovereignty. At the same time, the Apache depended on cultural exchange with federal land management agencies to successfully manage their eco-cultural resources. Exchange also facilitated the development of a labor force conversant with Western science and technology, which aided communication across cultural boundaries.

By the 1990s, the Apache had earned the political capital to resist universal applications of federal land management policies such as the Endangered Species Act, while simultaneously creating opportunities for cultural exchange with federal agencies, state agencies, NGOs, and academic institutions that benefitted the Tribe. The physical and social results of exchange formed eco-cultural hybridizations of science, technology, and the landscape. Unfortunately though, because the Apache held jurisdiction over valuable natural resources, they remained subject to outside perspectives – environmentalists, federal agencies, private industry – that didn’t always have the Apache people’s best interests in mind, constituting a perpetual threat to tribal sovereignty. The Tribe had long learned that their continued survival required a sustained vigilance in terms of protecting their eco-cultural resources.

Even though the Apache continued to acquire Western traits, they always employed Western science and technology to ensure the continuity of the Apache way. Furthermore, concealed under this Western veneer, the Apache hybridized the Apache way with the Euro-American way. In the 1990s the White Mountain Apache intensified this process, while fashioning a distinct cultural mark on the reservation landscape. Foremost, they began erasing past eco-cultural atrocities. As they gained almost complete control over eco-cultural resources, a whole slew of new restoration projects emerged: the Watershed
Restoration Program, Western Apache Placenames Project, and a number of endangered species restoration projects, to name a few. Instead of the BIA, FWS, and the AGFD, the Apache controlled the future appearance of their homeland.

Apache restoration projects began incorporating Apache local knowledge, land management philosophies, historical knowledge of the landscape, and cultural traditions. For instance, many members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe viewed ecological restoration as a logical extension of traditional Apache agricultural practices. In a sense, they perceived themselves as coming full circle with their history when participating in restoration work. As the Apache gained control of natural resources, they even tweaked some Western-designed techniques such as controlled burns to better accommodate tribal needs. In addition, all Apache restoration projects addressed cultural concerns. Whether restoring entire sacred sites, endangered species, or the ecological function of a stream, the Tribe consulted local Apache about the possibility of including cultural elements into a project. Most importantly restoration projects incorporated Apache local knowledge, intimate understandings of the reservation’s natural history, animal behavior, plant distributions, and environmental idiosyncrasies. Although a substantive hybridization of Apache and Western knowledge emerged in the 1990s, the Apache continued to grapple with defining the nature of this new knowledge production system.

The restoration of the Apache’s economic base and eco-cultural resources, although much different from their historic subsistence lifestyle, expanded their capacity to self-govern. During the 1990s the White Mountain Apache built the bureaucratic capability to deal with both managing and restoring eco-cultural resources on a large scale. Moreover, this capability allowed the tribe to monitor and develop relationships with federal, state, academic, and private sectors. The tribal government divided the WMRE into several divisions, including the Tribal Game and Fish Department. They created a Tribal Forestry office to monitor the Fort Apache Timber Company (FATCO) and the BIA’s management of
tribal forest resources. And they established the Resource Planning Division to coordinate the growing number of tribal enterprises and natural resource management projects.

Through their increased capacity for self-governance, the White Mountain Apache elaborated on the process of resistance and exchange, soliciting more partnerships with land management agencies, academic institutions, and private consultants (Fig. 13). These partnerships in turn buttressed and increased the Tribe’s technical expertise. More importantly, the Apache controlled the dialogue. For the most part, they set the terms, insisting on a respectful, equal engagement between themselves and their partners. Of particular note, the Tribe increased reliance on non-governmental entities to evaluate federal agency trust responsibilities and legal interventions into tribal affairs. For example, the Tribe partnered with the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (HPAIED) to increase the efficacy of their enterprises and natural resource management departments. In terms of restoration, the Tribe worked with HPAIED to conduct studies that defined the constraints the Endangered Species Act would impinge on tribal economic development, designed a more efficient and culturally relevant natural resource management program, and developed a permanent Land Restoration Fund.5

As the Apache assumed almost full control of restoration and management of tribal resources, new responsibilities and struggles emerged. The discovery of a large number of threatened and endangered species on the reservation, an increased frequency of cataclysmic wildfires, a growing distrust among the Apache people of tribal bureaucracy, and funding all the necessary restoration work emerged as new challenges for the Tribe. These struggles along with others, therefore, necessitated that resistance to and exchanges with Western society continue. Ronnie Lupe articulated this circumstance well when he

Fig. 13 – Ecological Restoration became a site of resistance and exchange that helped create and stabilize a government-to-government relationship with state and federal land management agencies.
remarked, “We must take the best of the white man’s world and blend it with ours. We must develop our resources and become strong. Only then can we expect to retain our traditional ways. A strong man can make his own path.”

The rest of this chapter illustrates how the Apache built upon their long-term survival strategy of resistance and exchange to create a sophisticated mediating system that allowed the Apache to continue adopting Western science and technology while reinforcing the Apache way. To ensure a continuity of Apache traditions with the past, an epistemological restoration proved necessary. In terms of ecological restoration, this meant increasingly hybridizing tribal knowledge and culture with Western science. I present four examples of how the Tribe accomplished this in connection with the restoration of their homeland, the survival of the Apache way, and the maintenance of tribal sovereignty. First, I examine the cultural significance of the Apache adopting the ecosystem management philosophy as a guiding framework for restoration work. Second, I demonstrate how the Tribe turned the potential threat to sovereignty associated with the Endangered Species Act into an opportunity for cultural restoration. Third, I outline how the Tribe redirected financial compensation derived from a lawsuit to fund long-term watershed restoration work, build expertise, and integrate Apache traditions into restoration projects. Fourth, through an analysis of several cultural revitalization projects, I reinforce the close connection between cultural and ecological restoration for the Apache people.

The Connection between the Philosophy of Ecosystem Management and the Traditional Apache Subsistence System

According to Eva Watt, a tribal elder and watershed restoration project advisor, many techniques currently employed in watershed restoration projects have historical homologies in Apache farming and

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horticultural traditions. Reseeding, transplanting plants, thinning and removal of vegetation, protecting culturally important plants from animals, crop rotation, prescribed burns, and erosion control all had precedents in Apache land management practices.\(^2\) Despite this continuity with the past, cultural intrusions modified the historical Apache farming and horticultural techniques. For instance, solar-powered electric fences, bulldozers, radio telemetry, and electronic aquatic monitoring devices were all twentieth-century Western technologies that infiltrated the Apache way of life. However, according to cultural advisors, it’s not a matter of what was traditional or non-traditional or the form of technological intervention, but the “mindset” of the person using these tools. Apache reason dictates that “patience, commitment, and adaptability” are key features of a proper “mindset.” An Apache heavy equipment operator working on a recent restoration project explained this philosophy: “You go to a place and do some work for it. You let it rest, and then you come back to it to see what it has done. Then it thanks you.” From there you make adjustments and decide the next line of action.\(^3\)

This Apache disposition towards the land embodies the Tribe’s cultural fit with the philosophy of ecosystem management. This land management practice and philosophy began to emerge as federal policy within Euro-American land management agencies in the early 1990s. Ecosystem management, broadly defined, is a pragmatic attempt to flexibly manage ecosystems through social and ecological experimentation by bringing together local stakeholders with the intent of seeking ecologically sustainable management decisions. This philosophy takes as a given that different interest groups project multiple values onto the land. Furthermore, it assumes that ecosystems are dynamic and subject to


\(^3\) Ibid.
unpredictable social and environmental events. Therefore, any attempt to manage natural resources through long-term predictive models proves untenable.4

The philosophy of ecosystem management evolved as a result of the failures of utilitarian conservation practices, which sought to create simplified, efficient ecosystems based on linear models of nature. Land managers that projected these models of nature onto highly complex, unpredictable, and dynamic systems yielded disastrous ecological results that our society continues to contend with today. Utilitarian conservationists also tended to operate from a universalist position, neglecting local social and cultural needs, which often led to community discontent and marginalization. Their management schemes also tended to benefit a small subset of the communities affected.5 Indeed, the history of land management on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation has been a testimony to the failure of such a management strategy. As a result of these failures, the Apache have abandoned the sustained-yield management practices initiated by the BIA during the Indian New Deal and adopted the ecosystem management philosophy. However, unlike with Western land management agencies, the adoption of this philosophy made immediate sense. Many aspects of this philosophy felt compatible with Apache traditions.

The Apache came to realize that restoring the eco-cultural resources of their homeland required incorporating a diversity of values into restoration work. Historically for the Apache, balancing economic, cultural, religious, and ecological values proved integral to their survival. Because of the unpredictable and diverse nature of their homeland, the Apache evolved a highly flexible and adaptive subsistence system. Embedded in Apache culture is a flexible outlook for dealing with the uncertainty of

acquiring resources. Past White Mountain Apache adaptive behavior to a variable and unpredictable mountainous environment created a social disposition compatible with the ecosystem management philosophy.

Prior to the reservation era, White Mountain Apache bands alternated seasonally among four basic subsistence strategies: raiding, farming, gathering, and hunting. Through many generations of living in the same region they learned how they could best exploit and manage their local environments (See Chapter 1). Michael Graves, an archaeologist who studies Apache subsistence systems, argues that Apache irrigation technology associated with this adaptive survival strategy was more environmentally congruent with the ecological dynamics of the White Mountains than the previous occupants of the region, a mix of Mogollon and Anasazi cultures. They only maintained the structures during the summer and fall months, thus preventing significant erosion and siltation problems. Furthermore, the Apache learned to adjust their four-tiered subsistence system to the local conditions of their settlements. For instance, some bands relied more on farming with a mix of hunting and collecting, whereas others depended more on the latter strategies. The mix of strategies a particular band employed depended upon the availability of resources. These adaptations probably required a trial and error (learn as you go) experimental approach that adjusted the local subsistence system to a heterogeneous environment. This complex system of indigenous management in many ways mimicked the natural flows of the local ecosystem. Arguably, the Apache subsistence system is akin to current ecosystem management philosophies. This contrasts with settlers and later land managers of the Western tradition, who insisted

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on imposing an order incongruent with the range of possible sustainable practices for a given environment. In essence, the White Mountain Apache may have been practicing a rudimentary form of ecosystem management that treated the environment as complex, variable, unpredictable, and multi-linear.  

In the 1990s this same philosophy resurfaced as the Tribe attempted to integrate a large number of restoration projects that operated on multiple scales and addressed multiple social, political, cultural, and ecological concerns. The nature and efficacy of this integration remains in flux. As the Apache seek to restore their watersheds, forests, grazing lands, along with maintaining a “wilderness” feel for their tourist clients, they continue to struggle with what works and what doesn’t. Challenges from past mismanagement of their lands, political confrontations with the federal government, persisting water rights struggles, ongoing issues with budget shortfalls, poverty, education, alcoholism, and drug abuse all work against the Apache goal of integrating restoration work into an ecosystem management framework. Nevertheless, while many of these issues remain obstacles to progress, ecological restoration acts as a counter to these impediments. Furthermore, the fact that the Apache employed the


9 Of course this sort of flexibly adaptive management of local environments was not unique to the White Mountain Apache. Documentation of native culture’s intimate understanding of their homelands is extensive. In particular, Frikit Berkes advocates that the ecosystem management philosophy, although not in modern ecological terms, was an inherent part of the Algonquin people. At the very least, most Native American groups had developed complex management systems that both shaped and mimicked the natural flows of their respective ecosystems. For examples of the Algonquin people in the northeast see Cronon, *Changes in the Land*; Berkes, “Common-property Resource Management and Cree Indian Fisheries in Subarctic Canada.” For tribes in the Southeastern United States see Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Merrell, “The Indians’ New World: The Catawba Experience.” For the Plains Indians see White, *Roots of Dependency*. For the California Indian see Anderson, *Tending the Wild.*
ecosystem management philosophy earned them political capital in battles with the federal government to control natural resources on the reservation. For instance, adhering to this philosophy aided the Apache in their battle with the FWS to control endangered species restoration.

**The Endangered Species Act, Sovereignty, and Apache Culture**

Environmental legislation enacted prior to the 1980s failed to specifically address Indian country, leaving ambiguous the implementation of these laws on reservations. Because Indian tribes are sovereigns and the federal government has limited powers on reservations, many court battles ensued over how and whether environmental laws should apply to reservation lands.10 Furthermore, environmental legislation became a double-edged sword for American Indians. On the one hand, it helped them protect and restore resources, but on the other hand, the application of this legislation to tribal lands often threatened tribal sovereignty, cultural traditions, and economic development. In many cases, legislation such as the National Environmental Policy Act and the Clean Water Act amounted to a net benefit for tribes. For instance, beginning in the 1970s, NEPA endowed tribes with a voice that they previously didn’t have with respect to federal projects within Indian country, especially in instances when projects jeopardized cultural resources.11 Yet, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) also burdened Native American nations with a disproportionate responsibility for the restoration and protection of plants and animals nearing extinction. This situation resulted from the fact that many reservations remained relatively undeveloped, isolated from large cities, or had been managed to enhance eco-tourism potential, turning them de facto into the last haven for many threatened and endangered species.

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The irony in all this was not lost on Native Americans. The White Mountain Apache in particular have pointed out that the environmental harms that caused the decline of most endangered species originated with activities associated with non-Indian economic development.

Despite the White Mountain Apache’s continued success with Apache trout restoration under the ESA, this law became a major economic impediment for the Tribe in the early 1990s. Once again the federal government threatened tribal sovereignty, and moreover, hindered the ability of the Apaches to sustain their culture and economy. Because the Fort Apache Indian Reservation remained remote, less developed, and less exploited than many other areas in the Southwest, it provided a refuge for many species of plants and animals that had been extirpated in more developed regions. This situation, therefore, presented both a blessing and a curse to the Tribe. On the one hand, relatively healthy ecosystems attract tourists, a major source of revenue for the Apaches. On the other hand, critical habitat designations potentially restricted the development of recreational infrastructure such as roads, sanitation systems, and reservoirs. A critical habitat designation was the tool that Congress provided the FWS for protecting threatened and endangered species. Through these designations, if the FWS determined that a human activity may harm a threatened or endangered species, they exercised their authority to halt that activity.


Historically, several tribes in the Pacific Northwest and Southwest had already experienced significant disputes with the FWS over the implementation of ESA on tribal lands. Because of this history, the White Mountain Apache braced for a conflict with the FWS when university and FWS biologists began discovering threatened and endangered species on Fort Apache in the late 1980s. The Council’s initial response to this imminent confrontation was to restrict access to the reservation to non-tribal biologists, halt all Tribal Game and Fish Department non-harvestable flora and fauna surveys, and orders the BIA not to disseminate plant and wildlife data to other governmental agencies. The Council believed that restricting data flow from the reservation lessened the chance that the FWS would take action. However, even limited knowledge about the presence of threatened and endangered species was enough for the FWS to act. In fact, as was later determined by a HPAIED consultant, this strategy created a worse situation for the Tribe, the ESA mandated the FWS to act on the basis of the “best available data.” In the eyes of the FWS, less data required more drastic measures.

As of 1993, thirty-one threatened, endangered, candidate, or proposed species resided within the reservation boundaries. Several of these species – Arizona willow, Mexican spotted owl, and loach minnow – received a great deal of attention because university biologists and local environmental groups pressured the FWS to protect them from further harm. The proposed critical habitat designations involved potentially dire economic and health consequences for the Apache. The Tribe not only expressed economic concerns, but they also believed that the FWS had called into question their ability to manage reservation lands. In essence, the FWS’s actions potentially threatened the “Apache way,”

15 Sieman, Overcoming Conflicts with the Endangered Species Act, p. 4.
16 Ibid., p. 2.
thus tribal sovereignty. According to the Apache, “The pressures of environmentalists and the Ecological Services Branch of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to manage our lands for a single species was a contradiction to our view of life.” In response, the Tribe once again challenged Western management philosophy. Echoing one of the main criticisms of the ESA at the time, the Tribe claimed an ecosystem approach to land management was more effective than managing for a single species: “In our Apache tradition… we strive to protect the land and all the life forms that it supports… The diversity of our land provides habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals and each is important to us.” 17 Ultimately, however, because of their sovereign status, the Apache strongly asserted that the ESA shouldn’t apply to them or any other Native American group, a position that would, in part, prevail.

In 1993 critical habitat designations jeopardized one major infrastructure project and the revenue generating potential of two tribal enterprises. The proposed designation for the loach minnow along the White River impeded the Miner Flats water works project, a project tribal officials claimed was necessary for providing better sanitation and much-needed water to drier areas of the reservation. Two species, the Arizona willow and Mexican spotted owl, threatened the operations of the Tribe’s two largest employers and revenue generators: the Sunrise Ski Resort and FATCO. Together these enterprises supplied the Tribe with 85% of their revenue and over 500 jobs. 18 FWS warned that the Tribe might have to shut down portions of the Ski Resort and stop further development due to the close proximity of Arizona willow populations to the resort’s ski slopes and snow making machine. Of even greater concern was the potential shutdown of FATCO because of spotted owl habitat. The Tribe

estimated, depending on the nature of the shutdown, that FATCO could lose between 10 and 30 million dollars.\footnote{“Known as a Great Predator, The Spotted Owl may make Logging on the Reservation its next Victim,” \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 31 (March 19, 1993); “Tribe Protests Agency’s move to Declare Reservation Land Critical Habitat for Willow,” \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 31 (February 19, 1993): 1; Ronnie Lupe, “Chairman’s Corner: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Latest Trespasser trying to Seize our Resources,” \textit{Fort Apache Scout} 32 (March 18, 1994): 2.}

Ronnie Lupe found irony in this situation. Legislation designed to save endangered species from extinction would possibly hasten the extinction of his people. Relating this concern to a college audience in the early 1990s, Lupe stated, “Miner Flat started long ago, and I can’t even get it off the ground. This was subsidized by your money and my money, too. I need help. I have a very long ways to go. I am the endangered species. If all of these endangered species can stop projects, we are in trouble with our development on our reservation.”\footnote{Ronnie Lupe, “Comments of the Chairman of the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council,” in \textit{Indian Water – 1997 Trends and Directions in Federal Water Policy}, Ted Olinger, ed. (Boulder, CO: Report to the Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission, 1997), 38-44.} In this speech and several appearances before Congress, Lupe assured everyone that the Apache people cared about threatened and endangered species. However, the issue on the reservation was not about whether to protect these species – they had always planned to do so. In his view, it remained about infringement upon the Tribe’s sovereign right to manage their resources. History and current actions demonstrated that the Tribe had both economic and cultural interests in preserving and restoring endangered species on Fort Apache. The Apache trout restoration project offered a prime example. And eventually, the Tribe would demonstrate that their past management practices in general were a major reason for the survival of Mexican spotted owls, loach minnows, and Arizona willows. Another irony that Lupe noted was that primarily Euro-American economic expansion into the West impoverished the populations of these species. And now that some of the few remaining places that these species thrived happened to be on Indian reservations, Euro-
According to Lupe, the whole situation amounted to another Euro-American attempt to seize valuable tribal land.

Feeling that his people would suffer an undue burden from the ESA, Lupe’s actions went beyond orations at Congressional hearings, speeches at natural resource management conferences, and public appearances at major universities. First, the Tribal Council passed a resolution in March of 1994 prohibiting FWS officials from entering the reservation without a tribal permit. According to Lupe, this official pronouncement forced the hand of the FWS, sending the message that “they had generated a potentially serious tribal-federal confrontation and sought ways of ameliorating the situation.”

Through this window of opportunity and in consultation with the HPAIED, Lupe pioneered one of the most forward thinking mechanisms for negotiations between federal land management agencies and tribal governments. Lupe began a dialogue through an intermediary, Joseph Kalt of the HPAIED, with Mollie Beattie, Director of the FWS. Kalt helped set up a meeting between Lupe and Beattie at a “neutral site” in Washington, D.C. They met in a park, as Lupe requested, with “the sound of trees and flowers, with the sounds of birds mingled with laughing children.” With no attorneys present, the two hashed out their differences. In terms of management philosophy, Lupe found a like mind. Beattie, the first woman director of the FWS, had a reputation for establishing amiable relationships with ranchers, farmers, hunters, and timber interests, despite her allegiance to the ESA. She also brought to the FWS an ecosystem management philosophy that had just emerged as a solution to the volatile spotted owl.
controversy in the Pacific Northwest. Working from that common ground, Lupe used past management successes, such as the Apache trout recovery effort and the technical abilities of the Tribe’s Game and Fish Department, as evidence that the Tribe was capable of managing vulnerable species without FWS interference.

Lupe also presented a number of current plans that indicated that past Apache land management decisions were primary reasons why threatened and endangered species continued to thrive on the reservation. For instance, the Mexican spotted owl flourished there because the Tribe voluntarily cut back on the allowable cut from 90 million board feet to 55 million board feet in the mid-1980s. This decision wasn’t based on a single species, but for consideration of the entire reservation ecosystem, which the Apache depended on for their livelihood. With the Tribe’s growing capacity to understand and monitor the BIA’s management strategy, they realized that the Bureau had been recommending unsustainable allowable cuts. At this time, the Tribe also adopted an uneven aged timber management strategy, thus leaving a more diverse array of young to old growth habitats for all species on the reservation. Furthermore, Lupe stressed that tribal traditions also served as an effective management tool: “For Apaches any owl is a ‘messenger’ [of death] and we leave them all alone. In fact, we go out of our way to avoid them.” Lupe also relayed to Beattie similar plans that applied the ecosystem management approach for the loach minnow and the Arizona willow.

From this dialogue came a Statement of Relationship between the Tribe and the FWS. Lupe and Beattie signed it in the Tribal Council Chambers on Fort Apache on December 6, 1994.\(^{27}\) Ultimately, the agreement reaffirmed a government-to-government relationship:

Tribal sovereignty [White Mountain Apache Tribe] and Service [FWS] legal mandates, as applied by the Service, have appeared to conflict in the past, but both the Tribe and the Service believe that a working relationship that reconciles the two within a bilateral government-to-government framework will reduce the potential for future conflicts.\(^{28}\)

The “Guiding Precepts” of the Statement emphasized that the FWS recognized “the Tribe’s aboriginal rights, sovereign authority, and institutional capacity to self-manage the lands and resources within the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.” The Statement also laid out the responsibilities of the Tribe to continue updating their wildlife management program and develop management plans under consultation with the FWS that “will direct the assessment, management, and restoration of ecosystems in accordance with tribal values.”\(^{29}\) Once the Tribe presented an adequate management plan to the FWS, the restrictions of critical habitat designations no longer applied. Currently, all critical habitat designations that address species on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation make exceptions for the Apaches. For instance, in a recent federal register notice (October 4, 2006), the FWS stated:

> We determined that the following tribes have lands containing features essential to the conservation of the spikedace and loach minnow: Yavapai Apache, San Carlos Apache, and White Mountain Apache. We also proposed to exclude lands of the San Carlos Apache Tribe and lands of the White Mountain Apache Tribe based upon our relationship with the Tribes and their management plans developed for the spikedace and loach minnow.\(^{30}\)

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\(^{27}\) Charles Wilkinson, “The Role of Bilateralism in Fulfilling the Federal-Tribal Relationship.”


\(^{29}\) “Statement of Relationship.”

\(^{30}\) FWS, “Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for the Spikedace and Loach Minnow.”
As hinted at in the above notice, the Statement of Relationship, which was specific to the White Mountain Apaches, would eventually hold implications for tribes all across the United States. Despite the Apache’s successful negotiation with the FWS, other American Indian groups continued to struggle with the implementation of ESA on tribal lands. Soon after Ronnie Lupe signed the Statement of Relationship, a large number of tribal representatives, including Lupe, gathered at a series of summits held by the American Indian Resources Institute. The Institute organized the summit with the intention of finding a solution for the ESA problem within Indian country. After much deliberation, this working group decided that the White Mountain Apache’s Statement of Relationship provided an exemplary model of how to effectively diffuse potential conflicts between the FWS and tribes. They fashioned a proposal and presented it to Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt in 1996.\(^{31}\) In June 1997, after another long series of negotiations between tribal representatives and federal officials, Babbitt and Bill Daley, Secretary of Commerce, signed Secretarial Order 3206, “American Indian Tribal Rights, Federal-Tribal Trust Responsibilities, and the Endangered Species Act.”\(^{32}\) The agreement struck between the FWS and Lupe became the template for nation-wide policy concerning Native Americans and the ESA. Early indications suggest this historic agreement hasn’t proved effective for all Native American groups, but for Tribes with robust management capacities, it has helped smooth poor relations with the FWS.\(^{33}\)

Currently, endangered species programs and associated restoration work flourish on many reservations, including the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.\(^{34}\)

\(^{31}\) Charles Wilkinson, “The Role of Bilateralism in Fulfilling the Federal-Tribal Relationship.”
For instance, the White Mountain Apache partnered with the FWS and a number of environmental groups on restoration work for the razorback sucker, the Southwestern willow flycatcher, and the bald eagle, just to name a few.\textsuperscript{35} In perhaps one of their most controversial moves, the Tribe agreed to participate in the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program led by the National Wildlife Federation and the FWS. Initially, White Mountain Apache ranchers and the Tribal Game and Fish Department raised serious objections to participation in the Program. In 1995 the Tribal Council outlined these concerns in the draft Environmental Impact Statement, stating that they would not participate. The Tribal Game and Fish Department feared wolves would cut into the trophy bull elk population and the ranchers worried about wolves preying on cattle. Moreover, the tribal government remained concerned about potential threats to sovereignty.\textsuperscript{36} In order to participate, the Tribe demanded a great deal of latitude to address potential problems arising from accepting wolf populations, mainly with protecting elk herds and cattle. If they had a problem wolf, they didn’t want to be hamstrung by FWS regulations.\textsuperscript{37}

As early as October 1997, the Tribe began to change its mind. To learn more about the Wolf Recovery Program, Lupe, along with the Tribal Attorney Robert Brauchli, visited the Mexican Wolf Management Facility in Sevilleta, New Mexico. Upon arriving, Lupe heard the wolves howl, and the sound invoked ancient memories: “[I]t was a beautiful and eerie sound, one that I had not heard since I was a boy in Cibecue.”\textsuperscript{38} In March of 1998, the FWS released eleven wolves into Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. Two of these wolves wandered onto Fort Apache. After much deliberation, the Tribal Council allowed them to stay. In further negotiations, the Tribe stipulated that their inclusion in the Wolf


\textsuperscript{38} Baeza, “Chairman Negotiates with Fish & Wildlife on Wolf Management.”
Recovery Program would require that the Tribe maintain full control of operations on Fort Apache, financial resources to hire a full-time Apache wildlife biologist to monitor reservation wolf populations, and compensation for any cattle loss due to wolf predation. The FWS and the Wildlife Federation agreed to these demands and in 2000, the Tribal Council approved the release of captive-bred wolves onto Fort Apache. Currently over twenty wolves either reside on or move through the reservation.\(^{39}\) The Program, however, to this day remains controversial among tribal members, especially the ranchers. In 2006 the Tribe asked for the removal of one of the wolf packs that killed at least six cows. Even though the FWS removed this pack, the Apache still contemplated pulling out of the Program entirely, but instead decided to remain a partner.\(^{40}\)

Despite the controversial nature of the Program, the Tribe capitalized on the project’s potential relevance to Apache cultural restoration efforts. Prior to cultural disruption and the Mexican wolf’s extirpation from the United States, the Apache held a spiritual connection to this species. According to Krista Beazley, a White Mountain Apache wildlife biologist who monitors the wolves on the reservation, Apache warriors in the past sometimes asked for “wolf power” prior to hunts and battles. They would perform a ceremony that involved imitating wolf-stalking behavior and singing a ritual song to wolves. After completing the ceremony, Apache warriors could borrow the hunting ability of wolves. Restoring the Mexican wolf afforded the Tribe with an opportunity to teach Apache youth past relationships with nature. Although the ceremony lacked relevant application in current times, it demonstrated that the Apache had always derived spiritual benefits from wildlife. In essence, the

\(^{39}\) Daniel Glick, “Leader of the Pack,” \textit{Audubon Magazine} (March, 2006).

Program created just one of many opportunities arising from restoration activities to reconnect Apache youth to their homeland.\textsuperscript{41} The Tribal Watershed Program would result in yet another such opportunity.

**Watershed Restoration: Healing Past Discretions, Building Respect for Apache Knowledge**

The BIA had long promoted policies that encouraged the overexploitation of timber, overgrazing, and increased run-off of water to the Salt River Valley. As a consequence, the reservation’s watersheds were in bad shape by the 1980s. One of the most controversial BIA programs was the Cibecue and Corduroy Watershed projects of the 1950s and 1960s (Fig. 14). The BIA, in conjunction with the Arizona Water Resources Committee and the Forest Service, designed this multi-purpose program to slow erosion resulting from overgrazing, improve timber lands, and provide more water to reservation ranchers and Euro-Americans in the Salt River Valley. This combined restoration and water management experiment ended in controversy in the early 1970s. Instead of repairing degraded land, the experiment exacerbated erosion problems and negatively impacted plant communities along targeted waterways, including the eradication of locally coveted cottonwoods.\textsuperscript{42}

The permanent destruction of the Apache landscape that occurred as a result of the Cibecue and Corduroy Watershed projects represented a desecration to Apache culture. For instance, cottonwood trees provided landmarks for the names of places. When invoked, these place-names relayed moral


Fig. 14 – Corduroy Watershed Project in 1956: (Top) A picture depicting a treated area in the foreground and an untreated area in the background. The treated area represents “restored” grazing land. (Bottom) An Apache man uprooting an alligator juniper with a bulldozer (Courtesy of the National Archives).
stories of how one should act in the world. These stories also stored knowledge about changes in the
landscape, natural history, and lessons on how to treat the land. One such place was one of six origin
sites for White Mountain Apache clans, “cottonwoods joining.” In some cases they signified local
group and clan identities, such as the “cottonwoods extending to the water people” or “at the standing
cottonwood people.” In essence, the eradication of cottonwoods literally represented the eradication of
Apache identity, moral and social structure, and knowledge about the landscape. Therefore, watershed
restoration in the 1990s went beyond an ecological imperative to include a cultural significance as well.
Restoring all the lost cultural connections to the land remained a tall order, but the Tribal Watershed
Program represented a modest beginning towards that end. In addition to the cultural significance of
these projects, demonstrating effective restoration and management of wetlands, streams, and rivers
endowed the Tribe with more political clout in water rights disputes.

The Tribal Watershed Program originated from a 1995 Indian Claims Court settlement awarded to
the White Mountain Apache. In 1950 the Apache filed this lawsuit against the federal government for
mismanagement of their natural resources prior to 1946. In the 1980s, after mounting evidence suggested
this negligence continued after 1946, the Tribe amended the old suit to include damages accrued after
1946. The Claims Court, however, only awarded the Apache damages for pre-1946 indiscretions, which
amounted to $22 million. Subsequently, the tribal government redirected twenty percent of the
settlement to create a permanent Land Restoration Fund. A Tribal Council resolution mandated that
the fund support the restoration of “tribal ecosystems to a condition that better reflects their condition

43 Goodwin, Social Organization of the Western Apache, p. 152. For more on the significance of place-names, see
Basso, Wisdom Sits in Places, pp. 105-151.
44 For examples of both place-names and clan names associated with cottonwood trees see Goodwin, Social
Organization of the Western Apache, pp. 574, 604, 606, 608, 613, 615.
45 In 1950, the White Mountain Apache Tribe filed a lawsuit (White Mountain Apache Tribe v. The United States,
11 Cl. Ct. 614 [1987]) against the federal government under the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946 (25
U.S.C. 70). The United States Claims Court made its final ruling in 1987. Because the Tribe wasn’t satisfied with
the award, they appealed their case in the United States Circuit Court of Appeals (5 F.3d 1506 [1993]), finally
receiving a settlement in 1995.
prior to suffering damage from the mismanagement [by federal agencies] and to fund the education of Tribal members in the disciplines related to natural resource management.” In addition, the Council gave funding priority to projects that developed comprehensive watershed planning activities, incorporated community-based efforts, and included “activities that promote traditional cultural practices, the Apache language, and the education of tribal members.” Unlike the BIA watershed projects, tribal restorationists always explicitly addressed the eco-cultural concerns of the Apache community in the planning and funding of restoration projects.46 Ronnie Lupe foresaw the Watershed Program as a long-needed healing process:

Without a doubt, there is a strong relationship between the damage to our ecosystems and the tremendous social problems our Tribe has experienced…And that suffering will continue until a healing process is set in motion. Our younger generations, who have witnessed this destruction, will now [be] able to learn the true value of our land. They will be able to establish the same relationship with our sacred land as our ancestors…Let’s go forward with this sacred obligation.47

Exchange with Western institutions proved key to launching the Watershed Program. A prerequisite of these arrangements, however, was that partnerships had to benefit the Tribe. As was often the case, outsiders would receive an opportunity to do research on the reservation that might further their careers in exchange for knowledge, training, and restoration of tribal eco-cultural resources. Jonathan Long, a Euro-American hydrologist and a product of the HPAIED, became the Watershed Program’s advisor. Long helped train tribal members in wetland and stream restoration techniques and worked with a new generation of college-educated tribal ecologists. One product of this relationship resulted in co-authorships on a number of published papers in scientific journals and proceedings for Delbin Endfield (Cibecue Project Manager), Benrita Burnette (Director), and Candy Lupe (Field Supervisor), all


members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Along with many other members of the tribal community, they worked to restore ecologically damaged wetlands and streams. Using modern technology guided by Apache knowledge of past plant communities, they attempted to reconstruct past ecosystems and cultural traditions within the limits of contemporary environmental and social constraints.  

In the late 1990s, the Cibecue Bridge Project combined elements from the present and past to restore culturally important plant communities and water flow disrupted by sedimentation. This project took into consideration the local needs for passable roads, livestock grazing, traditional use of plants (e.g., replanting cattails important for curing ceremonies and girl’s puberty ceremonies), and a hydrologically functional stream flow. The project required heavy earthmoving equipment to clear channels and reduce sedimentation. Restorationists erected solar-powered electric fences to protect wetlands from cattle and elk. Local White Mountain Apache students cleared overgrowth and planted native vegetation along the streams near bridges. More importantly, these students learned from Apache elders about the ecology of the stream bank. Elders served as eco-cultural advisors, using their intimate knowledge of Fort Apache natural history to help reconstruct long degraded stream-side plant communities. Their knowledge was rooted in the variety of ways the Apache exploited these plant communities for ceremonial and medicinal purposes. This newly constructed landscape, therefore, took aspects of the past (functioning

stream flow, traditional plants) and fused them with modern features of the landscape (cattle grazing, bridges, electric fences).

During the same time frame, the restoration of Soldier Spring, a sacred site important for ceremonial performances, symbolized the restoration of Apache knowledge (Fig. 15). Long and Burnette employed an Apache legend about Soldier Spring to reconstruct the plant community that occurred there prior to disturbance. Soldier Spring is sacred because it is a source of water, thus a source of life. Ronnie Lupe explained, “The Apache way is to bless ourselves with water… the life blood of my people. It has sustained us from time immemorial. It nourishes and sustains the plants, the animals, and the ecosystem – to use a modern word – upon which we live and survive.” Thus, uncontaminated, free-flowing water remained imperative to Apache cultural and spiritual survival. The cultural significance of the site moved Al Medina of the Rocky Mountain Forest Experiment Station to design more subtle interventions for erosion control and stream flow restoration. In order to accommodate Apache customs, instead of using metal, a material often used to construct erosion abatement structures in stream restorations, Medina, Long, Burnette, and a tribal youth group installed check dams and riffle structures constructed of local rocks and plants. The tribal community appreciated this innovation as metal compromises the spiritual integrity of ceremonially significant streams.

Tribal restorationists such as Benrita Burnette played an important mediating role in these projects. Her expertise in both the Apache way and Western land management techniques allowed her to set appropriate boundaries between Apache and Euro-American culture. Her presence required non-Indian experts to address local cultural and environmental concerns. Although Burnette stood to learn from non-Indian restorationists, her level of expertise was sufficient enough to earn the respect of non-Indian experts. Furthermore, her epistemological capacity allowed her to determine whether the interests of

49 Long and Burnette, “Cibecue Watershed Projects: Then, Now, and in the Future.”
50 Ronnie Lupe, “Comments of the Chairman of the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council.”
51 Ibid.
Fig. 15 – Restoration of Soldier Spring: (Top) An electric fence serving as an ungulate exclosure. (Bottom) Soldier Spring approximately ten years after restoration work began (Photos taken by author).
non-Indian restorationists were in line with Apache interests. As a consequence, she could absorb new knowledge, while simultaneously protecting Apache assets. She and other tribal restorationists now embodied the process of cultural exchange that cautiously erected selective boundaries that delineated between knowledge that would benefit the Apache and knowledge that lacked application to Apache circumstances. In the 1990s, all restoration projects operated under this exchange process.

In sum, the Watershed Program began restoring a whole host of ecological, epistemological, philosophical, and cultural elements of the Apachean landscape. The program applied tribal elder’s knowledge concerning past plant community structures, restored native plants and animals, restored damage due to channel down-cutting (results from increased water flow due to road construction, wildfires, excessive animal trampling), restored culturally important plants used in traditional ceremonies, restored culturally important places and sacred sites, instilled a sense of community participation, and became a venue for acquiring skills and dispensing knowledge. Indeed, the Watershed Program embodied a hybridization of the “best of the white man’s world” with the Apache way. This program marked a significant departure from the culturally sterile programs of the BIA. It signaled Apache control over reservation resources. The next section serves to reinforce how important the integration of Apache culture into ecological restoration is to the Apache people.

**Cultural Restoration: Reconnecting Apaches to the Land**

For a place-based people such as the White Mountain Apache, separating culture from ecological concerns is a contradiction to their life way. If the reservation ecosystems remained ecologically unsound, Tribal traditions would go extinct. Apache ancestors inscribed stories, legends, moral guidance, and spirits into the White Mountain landscape. For the Apache, therefore, ecological and cultural restoration went hand in hand. Even projects characteristically classified as cultural restoration,
also addressed ecological issues. For example, in 1993 the Tribal Council developed a plan to transform Fort Apache (the historic fort) from an icon of oppression, where missionaries and the BIA forcibly tore Apache cultural traditions from their ancestor’s lives, into a symbol of cultural restoration and autonomy. The old fort became the Apache Cultural Center and Museum. The Center hosted classes where White Mountain Apache students began to relearn what tribal elders saw missing from recent generations: the connections between the “land and mind,” culture and nature. By teaching Apache children about past traditions, stories, and customs, tribal leaders hoped that the experience would initiate a healing process of the physical and social rift between nature and culture that non-Indians imposed on the Apache people. Once healed, the Apache would reestablish a reciprocal relationship with the land that encourages stewardship. In essence, the Center became a powerful symbolic statement of resistance and reconciliation, a place to confront and transcend past atrocities inflicted on the Apache people and homeland. Ultimately, tribal elders hoped that reconnecting to the land would foster a responsibility to restore the Apachean landscape.  

The Apache initiated another project in 1990s designed to heal the relationship between the land and mind, the Western Apache Placenames Project. This work not only illustrated the impossibility of separating culture and nature for the Apache people, but also held a restorative quality to it. Partially inspired by Keith Basso’s research in the early 1980s on the cultural and ecological importance of Western Apache place-names, the Project collected ethnographic data about Apache place-names and the stories associated with those places. According to Basso, the origin of his research idea rested with Ronnie Lupe. Basso had finished several research projects and was searching for new ideas. In a conversation with Lupe, he got his answer. Lupe posed, “Why don’t you make maps over there… Not

52 John R. Welch and Ramon Riley, “Reclaiming Land and Spirit in the Western Apache Homeland,” *American Indian Quarterly* 25 (Winter 2001): 5-12.
53 On the importance of place-names for ecological restoration see Ibid., p. 11.
whitemen’s maps, we’ve got plenty of them, but Apache maps with Apache places and names. We could use them. Find out something about how we know our country. You should have done this before.”  

These stories contain immense amounts of knowledge relevant to the Apache way of life. The connection between the Apache people and the land is so strong that destroying places essentially eradicates knowledge. A single place-name can evoke an image of a geographical location, call on historical tales and legends, validate ancestral moral knowledge, offer personal support, politely remind people of indiscretions, apply ancestral knowledge towards solving emotional problems, transform negative thoughts into positive ones, and “heal wounded spirits.” For instance, stories can call on ancestral knowledge that teaches moral lessons about the right way to treat other members of the community and the land. The origin of all these stories resides in the Apachean landscape. Therefore the land contains knowledge. And each specific location embodies a diverse set of knowledges depending on the reason a story is invoked.

The Apache invoke the power of place through a process they call “speaking with names.” In many cases, all one has to do to deliver a moral lesson, information about the past, or help solve a problem is mention the name of a place to the targeted person. In turn, that place contains specific knowledge about the message one wants to deliver. Lola Machuse, a resident of Cibecue, explained to Basso how this works:

We gave that woman… pictures to work on in her mind. We didn’t speak too much to her. We didn’t hold her down. That way she could travel in her mind. She could add on to them [pictures] easily. We gave her clear pictures with place-names. So her mind went to those places, standing in front of them as our ancestors did long ago. That way she could see what happened there long ago. She could hear stories in her mind, perhaps hear our ancestors speaking. She could recall the knowledge of our ancestors.

55 Ibid. p. 100.
56 Ibid., pp. 82-83.
Because of the powerful social implications of these stories, reviving them for future generations remained integral to reestablishing long-fragmented relationships with the land and cultural traditions. As a consequence, recovering these stories had implications for ecological restoration on the reservation. Place-names and their stories hold vital information about how the local conditions have changed over time, making them valuable source of knowledge in the recreation of landscapes for restoration projects.\(^57\)

Cultural healing also involves restoring control of sacred places outside the reservation. The White Mountain Apache are among several Western Apache tribes involved in protests against the University of Arizona construction of telescopes on Mount Graham in southeastern Arizona. The White Mountain Apache have long held Mount Graham as a sacred place; they view any technological intervention on this land as sacrilegious, thus inhibiting their religious freedom. In essence, to the Apache, the desecration of Mount Graham equaled someone tearing down a Christian church to build a mall.\(^58\) Saving Mount Graham from desecration also symbolized the Apache struggle with modernization. As Mark Altaha of the White Mountain Apache Historic Preservation Office posited, “It is only inevitable that we change and adjust with modern technology, but where do we draw the line between what we’ve held sacred for generations and the development of ever changing technology?”\(^59\) Since the struggle began in 1988, two of seven planned telescopes have been built. The Western Apache opposition has stalled the other five, hoping that the rest of the site might be spared from further desecration. In 2005

\(^{57}\) Welch and Riley, “Reclaiming Land and Spirit in the Western Apache Homeland,” p. 11.


the National Park Service determined that Mount Graham was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. As of yet, however, it remains unlisted.60

Managing Success, Limitations to Progress

The White Mountain Apache have come a long way in the past seventy years. For the most part they have full control over eco-cultural resource decisions on the reservation, they have generated substantial revenue by wisely using these resources in tribal enterprises, and they have developed an exceptional restoration and management capacity. In essence, the 1990s bared witness to an explosion of restoration work on Fort Apache. The examples mentioned above are only a small sample of the projects the Apache implemented during this decade. Despite these advances, serious barriers to further progress emerged. I briefly touch on two of these limitations below: the growth of bureaucracy and the bounds of resource availability.

The Growth of Bureaucracy: Although White Mountain Apache restoration efforts gained prominence on the reservation, coincident with this prominence tribal natural resource management bureaucracies tended towards a top-down/paternalistic relationship with the Apache people. So as the Tribe shed the chains of federal and state paternalism, they ironically were in danger of creating a similar governing structure in relation to their own people. Evidence of this sort of relationship emerged in the late 1980s as the Tribal Game and Fish Department grew in power. The Department began addressing what they felt were growing problems within the tribal population. It is difficult to say how tribal members reacted to these criticisms, but the nature of the contentions leans towards paternalism. Game and Fish officials accused the Apache community of taking “for granted what we have. They do not respect it. In fact, they abuse it.” They were reacting to an increase of wildlife violations among tribal members. According to

the Tribal Game and Fish Department, the root of the problem lay with a loss of Apache values; the elders no longer taught young Apache respect for the land. As a consequence, young people lacked reverence for Apache culture and religion. Place-names failed to hold meaning, so they didn’t believe, “If you do not take care of the land, it will get mad at you. It will turn on you. Something unnatural will happen.” Speaking from a position of authority, Game and Fish officials exclaimed that the Apache people needed to “wake up” and start adhering to Apache conservation values, which entailed taking care of their homeland.61

Regardless of the legitimacy of these claims, the Fish and Game Department’s chastisement of the Apache community held similarities with the approach that many environmental groups and federal agencies employed in the 1980s and 1990s to motivate the American public. Speaking from a privileged position, they passed judgment on the rest of the population’s motives concerning land use. This mainstream environmental rhetoric often led to backlashes such as the Wise Use Movement, pro-development ranchers, loggers, and farmers in the West who disingenuously employed environmental rhetoric to validate liberal forms of resource exploitation on public lands. The mainstream environmental movement also overlooked the needs and concerns of minority groups, leading to the development of reactionary movements such as the Environmental Justice Movement.62 My main point here is not to determine whether Game and Fish officials were right or wrong, but to illustrate a tendency towards paternalism, a potential pitfall for any bureaucratic organization.

The problem extended beyond the Tribal Game and Fish Department’s management style. As a general rule, not all tribal members shared a favorable view of restoration work on the reservation. More traditional Apaches opposed the intrusion of Western ideas and technology into Apache culture,

61 Phil Stago, Jr., “An Interview: Phillip R. Stago, Jr., Director, WMAT Game and Fish Department,” Fort Apache Scout 27 (November 18, 1988): 11.
viewing them with skepticism. This sort of resistance dated back to the Indian New Deal, the establishment of the WMRE, and the wide variety of modernization programs introduced to the reservation since. The only difference was that in this case some tribal members directed their discontent towards tribal bureaucracies rather than the federal government, Euro-American industries, and other outside influences. Some among the Tribe believed that any technological intervention was sacrilegious. And others, because of past relationships with the federal government, insisted on the elimination of all outside influences from tribal affairs, even on an advisory level. Yet others distrusted tribal government-sanctioned projects. They continued to see the Tribal Council as a puppet of the federal government.

Fortunately, the tribal government and the White Mountain Apache land management agencies recognized the potential of and problems with becoming a paternalistic governing body. The tribal government commissioned studies to gain a better understanding of how Apache citizens reacted to tribal restoration projects. To that end, demonstration projects such as the Soldier Spring Project incorporated community concerns about the cultural incompatibility of using metal in a sacred spring. The project also encouraged community participation in the actual restoration work. The Tribal Youth Program was particularly active in this respect. Encouraging public participation, especially from Apache youth, has been slowly winning tribal members over. Progress is slow, but an increasing number of Apaches are beginning to see the importance of restoration work to the sustainability of tribal society.63

Resource Availability (Vulnerability to Disaster) - Despite inhabiting one of the wealthiest (in terms of natural resources) and largest reservations in the United States, the White Mountain Apache are extremely vulnerable to large-scale disasters, such as a wildfire, plant disease, or flooding. This vulnerability reveals the still limited financial, human, and technological resources of the Tribe. As a

63 Long, Endfield, Lupe, and Burnette, “Battle at the Bridge.”
result, the Apache remain highly dependent on outside help, thus the continued need for a vigilant, selective process of resistance to and exchange with Euro-American society to sustain their sovereignty and cultural identity. Any large-scale disaster could easily swamp the Tribe’s resources and hamper their economy. Since the Apache subsist mainly off a natural resource-based economy, the maintenance of an efficacious restorative capacity is vital to their existence.

In 2002, the Rodeo-Chediski Fire tested the Tribe’s vulnerability to natural disaster. Past actions that weren’t in the Apache’s control prefigured the extent of damage the Rodeo-Chediski Fire exacted on the Fort Apache landscape. Although efforts had been made to rectify the vulnerability of the reservation forest ecosystem to a major fire since the Indian New Deal, a number of environmental factors and misguided policies hindered these efforts. For instance, the Tribe never managed to fully employ Harold Weaver’s prescribed burn experiments designed to prevent future major conflagrations. Lack of trained manpower, limited funds, and past BIA neglect of the forest ecosystem, prevented the Tribe from applying reservation wide treatments. Furthermore, prescribed burns held a stigma among the Apache. The Apache associated it with attempts to increase water yield to off-reservation interests. This negative association almost led to the complete cancellation of the program in the 1990s. Even the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990, a proposed remedy to past budget shortfalls and the need to modernize management practices within Indian country, failed to fulfill its promise. The final result of these constraints on restoration efforts resulted in heavy fire damage to 276,000 acres of the reservation’s ponderosa pine ecosystem during the 2002 Rodeo-Chediski Fire, the largest in Arizona’s

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history (in total, 476,000 acres burned). However, subsequent studies have revealed that less damage occurred in areas treated with prescribed burns conducted within ten years of the fire than in untreated areas. Fortunately limited prior treatment spared some of the 276,000 acres extensive damage. The same couldn’t be said of the adjacent Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, which never received prescribed burn treatments.67

After the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, the Tribe requested and received federal assistance through the federal Burned Area Emergency Response program (BAER). The program initially entailed a cooperative action between the BIA fire management office, the Forest Service, the Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University, Tribal Forestry, Tribal Game and Fish, and the Tribal Watershed Program. Their charge was to restore watersheds made vulnerable to flooding, damaged timberlands, sites of archeological importance, and areas containing sacred burial grounds. This collaborative effort, which incorporated cultural, economic, and ecological concerns, was heavily reliant on tribal knowledge of the land. Because of the immense work load, Tribal Forestry received funds to increase its staff from twenty to sixty-six personnel, many of whom received opportunities to take college-level training courses. This staff also employed local knowledge to locate archeological sites and sacred burial grounds, communicating with federal authorities cooperating on the project about these culturally sensitive places. Once located, they exercised measures to protect and restore these places. They also identified areas particularly vulnerable to flooding, evaluated the extent of damage to timber resources, and defined restoration priorities. The Apache’s efficacious work on the recovery effort earned them the Forest Service’s National Fire Plan Award in 2005.68

Even though the Tribe managed to parlay the disaster into more training opportunities for tribal members and positive press, these benefits failed to make up for the fact that the Apache suffered serious economic and public safety consequences as a result of the fire. Early successes with restoration didn’t replace the loss of revenue FATCO experienced due to timber damage. And towns in the fire-ravaged areas remained vulnerable to flooding. The fire destroyed an estimated 400 million board feet of timber, sterilized the soil, and killed soil stabilizing vegetation. Tribal Forestry officials also claimed that the affected areas would require between 100 and 150 years to recover harvestable levels. The Tribe had the opportunity to generate revenue through timber salvage, but this required expensive equipment modifications at FATCO. Furthermore, they lacked the resources to retrieve all salvageable timber. As a consequence, the Tribe was forced to hire outside lumber companies to extract damaged timber in remote regions with helicopters.69

Other problems emerged once BAER funds diminished in 2007. The Forest Service designed BAER as a five year stopgap funding source for communities suffering from wildfire damage. However, the Rodeo-Chediski damage remained so extensive, the initial funds only paid for preliminary restoration work. As a final resort, the Tribe began siphoning funds from already taxed tribal enterprises to continue necessary work, especially in flood-prone watershed communities such as Carrizo and Cibecue. To this day, the Tribe remains financially strapped because of the Rodeo-Chediski disaster. This wildfire not only impacted the tribal economy, but also the Apache’s capacity to continue eco-cultural restoration projects.70

Conclusion

Ronnie Lupe once said that in order for the Tribe to succeed in the modern world his people had to operate “in both the Wall Street way and the Apache way.”\(^\text{71}\) Lupe recognized that a perpetual process of resistance and exchange was necessary to maintain cultural identity, sustain political independence, and adapt to the ever evolving “dominant” society. Moreover, he realized that controlling knowledge production on the reservation would prove paramount to solidifying this process. White Mountain Apache wildlife biologists, restorationists, engineers, planners, and land managers had to know the language of both worlds. Although tribal members adopted a diverse array of Western skills, they worked to balance Western knowledge with Apache knowledge. The White Mountain Apache would cease to exist as an autonomous culture otherwise. This was why, once the Apache had built a relatively solid economic foundation, the revitalization of Apache culture became a vital element of restoration work in the 1990s.

The Apache connected epistemological restoration to the restoration of the Apachean landscape. The Apache weren’t alone in this endeavor. By the 1990s, a major movement erupted among native communities to recover lost knowledge.\(^\text{72}\) For example, Vine Deloria’s *Red Earth, White Lies*, along


with offering a scathing critique of Western science, also represented a work of epistemological restoration on behalf of a variety of American Indian cultures. The book claimed that local Native American knowledge had something to offer Western science, if not in some cases replace completely common orthodoxy such as the Paul Martin’s Pleistocene overkill hypothesis with native memories of geologic events that call this knowledge claim into question. 73 Most epistemological restorations didn’t involve such high-profile targets, generally focusing on historical land management techniques, culturally important species, or (as with the Apache) recovering local knowledge embedded in the landscape. Nonetheless, no matter how large the claim, legitimizing local knowledge became a key ingredient in the restoration of political autonomy. If you lacked ownership of knowledge production on tribal lands, you truly couldn’t ever control management decisions concerning that land.

On Fort Apache, ecological restoration remained a locus through which the Apache controlled and mediated knowledge production. In essence, the Apache epistemological restoration coincided with ecological restoration work. For the Apache, this process entailed a constantly evolving rediscovery process, melding newly found Apache knowledge with Western knowledge. This emerging hybrid knowledge production system remains in the early stages of development. The Apache continue to struggle with reconciling the Apache way with the Western science and technology. Furthermore, they have just begun to explore the depths of lost knowledge and how it can be applied to restoration work. As this knowledge production system matures, the Tribe will continue to reinvent and further elaborate the essence of Apache knowledge, which embodies the Apache values of adaptability, spirituality, and community.


While creating this hybridized knowledge system, the White Mountain Apache maintained cautious boundaries between Western and Apache traditions. Apaches became quite critical of the Western traditions (Christianity, technological determinism, science, capitalism) that undermined their pre-contact culture, a culture that they believe was much more in tune with natural processes than Euro-American society. As Benrita Burnette explained on behalf of her people, “Apaches see the cause of unhealthy ecosystems not as the result of traditional philosophies, but rather as the disruption of those philosophies by external influences.”

Over the past seventy years, the Apache became increasingly suspicious of restoration goals that overlooked economic, political, and cultural issues. Following that reasoning, Chairman Lupe warned in 1991, “We are not patient with those who disregard our knowledge and our love of the land and those creatures that live upon it.” In many respects, therefore, what set Apache restoration projects apart from non-Indian projects were Western traditions and environmental perspectives that failed to take into account local community needs and protecting Apache culture. Because of these philosophical differences, the numerous partnerships emerging between the White Mountain Apache and outside institutions (BIA, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Federation, and various academic institutions) remain on fragile ground. Therefore, a dynamic tension between cultural resistance to and exchange with outside cultures remains a force that shapes the Apache culture and the lands they manage – a subject I explore further in the conclusion.

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74 Long, Tecle, and Burnette, “Cultural foundations for ecological restoration on the White Mountain Apache Reservation.”

Conclusion

The Ecological and Cultural Significance of White Mountain Apache Restoration

The previous chapter demonstrated that ecological restoration represented a political vehicle for regaining control of knowledge production and land. If the Tribe could control science on the reservation, they could direct its uses towards the ecological and cultural concerns of the Tribe rather than those of outsiders. Beyond the epistemological and political implications of restoration, the appropriation of this technique acquired a broader social meaning. The concept of restoration for the White Mountain Apache became intertwined with a complex array of social, political, cultural, and ecological values. Furthermore, the integration of a diverse set of values into restoration work had consequences for the land. The values associated with Apache restoration projects over the years not only dramatically altered the reservation landscape relative to past conditions, but also shaped the ecosystems of the reservation differently from those on adjacent private and federal lands. Because of the unique set of values associated with Apache restoration projects, I propose that the White Mountain Apache have directed the Fort Apache Indian Reservation ecosystems in a different ecological trajectory than the rest of the region.

In forming a concluding argument, this chapter outlines the values of Apache restoration that evolved over the past seventy years and speculates on the consequences these values have had for shaping the Fort Apache landscape. First, I review the evolutionary development of the values associated with White Mountain Apache restoration projects. Second, I discuss the impacts of these values on the Fort Apache landscape. And finally, I explore the implications of White Mountain Apache restoration work for the broader concept of ecological restoration.
The Meaning of Restoration for the White Mountain Apache

The temptation exists to reduce the majority of White Mountain Apache restoration work to an economic motive. But that would not pay due consideration to the complex development of this science and technology within the context of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Restoration’s roots on the reservation certainly evolved from an economic imperative during the Indian New Deal. But the Tribe eventually wove other social elements into the fabric of restoration efforts. Hidden beneath the veneer of recreational and economic restoration was political, cultural, ecological, biodiversity, and epistemological restoration (Fig. 16). In the continuing process of rebuilding their society, the Apache integrated a wide array of values while recreating the Fort Apache landscape as a hybrid of the past and present.

By the late 1990s, the White Mountain Apache essentially had developed a land management system that entailed a landscape (ecosystem)-scale restoration project that incorporated local, regional, and national needs along with considerations for nonhuman nature. On a local scale, restoration projects addressed the cultural and ecological needs of the various Apache communities. On a regional scale, restoration goals worked to attract tourists and provide ecological services for down-stream Euro-American populations. On the national scale, endangered species projects assuaged public and scientific concerns for biodiversity. Much of this restoration work was a political product of the Tribe’s struggle for sovereignty. Because they reassumed autonomy over their eco-cultural resources and resided in a large reservation that drains into two major watersheds, they controlled enough land to develop regionally comprehensive plans. As we have seen, restoration projects meant many things to the Apache people. Beyond the ecological benefits, restoration became a mechanism for articulating political sovereignty; a vehicle for demonstrating self-determination and efficacious self-governance; a forum for acquiring and developing Western technical skills and knowledge; a means by which the Tribe
Fig. 16 – Emphasis on values associated with ecological restoration over time. In general, the number of values associated with restoration diversified and intensified over time as the White Mountain Apache gained control over knowledge production and eco-cultural resources on the reservation.
redisCOVERs and incorporates Apache knowledge, culture and religion; and a venue for maintaining community stability and identity.

This diverse array of benefits helped the White Mountain Apache forge a pathway towards political autonomy. The agency of the Apache people converted the nature of restoration from a paternalistic tool of exploitation to a diversity of techniques for solving the problems of the reservation community. In many ways, if the Tribe hadn’t appropriated ecological restoration for their benefit, the reservation might have ceased to exist – degraded to an uninhabitable point, leaving the Apache without a homeland and their basis for existence. Instead, the Apache cultural appropriation and adaptation of ecological restoration aided the cultural and political revitalization of the White Mountain Apache nation. At first, restoration of economically important resources proved crucial. Beginning with the Indian New Deal and on into the post-war era, restoration worked to restore range, forests, wildlife, and the recreational potential of the reservation. Although outside interests continued to exploit Apache timber and water resources, the Tribe assumed a modest amount of control over their wildlife and grazing lands. The establishment of the White Mountain Recreational Enterprise (WMRE) in the 1950s led to the restoration of the Apache trout and many aesthetic qualities of the reservation. Albeit with Western science and technology, the WMRE became a technical and economic foundation for the Apache struggle to regain control of the management of Fort Apache.

As the WMRE expanded its purview, the Tribe was able to hire increasing numbers of tribal members into natural resource management positions. Through cooperative agreements and programs with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Branch of Land Operations (BIA), the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), select Apache gained expertise in Western science and technology. In doing this, they acquired the power and credibility to express local knowledge and integrate it with Western science and technology. In addition to these programs, some
tribal members began returning to the reservation with college educations in natural resource management. Acquiring technical expertise served two basic purposes. First, Apache biologists and land managers more likely ensured that tribal resources were managed for the benefit of the Tribe. For example, Phil Stago’s battle with the AGFD over the Tribe’s right to manage elk herds on the reservation represented a turning point for the Apache people in terms of managing and restoring resources. Second, expertise allowed tribal land managers to mediate and move fluidly between the Apache culture and Western culture. Being able to speak both “languages” reduced the chances that outside interests would exploit the Tribe in the future.

On top of gaining expertise, successful restoration projects meant building political capital. In general the restoration work of the WMRE in the 1950s and 1960s gave the Tribe political leverage in later battles to control Apache resources. In particular, cooperative efforts with the AGFD and the FWS in the restoration of the Apache trout proved most valuable. For the most part, the White Mountain Apache were responsible for saving this species from extinction. They protected the Apache trout for more than a decade before the AGFD and FWS took a substantial interest in its survival. Even after these agencies began contributing to restoration efforts, the Apache were largely responsible for the restoration work that increased Apache trout numbers and expanded its geographic range. Just as the FWS downgraded the Apache trout from endangered to threatened in 1975, the Apache found themselves embroiled in political battles to control elk management and forest restoration on the reservation. Success with the Apache trout demonstrated the legitimacy of the Tribe’s management capacity, aiding their justification to control elk and forest restoration. After assuming control of these management endeavors, elk numbers dramatically increased and forest health improved. All of these successes fed off of each other, providing the Tribe with political momentum. In short, as restoration successes mounted, so did the Tribe’s political capital. Most recently the Apache used this political
capital to avoid the economic and cultural constraints of critical habitat designations, finally earning the right to build the Miner Flats water works system. Furthermore, with this political capital and the restoration of an economic base, the Tribe reached a level of self-sufficiency and cultural autonomy not seen since the beginning of the reservation days.

As restoration lent itself to increasing the economic and political stability of the White Mountain Apache, the Tribe acquired the political and economic flexibility to be more creative with their restoration work. The Apache solidified the foundations for self-sufficiency by incorporating tribal cultural and economic concerns with ecological goals when designing restoration projects. Over time, these projects evolved to perform the tripartite function of healing the negative impacts of Euro-American overexploitation of reservation lands, establishing a degree of economic freedom from the federal government, and restoring and maintaining cultural traditions. To that end, the 1990s saw an explosion of restoration projects that widely integrated elements of Apache culture, which often meant rediscovering Apache knowledge and applying it to these projects. The new Apache knowledge system became a hybrid of past Apache traditions and contemporary Western science and technology.

Incorporating elements of Apache knowledge and culture became the cornerstone of many restoration projects. Restorationists began employing Apache cultural traditions, natural history, land management techniques, and philosophies of ecosystem management. For instance, the Tribe included aspects of their pre-colonization land management practices into restoration projects. White Mountain Apaches, like most indigenous groups, have their own technological history. This history provided inspiration for their restoration efforts. The recognition of a technical continuity with the past became an important feature of restoration projects. Many members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe viewed ecological restoration as a logical extension of traditional Apache agricultural practices. In a sense, they perceived themselves as coming full circle with their history when participating in restoration work.
In sum, ecological restoration on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation currently is guided by a hybrid knowledge system, albeit a hybrid system that Western science and technology still largely dominates. This knowledge system has evolved considerably since the Indian New Deal and will continue to evolve. As the Apache people continue to rediscover their past and conduct cultural restoration projects, the Apache way will become more evident in land management plans. And they will continue to connect these cultural traditions with a diverse array of values: biodiversity, religion, ecological, economic, aesthetic, recreational, health (mental and physical), political, adaptability, and epistemological. The history of ecological restoration on the Fort Apache exemplifies the necessity of acknowledging that all restoration work embodies the mark of a context-specific community value system. The very incorporation of this value system into restoration goals and other land management practices aided the Tribe’s political quest to regain control of their eco-cultural resources, thus their destiny. In short, they retook ownership and responsibility for their homeland. Although the Apache story makes obvious the importance to local communities of including multiple values into restoration projects, we still should recognize that integrating social and cultural values into land management strategies has consequences for the land. In the next section, I discuss the implication of incorporating a diverse set of values into restoration projects for the Fort Apache landscape.

The Geography of Restoration

The evolution of restoration and land management on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation has had consequences for the physical shape and ecological health of the Apache homeland. Restoration since the Indian New Deal has evolved from a paternalistically driven practice focused on rehabilitating commercially important species to a community-based practice focused on ecosystems as a whole. In addition, the philosophical approach to land management has shifted away from one relying on linear,
mechanistic, sustained yield models that generally created predictions to guide the management of a few economically important species or a single ecosystem service such as water yield. For instance, prior to the 1970s, reforestation, forest thinning, and prescribed burns had two purposes: ensure the highest productivity of Ponderosa pine and increase water yield. And arguably, these practices benefitted outside interests more than the Apache. Currently, these practices still exist; however, they serve the concerns of the Apache community and restore a wide variety of ecosystem functions and services. For example, prescribed burns now are applied to enhance wildlife habitat, protect endangered species, improve grazing lands, restore wetlands, return the forest to a pre-twentieth century community structure, and not only restore overall ecosystem health, but protect sacred sites and burial grounds from wildfires. By gaining control of prescribed burns and other restoration techniques from the BIA and other governmental agencies, the Tribe has begun to reconfigure the Fort Apache landscape for the benefit of the Apache people.

The White Mountain Apache are quite proud of their restoration accomplishments. This pride manifests itself in tribal land manager’s employing boundary work that actively delineates Apache land from adjacent federal and private lands. For instance, in addition to the Watershed Program’s restorative duties, its projects became an opportunity to promote the health of the Apache landscape to outsiders. In 1996, the Tribe invited University of Arizona ecologists to monitor the reservation’s “pristine” highland springs for comparison to streams in the adjacent Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. In exchange for training tribal members in cutting-edge stream analysis technology, the Tribe permitted these ecologists to conduct their research on the reservation. Benrita Burnette, a benefactor of the training program, proudly claimed, “Our … visitors said that they liked our stream better than the ones they had been to on the Forest Service [National Forest], which they said had smelled bad.”

1 B. Mae Burnette, “Studying the Rivers: A Great Adventure,” *Fort Apache Scout* 35 (November 22, 1996): 1; “BIA to Resume Control Burning: After a 3-year Tribe-imposed Hiatus, the Bureau will Burn Forest Land under
Apache pride for their restoration work remained quite evident during my visit with White Mountain Apache restorationists in 2007. Tribal restorationists revealed a number of their successful wetland and stream restoration projects. On our stop at Soldier Spring, which flows east off the reservation into the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, they made a point of showing me the drastic difference between the stream bank within the reservation boundary and off-reservation. Indeed, evidence of erosion and down-cutting was negligible on the reservation, but signs of erosion were considerable as soon we entered the national forest. Demonstrating the relative health of the Fort Apache ecosystem and their stewardship capabilities remain extremely important to the Tribe for political, cultural, and social reasons. Such comparisons bolster the Tribe’s growing reputation as restorationists and land managers. Furthermore, any image of good land management the Tribe can lodge in people’s minds aids the Apache people in their ongoing battles to control their eco-cultural resources.

Consequently, the political sovereignty of the Apache people over their land has major implications for the physical shape and ecological health of the landscape. Ever since the Executive Order that established the reservation, the federally defined boundary has played a role in shaping the Fort Apache lands relative to off-reservation lands. As early as the late nineteenth century Edward Nelson noticed that elk populations flourished on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, while they declined off-reservation. Politics, culture, and differing land management regimes caused these differences. The Apache preferred deer meat over elk, the reservation Superintendent held non-Indian hunting to a minimum, and Euro-Americans remained deathly afraid of the Apache, thus curtailing the extraction of elk from the reservation. At the on-set of the Indian New Deal, BIA officials bragged about the abundance of wildlife on the reservation relative to adjacent lands. Because of this, the BIA began promoting the recreational potential of the reservation and trained Apaches as game wardens. The

reservation boundary again delineated ecological differences. The Apache chose not to allow Euro-Americans to hunt on the reservation until the mid 1947 and not extensively until the 1950s. Deer and turkey remained off limits until the 1960s, again reconfiguring reservation wildlife populations relative to adjacent lands. The Apache trout benefitted from this cultural and political isolation as well, surviving long enough to benefit from the WMRE. Fort Apache became the last refuge of this endangered trout and eventually the source for recovery efforts state-wide.

Fort Apache also became an experimental ground for new restoration and land management techniques. These cooperative efforts between the state and federal government had both positive and negative consequences for Fort Apache ecosystems. On the negative side, while water conservation experiments minimally increased water yields to users in the Salt River Valley, the experiments devastated culturally important sites by destroying cottonwood groves along streams. On the positive side, on a limited scale prescribed burns recreated a forest less vulnerable to destructive wildfires. The highly destructive Rodeo-Chediski Fire of 2002 served as a natural experiment that revealed the benefits of prescribed burns, a silver lining in this unfortunate conflagration. Areas on the reservation that had been consistently treated received far less damage than untreated areas. Even more telling, the adjacent national forest that had never received any treatments experienced far worse damage than reservation lands. The Tribal Council’s decision to continue prescribed burns under a modified regime in the early 1990s had lasting benefits, even if on a small-scale, to their homeland. The Rodeo-Chediski Fire could have wreaked far more havoc if the Tribe had decided to discontinue this practice.2

The transfer of control over reservation resources didn’t begin in earnest until the establishment of the WMRE in 1952. At this time the Tribe decided to pursue the restoration of the Apache trout and the enhancement of their lands for tourism. However, the impact of Apache decisions on reservation

2 Strom, Pre-fire Treatment Effect; Mary Stuever, “BAER Fairs Showcase Burn Restoration,” Fort Apache Scout 43 (February 18, 2005).
resources remained minimal relative to the BIA’s decisions concerning land management until the 1970s. The creation of the Trophy Elk Program and the decision to reduce allowable cuts for FATCO marked a major transition in power from the BIA and the Arizona Game and Fish Department to the Tribe. During this period, the Tribe regained substantial control over all reservation eco-cultural resources. This time period also signified a change in direction for the ecological destiny of the reservation landscape. First, the Tribe ramped up efforts to use ecological restoration to enhance the recreational potential of the reservation. Increasing elk populations attracted hunters from all over the world, reducing allowable cuts enhanced the “wilderness” quality of the reservation, and restoring Apache trout populations turned the reservation into fishing hot spot. In short, eco-tourism became a major industry for the Tribe.

This economic boom also had implications for lands adjacent to the reservation. Towns on the northern edge of Fort Apache - Pinetop, Showlow, and Springerville - experienced extensive economic growth as a consequence of the WMRE. Motels, restaurants, gas stations, and retail services all swarmed to this region to capitalize on the increased tourist activity associated with Fort Apache. With the intrusion of these businesses came population growth and suburban and exurban sprawl. While the Tribe limited the influx of retail and restaurant chains, the surrounding Euro-American communities didn’t. As a consequence, Apache land use decisions literally created an island paradise for nature seekers. White Mountain Apache actions to limit allowable timber cuts, increase elk populations, restore the Apache trout and other endangered species, restore watersheds, build reservoirs, establish a wilderness area and game preserve, continue conducting prescribed burns, and limit the intrusion of national business chains resulted in a noticeable contrast in landscapes.³

Finally, the economic boom from tourism, along with changes in federal Indian policy, bestowed the Tribe with the financial stability to rediscover Apache culture. As early as the 1960s, with the establishment of Mount Baldy Wilderness Area, the Tribe began giving consideration to integrating Apache culture into restoration and land management projects. However, the 1990s truly marked the first time the Tribe obtained the financial capacity to seriously address matters concerning the degradation of their culture through ecological restoration work. The significant addition to restoration work of Apache cultural elements played a major role in shaping the ecosystems of the reservation. The decisions to restore sacred sites such as Soldier Spring, restore culturally important species (cattail, medicinal plants, Mexican wolves, pronghorn antelope, elk, and Mexican spotted owls), incorporate culturally sensitive materials in restoration work, use the knowledge of elders, reconstruct places based on Apache legends, adopt an ecosystem management philosophy, and protect spiritually important places such as Mount Graham and Mountain Baldy all had consequences for the reservation landscape.

In many instances the ways the Apache have begun to reconfigure the land are quite subtle and perhaps unnoticeable to a non-Apache, especially in terms of culturally significant places. To the outside observer these places may only look like a grove of cottonwoods, or a run of the mill stream, or a wetland, but to the White Mountain Apache these places emanate deep historical and cultural meaning. In a sense, the act of restoration transcends the physical landscape and enters the mind, promoting the less tangible epistemological, moral, mental health, and spiritual aspects of Apache culture. And their decisions to restore these culturally important places or keep them intact have a bearing on the appearance and ecological function of the land. In part because the Apache have chosen to protect and restore culturally important places, tourists are treated to the aesthetic qualities of a relatively healthy ecosystem.
Beyond local effects, the restoration work on Fort Apache holds fairly broad implications. White Mountain Apache ecosystem management decisions impact roughly 1.7 million acres of land. Multiply the Apache restoration efforts by the vast amount of restoration work that emerged in Indian country in the 1990s and one finds that Native Americans significantly influence over 100 million acres of the United States. This number doesn’t even include the trend towards contracting Native American land management agencies to administer restoration programs on federal and state lands. Although Native American groups broadly shared a culturally disruptive past, attempting to boil all American Indian restoration efforts into a single category seems ill-advised. Each culture has endured different experiences with the federal government, state governments, municipal governments, and their own people. Each culture’s struggle diverged because they had unique political arrangements (treaties, Executive Orders, agreements, status as a federally recognized group) with the federal government. Other factors that influence the nature of Native American restoration efforts is the geography of the reservation, size of reservation, what types of lands are adjacent to Indian lands (public or private, city or rural), population size, degree of outside exploitation, the degree of cultural disruption, and so on. Because of all of these social, political, cultural, and environmental variables, each Native American group embarking on restoration projects is working with unique initial conditions contingent on their particular historical circumstances. These unique conditions constrain and shape the outcome of Native American projects.

As a consequence, Indian lands all across the United States have become eco-cultural islands in the ocean of Euro-American society. These patches of land add to the eco-cultural (bio-cultural) diversity of the North American landscape. Perhaps one of the biggest questions of the twenty-first century revolves around the impact that the cultural mosaic of Native American, Euro-American, and other cultures has on the sustainability of North American ecosystems. One possible positive role that Native Americans could play as the restoration phenomenon within Indian country matures is that the various cultures could operate as a counter force to the homogenization effect of the dominant society’s economic growth.

My hunch is that a diversity of restoration cultures is a good thing, thus something worth encouraging. Native American restoration efforts are a perfect example of this. Since so many Native American groups are currently practicing ecological restoration, each representing a unique culture, their efforts represent a major contribution to addressing the biodiversity crisis. Links between biological diversity and cultural diversity are becoming more evident as anthropologists, ecologists, conservation biologists, and social scientists begin to study the context-specific manner in which different cultures, especially indigenous cultures, managed their local ecosystems. Thousands of human cultures remained relatively isolated from each other until 1,000 years ago. As a consequence, the sheer diversity of these cultures was partly responsible for creating heterogeneous landscapes across the globe, thus maintaining the diversity of flora and fauna that currently are rapidly disappearing. To be clear, I am in no way suggesting that humans are responsible for all biodiversity. Obviously biodiversity is a product of

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billions of years of natural selection, which involves a variety of selective pressures beyond human influence. Nevertheless, what seems plausible is that the arrival of diverse human cultures into a variety of ecosystems led to the partial reordering of these systems to suit each culture’s needs. Some of the biodiversity that we see today is an artifact of these relatively local manipulations of ecosystems. The restricted nature of these local interactions with the non-human environment helped maintain and create biodiverse ecosystems. However, only in recent history with the global expansion of a few cultures, their preferred beasts of burden and domesticated plants, and their accidental hitchhikers did the biodiversity crisis emerge. In particular the rapid expansion of Western culture in the last thousand years produced a bio-cultural homogenization on a global scale.6

This homogenization process occurred on both cultural and biological fronts. The indigenous movement to sustain their cultures in the wake of this homogenization process functions to rebuff the depletion of biodiversity. This resistance to Westernization has direct implications for American Indian restoration efforts. In pockets throughout North America, Native Americans, First Nations Peoples, and indigenous groups in Latin America are blending their unique cultures and ways of viewing nature with the Western science and technology of ecological restoration. The localness and cultural idiosyncrasies of these projects provide hope that the species endemic to these places might regain cultural significance or acquire cultural importance, thus a greater chance of survival.7 The Apache trout offers a case in point. If the White Mountain Apache had not bonded with this species, it’s extinction may have transpired relatively unnoticed due to twentieth-century fish culturist attempts to standardize North American streams for the optimal fishing experience. Other Native American groups are accomplishing the same – restoring culturally keystone species that don’t necessarily hold a global economic value.8

7 Persic and Martin, Links Between Biological and Cultural Diversity.
8 Garibaldi and Turner, “Cultural Keystone Species.”
Each of these groups, by saving locally important species, is combating the standardizing force of globalization and Western Eurocentric domination.

We must note, however, that these cultures interact with other cultures, including Western society. The outcome of restoration work, in many ways, is still a product of ongoing tension among federal, state, municipal, private, and tribal interests. In short, Native American groups co-evolve with other cultures. They incorporate cultural elements, especially knowledge, science, and technology, into their own cultures. This process is unstoppable, and we should not attempt to deny modernity to Native Americans for the sake of preserving past cultures. Indigenous cultures desire social progress just as Western culture does, although on their own terms.

**Challenges to Euro-American Conceptions of Ecological Restoration**

Beyond their presence as active managers in the pre-European settlement landscape, current American Indian restoration efforts complicate, challenge, and potentially enrich Western notions of restoration in at least six ways. The first one we already discussed at length in the previous section: the integration of cultural and ecological concerns in restoration projects has significant implications for the maintenance of biodiversity on a landscape-scale. Second, the eco-cultural emphasis on restoration has led to a flexible, context-specific planning approach - the application of an ecosystem management philosophy flavored by the local idiosyncrasies of the White Mountain Apache and other Native American groups. Moreover, American Indian restoration efforts demonstrate the necessity of locally designed restoration goals. For instance, the White Mountain Apache have transcended conflicts over which historical landscape to restore, consequently combining many goals and values to produce eco-culturally hybrid landscapes. The diversity of projects occurring with a limited budget on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation illustrates the possibility of developing comprehensive, landscape-scale
restoration projects that incorporate local, regional, and national needs along with considerations for nonhuman nature. On a scale encompassing the entire reservation - an area covering 2,627 square miles (slightly larger than the state of Delaware) – the patchwork of local restoration projects, regardless of the goals, collectively act to restore the ecosystems of the Apache homeland by incorporating eco-cultural elements from both the past and present.

Third, since Phil Stago’s proclamation that Apache local knowledge was superior to Arizona Game and Fish Department knowledge concerning the management of elk populations on Fort Apache, the Tribe has increasingly employed local knowledge about reservation ecosystems to manage their lands for the benefit of the Apache people. Local Apache knowledge is practical knowledge developed from knowing the idiosyncrasies of the land one lives on. As the Apache continue their quest to control knowledge production on the reservation, they find further examples of how the application of universal knowledge fails when it is not integrated with local knowledge. Dallas Massey, the Tribal Chairman from 1998 to 2006, aptly described the negative consequences of this epistemological misconception at the Tri-Area Forestry Meeting in 1999:

Our wildlife budget plan is currently being developed by a computer software program created by federal agencies far removed from our reservations. This program not only confines our costs to prevent and fight forest fires, it also bases this cost upon an average value of a stand of timber in the southwest [sic] and an average value of machinery and labor necessary to fight and prevent forest fires. The program does not consider other conditions which are different from one reservation to another, nor does it care about conditions on a particular reservation. Such a general, broad-based application of conceived condition results in vastly different outcomes for similar reservations, and equal results for very different reservations …Without “hands on” experience of preventing and fighting forest fires, no amount of averaging will provide the means necessary for each Indian nation represented here. We must break these conventional bonds and generic descriptions of the unpredictable costs for these programs, and create individual systems to develop wildfire budgets.9

This White Mountain Apache resistance to universal knowledge production serves as a reminder of the inadequacies of this epistemological philosophy when applied without complementary local knowledge.

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Native Americans along with other local cultures are all experimenting with the integration of local and universal knowledge in a trial and error fashion. We shouldn’t overlook these bold experiments.

Fourth, the incorporation of different cultural perspectives is important to the success of restoration projects on reservation lands. By the 1990s, the Tribe fused Western science and technology with Apache knowledge and culture in all of their projects. This has been a potentially fulfilling endeavor within the reservation setting. However, beyond the reservation, skepticism about the efficacy of Native American knowledge remains common. This is despite the efforts of a growing number of Euro-American advocates, such as Kat Anderson and Nancy Turner, who believe incorporating Native American knowledge into Western-based land management strategies can help solve many environmental problems. Nonetheless, the National Park Service, the Forest Service, the FWS, conservation biologists, and restoration ecologists have recently begun to acknowledge the importance of Native American knowledge. However, progress towards incorporating this knowledge into management plans is not only slow, but often met with political resistance. This is apparent in the FWS’s recent unprecedented decision in December 2004 to turn half the management duties on the National Bison Range over to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CKST), a group with a respectable record of natural resource management on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Resistance to this move, which began well before the transfer of responsibilities, continues today from within the ranks of the FWS, environmental groups, science watchdog groups, and conservatives seeking to undermine tribal sovereignty. Many of the formal complaints question the scientific competency of the CKST, but these criticisms only mask the territorial nature of the dispute. Equally evident are concerns about job loss for federal employees, loss of federal control over natural resources, and the special status of tribes as sovereign nations. Nevertheless, the successful integration of Native American and Western knowledge on some reservations seems to suggest that the resistance to importing Native American
knowledge into the mainstream of Western science is less about epistemological incompatibility and more about power struggles and cultural inflexibility.¹⁰

Fifth, American Indian restoration efforts are explicitly political. Historical and contemporary external threats to sovereignty often motivate restoration projects on tribal lands, thus blurring the boundaries between science and society. In mixing science with politics, American Indians realize that the process of building sustainable societies can’t rely too much on restoring the past. They must take into consideration what has transpired to create their current condition and the constraints that past and present conditions put on any plans for cultural or ecological restoration. In essence, this restorative mindset doesn’t seek to return to an ideal past condition, but embarks on a “continuous communal re-interpretation of conditions from the immediate and long-term past.”¹¹ This process not only involves blending past and present physical features of the landscape but different cultural traditions as well. So in a sense, the Apache along with other Native American groups are creating hybridized landscapes and knowledge systems. In creating these landscapes and knowledge systems, American Indians use Western and Native American techniques and knowledge to shape ecosystems in accordance with their history and contemporary physical and political constraints. In doing so, they cautiously attempt, while protecting their cultural identity, to transcend rigid historical (e.g., the wilderness ideal) and cultural barriers (e.g., Western versus non-Western knowledge systems) prevalent in Western society. In sum, American Indian resistance to cultural assimilation ultimately entails cultural exchange with Western society, which leads to the creation of eco-culturally hybrid landscapes and knowledge systems on reservation lands.

Sixth, the political nature of American Indian restoration projects also points to the importance of restoring or developing a sense of place. For American Indians, restoring a sense of place is essential to recovering eco-cultural sustainability. This is what is truly innovative about indigenous restoration projects – they draw from the past to reconstruct eco-cultural ties to the land. This component of indigenous restoration projects remain absent from many Euro-American projects, which tend to focus solely on ecological or economic issues. Perhaps if Western restoration efforts centered more on “becoming indigenous” and eco-cultural survival, these projects would have a lasting public appeal.

Developing an intimate connection with the land, people would own the process and take responsibility for restoring nature. In fact, this phenomenon is beginning to emerge in many places, especially in the western United States in areas ravaged by timber over-exploitation, inflicted by desertification, and reconfigured by dams. Ultimately, like American Indian restoration projects, these community-based efforts are tied to cultural survival. More restoration projects must follow this pattern if restoration technology is going to have a lasting effect on solving environmental problems. While blending ideas from both Native American and Western cultures, Robin Wall Kimmerer, a restorationist of American Indian descent, expresses this sentiment well:

Traditional ecological knowledge is not unique to Native American culture. It is born of long intimacy and attentiveness to a homeland and can arise wherever people are materially and spiritually integrated with their landscape. The writings of such luminaries as Aldo Leopold in “The Land Ethic” and others in the Western tradition express this imperative most powerfully. The goal should not be to appropriate the values of indigenous peoples. As an immigrant culture, Americans must start to engage in their own process of becoming indigenous to this place.

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