



Kupper, P.

Wildnis schaffen – Eine transnationale Geschichte des Schweizerischen Nationalparks

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The book offers a detailed account of how the Swiss National Park (SNP) came to be established. It starts with a short overview of the idea of an SNP developed in the early 20th century, then moves on to the Yellowstone Park in the US, only to return to the incremental establishment of the SNP between 1909 and 1914. Zurich botanist Carl Schröter first aired the idea of an SNP at a meeting of the Swiss Conservation Commission in 1906. A suitable area *large and remote, ... where the bear still roams* should be found and only researchers be allowed access. The author goes on to describe in vivid detail the various actors (individuals, organizations and institutions) who pursued this idea and their motivations for realizing it. Of special interest are the negotiations with the relevant municipalities about transfer of land titles. The strict protection regulations triggered conflicts with local interests which hampered negotiations. Usage rights were largely bought up. To round off the picture, the author describes the socio-economic conditions of the population in the SNP municipalities, both before and after the park was established.

The caricatures of the project in the Bern newspaper *Der Bund* and the reactions they triggered demonstrate the conflicting emotions within Swiss society about this park in its early years. Based on his extensive background research, the author succeeds in engaging the readers with the different positions on the establishment of the park.

Once the park had been set up, its declared aim became total protection, only to be repeatedly questioned when interventions were deemed necessary. One such case was the successful introduction of the ibex, but to keep the animals in that area, salt licking stations had to be introduced or the animals would have wandered on into areas where they would have been hunted. This meant that the declared aim of the SNP to avoid all *human influence* was repeatedly undermined.

Another intention of the national parks is *permanent scientific monitoring*. The author pulls together the vari-

ous influences on research in the SNP over time and introduces the individuals that shaped this research.

A later chapter is dedicated to the natural dynamics and the societal balance in the SNP. The park has been and still is open to impacts from more general societal developments. It had to come to terms with hydroelectric power generation on its territory, face enormous increases in traffic and tourism, and regulated rising stocks of wildlife. These developments necessitated and justified the creation of a park management.

Given the author's well-crafted text, it is all the more regrettable that the graphics do not match it in quality. The book is written in German, the legend of one diagram is still in English; some of the maps come without any legend or with an incomplete legend. The photographs are well chosen and complement the text well.

The author succeeds in creating a vivid image of the SNP and all the complexities associated with creating a *new wilderness*.

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