



The Legacy of a Wilderness Purist

The first waves of immigrants to North America found a vast land filled with endless gruesome ways the unskilled or unlucky might die. They called this wilderness. Time, population growth and modern technology have forced that definition to evolve. What we call Wilderness today is a legacy awarded to America, and the world, by a handful of visionary leaders who understood that, without protection, America's vast tracts of natural lands would soon be a thing of history.

Set aside and protected by a congressional act, one might think that the essence of America's wilderness heritage has been safely protected for posterity. Unfortunately, our wilderness system is under frequent attack, often by the very managers entrusted with its protection. Sadly, wilderness needs dedicated, visionary protectors today as much as ever.

Where, especially in an increasingly electronic world, do we find those protectors of wilderness? Where do they come from? How does a person make that connection to wilderness that evolves, grows and becomes one of life's defining factors? And most critically, how does the next generation come to understand, value and protect wilderness?

Does a wilderness awakening start with that first family visit to a national park? Perhaps it comes first from spending time outdoors with friends, or perhaps you simply discover the beauty of wilderness. Maybe you just needed a summer job and ended up on a FS trail crew.

Perhaps, for it is far more likely, one experience simply brushes the trail for the next. With Clem, family trips to a myriad of national parks and an occasional backpack trip with Dad were followed by camping trips with high school friends and finally a summer job on a wilderness trail crew.





Years of wilderness travel gave Clem a relaxed, easy rhythm outdoors and a love of wilderness that Clem passed on to his son and daughters; all experienced with a crosscut with and totally at-ease with long stints of off-trail travel across remote, rugged country.

How all the pieces come together that lead a person to dedicate themselves to wilderness is probably a sloppy and unscientific process

and perhaps how it happens doesn't matter. What does matter is that wilderness needs dozens and dozens of Clems; wilderness advocates dedicated and unwavering in their efforts to assure wilderness is managed as Congress decreed in the Wilderness Act.

Wilderness needs strong, vocal, persistent advocates with no tolerance for managers who through laziness, ignorance or inaction eat away at the essence of wilderness one questionable action after another: sure, we can fly in earthmoving equipment to rebuild that ancient irrigation dam; we can reopen that abandoned wilderness airstrip if that's what hunters want; we'll just ignore that motorized access across wilderness to a private holding; we won't cite that an outfitter using a chain saw; we won't confront Idaho Fish and Game for using power tools in wilderness to route pipe that will irrigate a pasture to increase elk populations for hunters; action after action, each eating away at the essence of wilderness.



Clem started his wilderness career on the Selway Bitterroot working out of the historic Moose Creek Ranger Station; one of the last district offices to be located in wilderness He was first on a trail crew known for often covering a hundred miles or more during days off. Clem next advanced to the job of Wilderness Ranger took and spent years mapping out faint trails in little visited corners of the District.

Next, he became the District Packer in an era when trail crews spent long stints on remote projects. Clem often covered thirty miles with his string of mules stopping long after dark and heading out before dawn to resupply crews the way it had always been

done. A move to McCall, the Frank Church led to promotion as Resource Manager on the Krassel Ranger District; the job Clem held for the rest of his career.

Clem remains a steadfast and unwavering critic of decisions that erode wilderness character. An avid defender of wilderness as defined in the Wilderness Act, Clem knows wilderness is a concept that can readily be lost. From decades of experience Clem also knows that managing wilderness, as wilderness, is not always the easiest and most cost-effective way to manage public lands but he is adamant that it is the only way to manage Wilderness.

Clem values historic wilderness skills and knows that to manage wilderness as wilderness requires an investment in historic tools and people who know how to use them. Cross cuts, Pulaski's and rock bars. Single-jacks, double-jacks, peavey's, cant hooks, Gibbs jointers, spiders, single-trees, manty's, mules and McCleod's. These are the tools of wilderness and they demand people who respect them, use them, and know how to maintain them. America's wilderness is the Smithsonian of these skills and wilderness managers must support, protect and retain this resource to maintain wilderness both as congress decreed and most importantly, as wilderness deserves.



During his years as Resource Manager Clem helped hundreds upon hundreds of young adults experience wilderness much as he first did, in full immersion mode; season after season he hired youth crews from the Student Conservation Association, the Montana Conservation Corps and Northwest Youth Corps. Guaranteed, no graduate of such an experience ever, looks at a trail the same way again; they walk taller, they work harder and most of all, develop a profound new commitment to wilderness and our nation's public lands.

Wilderness will soon lose the voice of one of its staunchest advocates. Clem has four tumors growing in his brain. He will soon lose his ability to speak. Death will follow soon after.

If you know Clem, or if you just value wilderness, you can honor his lifetime dedication to wilderness by speaking up next time managers propose helicopter flights to conduct some sort of wilderness study, want to fly in a resupply to a trail crew, use power tools to build a pack bridge or make any other decision destined to mitigate the purity of wilderness. Clem would say, "look beyond what is simply legal, expect managers to do what is best for wilderness".

In honor of Clem's lifetime dedicated to protecting the essence of wilderness a wilderness defense endowment will soon be established with Great Old Broads for Wilderness. The *Pope Family Wilderness Defense Endowment*, will be used exclusively to support legal actions needed to assure the ongoing protection of wilderness values.

The Pope Family Wilderness Defense Endowment has been established with an initial \$100,000 gift. But this is not nearly enough. You are invited to continue Clem's legacy as a self-avowed "wilderness purist" by helping this fund grow, right now and with renewing gifts every August 21st, Clem's birthday.

