



View from

Listening Point

Newsletter of the Listening Point Foundation, Inc.

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Sigurd Olson's 1963 Wilderness Act Testimony

By Kevin Proescholdt

Sigurd Olson was a strong proponent of the landmark 1964 Wilderness Act, whose 50th anniversary we celebrate this year. It is the Wilderness Act that established the National Wilderness Preservation System (which includes the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness) and provided wilderness protections for the first time in the federal statutes.

Sig was a good friend and advisor to Howard Zahniser, the executive secretary of the Wilderness Society and the editor of its magazine, *The Living Wilderness*. Sig had become friends with Zahniser even before Sig began serving on the Wilderness Society's Governing Council in 1956. It was Zahniser who wrote the Wilderness Act, with the advice of Sig and other confidants. "Zahnie," as Sig and other friends called him, was a deep thinker, careful wordsmith, and tireless advocate who crafted the poetic language of the Wilderness Act which, among other things, defined

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Howard Zahniser, pictured above, wrote the Wilderness Act with input from Sigurd Olson and others.

Sig Testifies

Sigurd Olson delivered this address on March 1, 1963, to the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee

My name is Sigurd F. Olson, my home is Ely, Minn., in the Superior National Forest which has within its borders the famous Boundary Waters Canoe Area administered by the U. S. Forest Service. I represent the Izaak Walton League of America, one of the largest conservation groups in the Nation, as well as the Wilderness Society in which I serve as a member of the council. I also speak for myself and for those who have read my books and listened to my lectures on wilderness and who also feel as strongly about it as I do.

Last year proponents of wilderness preservation were greatly encouraged by the splendid support of the Senate in passing S. 74 with a vote of 78 to 8. That action convinced everyone that the people of the United States understood what was at stake and were overwhelmingly in favor of a Wilderness Preservation System as outlined in that bill. The fact that the House version of the same bill was not reported out of committee and not voted on by that body, did not change the situation. I was confident then, that had the wilderness bill been reported out and come up for a vote, it too would have passed with a big majority. I am just as confident today that if Congress has the opportunity to vote on the measure, it will pass both Houses.

The American people want their wilderness protected as witness the continuing favorable articles and editorials all over the Nation. The long effort to establish a Wilderness Preservation System has made people aware that without its protection, they might lose a precious heritage, one that is becoming increasingly valuable as time goes on.

With our population growth, our industrial and urban expansion, the increased use of all natural resources, it is evident that unless the remaining wilderness we have is given statutory protection, the day may come when there will be no wild, undeveloped country. Should that happen, Americans will have lost something of their character and dignity as a people, some of the sense of freedom and challenge bred into them during pioneer days. I believe that Americans are not yet ready for a completely urban existence removed from all the influences which molded them as a

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Holding Fast

If we are lucky, each of us has a special place we've known in our lives, and special moments we have spent there, that color everything that came before and all that comes after.

It may be the simple things we have seen and heard there: the sound of the breeze through a particular stand of trees, the look of the setting sun's rays on a particular rock formation, the sweep of a certain horizon, the brow of a lonely hill, the way the air smells in one favorite place that is like no other.

Often the feeling also has to do with the people with whom we have spent time in such a place, the shared experiences we have known. Thus it is that people return to the same lake or resort time and time again, even passing the tradition on from generation to generation, until the woven fabric of experiences and memories is so dense and warm and comfortable that one's life can hardly be imagined without it.

The family farm. The street you grew up on. A favorite park. A river. A certain campsite returned to again and again, its image burnished by the years until it fairly glows in memory and in the anticipation of the next time to be spent there.

If we are lucky, we have such a place and have shared it with others.

But lives change and do not last forever, and we must be fortunate indeed to feel that our special place will somehow last, last beyond our own lives and somehow touch the lives of others perhaps yet unborn. Such is the meaning of conservation and preservation. Such is part of the meaning of wilderness, where change, if it comes, is slow, made by the hand of nature and not the swift and heedless acts of man.

Such a place is Listening Point.

Sigurd Olson was a man with a rare appreciation of the timeless, the slow cycles of the natural world, the shadow of history and the meaning of tradition. In Listening Point he found and created a place where such concerns could be honored and nurtured. Where the look of a small pine against the rising moon was a cause for celebration and appreciation:

"No one, I thought, must ever touch that tree, no one ever change its twisted black against the sky. What storms it had withstood, how bravely it flaunted its few clumps of needles, how it had fought over the years for the right to live, thrusting its roots deep into the cracks of granite and greenstone beneath it, holding fast and desperately there as the storms from the northwest tried to tear it from its mooring.... The Shield that covers most of the north with volcanic rock is unyielding and ancient, muskeg and forest, cold and storm, and violent roaring rivers. It has spirit and challenge, and the little pine was the embodiment of it all."

Sig Olson had a rare appreciation for the timeless, for hardiness in the face of the storms of life, in the face of change. And Listening Point, a tiny part of the North Country wilderness, epitomized these feelings. But even Sigurd Olson could scarcely have imagined that one day there would be a Listening Point Foundation, dedicated to preserving that little pine's silhouette against the moon. To preserving the bearberry ledge in which it is rooted, the trail through the blueberries and wild sarsaparilla and bracken ferns and twin flower and corydalis, and the old cabin behind the great glacial boulder that stands guard over it all.

Thanks to Bob and Vonnie Olson and others, such a foundation came into being, ensuring that far into the future people can share Sig Olson's "special place." Many come to visit, and more will do so in the future. But many others share just by knowing it is here, that it exists at all, a symbol of timelessness in a changing world, and perhaps a reminder of the special places in their own lives.

So thank you, once again, to all our supporters. Thank you for helping to make the work of the LPF possible—not just in preserving the Point, but in helping us to nurture the very idea of wilderness itself, the idea that a little pine whose branches hold the moon, on a rocky point by a clear water lake, matters.

—Douglas Wood



Doug Wood Illustration

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Workshop Inspires Writers

This past September a group of writers sought inspiration upon the same paths, beneath the same pines, and within the same cabin walls where Sigurd Olson once found it. As often happens when one looks and listens in the right place, the seeking was rewarded. Some beautiful writing resulted. And on one magical evening more intangible rewards tumbled one upon the other.

Each person found a comfortable stone seat at the end of the Point and watched the sun descend in a fiery spectacle across the lake. Not a word was spoken for all the sunset hour. The dark trail back to the cabin was then illuminated by a rising full moon, spreading silver on the water. Next, the loons began as though on cue, one wailing, echoing chorus after another. And when it seemed that all was done, the evening overfull with beauty, the wolves began to howl from the wild hills beyond the lake. Unforgettable. As it always has, Listening Point still rewards those who come to listen...

One of the listeners was Harold Fenske, who heard echoes of Sig Olson himself in the breezes and the waves, echoes of the great Finnish classic *Kalevala*, and of the timeless concept of *sisu*.

2015 Writers' Weekend: Come Join Us!

For the past two years, the Listening Point Foundation has offered an extraordinary experience: the chance for writers, prospective writers, and those who just want to explore the idea of writing, to think, write, and simply soak up inspiration at Sigurd Olson's Listening Point. The experiences have been magical, from the wailing of loons to the howling of wolves to the simple dancing of oil lamp shadows on the walls of the old cabin at night. And the writing, even from novices and those who shyly insist, "I'm not a writer," has been outstanding—moving, funny, touching, illuminating.

This "Writers' Weekend" so clearly fulfills what LPF, the Point, and Sig's literary legacy are all about, that we are offering it again. The chance to walk the same trails, paddle the same shorelines, gaze up at the same trees, and sit on the same boulders as one of the greatest outdoor writers and conservationists of the last century does not come along that often.

The next annual "Writers' Weekend at Listening Point" will be **September 11-13, 2015**. Best-selling author and LPF President Douglas Wood will be guide and facilitator. Virtually everything, including food and lodging—and inspiration—provided. Hope you can join us!

Dates: September 11–13, 2015

Cost: \$540, includes both food and lodging. Adults only. For more information and to reserve your spot, call 218-365-7890 or e-mail info@listeningpointfoundation.org.

The Sauna at Listening Point

By Harold Fenske

The Listening Point writing assignment was, "Go write about something that captures your interest and if possible, tie the story into your personal or family life." I hurried out the door and headed down the narrow trail to the sauna. There seemed no other choice for me.

I wasn't always a Finlander. My grandmother, Ida, came to America from Esse, Finland in 1902, but she claimed to be Swedish. She spoke Swedish even though she was raised on a farm that was established in the 1500s in the center of Finland. Grandma Ida became angry if anyone dared call her a Finn. So my father's generation grew up as Swedes and we grandkids feasted on lefsa and krumkaka, recipes perhaps stolen from the Norwegians, and we suffered the Christmas lutefisk.

We are Finns! As a retired guy with time on my hands and with the long reach of the internet, I was eventually able to establish our family origins. My American cousins were pretty skeptical of these findings. My wife said it was funny how I was the only Finlander in my family, but I was finally vindicated—back in the "old country" I discovered over 200 relatives! To make a long story short, eight of these Finnish cousins visited northern Minnesota last summer and, yes, we actually all pretty much look alike.

With my Finnish credentials firmly established, I argue that Sigurd Olson was also Finnish. Sig was born a Swede. His father, a Baptist minister, delivered sermons in Swedish. Like my Grandmother Ida denying her Finnish heritage, did Sig stray from his Swedish roots? He chose the Finnish architecture for his cabin and sauna. On his canoe trips, he prepared a fish stew, a staple in the Finnish diet. In his writing, he mentions the Finnish word for bravery and fortitude—*sisu*. There was something about the Finnish culture that Sig innately admired.

Sure, it is possible that Sigurd chose to transplant the two buildings to Listening Point because the silver-gray color of the weathered logs blends so well into the surrounding landscape. But examine the dovetail corners of the sauna. Finnish builders are famous for those precise cuts. Sigurd must have admired the craftsmanship that plain-living country people could accomplish with natural material—the joining of two perfections: Finnish



Sig at the sauna

Continued on page 4

Coming Up...

April 25: Annual SFO Birthday luncheon, St. Paul.
Speaker: Mike Link

May 15 – Oct. 31: SFO exhibit at the Ely/Winton
Historical Society

June 5: Minnesota Association of Library Friends
Literary Landmark award ceremony in honor of
Sigurd Olson, Vermilion Community College, Ely, MN

July 24-26: Blueberry Arts Festival information
booth, Ely, MN

Sept. 11: Annual Northwoods Dinner, Ely, MN

Sept. 11-13: Third annual Writers' Workshop, Ely, MN

The Sauna (Continued from page 3)

woodworking skills and nature's finest effort, a tree.

When one talks to the real practitioners of sauna it is evident that this is more than a bath or a "good sweat." Something mystical happens in a sauna. It is a time when an individual has a chance to look back at a memory, clarify a thought, or experience a vision. This can be a time of quiet, time ordinarily not found in daily life. Sigurd spent a good share of his adult life seeking those special moments. He called them "flashes of insight."

In his book *Runes of the North*, Sigurd describes the sauna experience. I had the privilege of sitting on the shore of Listening Point near that old weathered building and imagining the details of his colorful sauna story: chop the wood, build a fire, heat the rocks, pour the water, enjoy the steam, share a laugh, sprint to the lake, immerse in the cold water, do the birch-branch whipping thing, and repeat as needed.

As final proof of Sig's "Finnishness," he begins and ends the *Runes* book with passages from Finland's epic poem, the Kalevala. My favorite line, "Birds twittered words, and the boughs of trees whispered charms."

These things happen at Listening Point in every season. For those who listen to the wind as it sweeps across the rocks or quietly rests in the branches above, some days a single word can be heard, a word that pays tribute to Sigurd's vision of man's place in the natural world: *sisu*. ●

—Harold Fenske attended the LPF Writers' Weekend in September, about which he writes: "I give high marks for the workshop. I learned a few things about writing but the best part was to just 'hang out' at Listening Point."

Guest Pen:

Cabin Country: A Writer's Work in Progress

By Mike Lein

In 1992, my spouse, Marcie, and I bought five acres of woods on a small lake near Park Rapids. We spent the first summers camping, clearing brush, battling bugs and having all kinds of fun with our two sons, dogs and friends. It didn't take us long to want more—a cabin where we could hunt, cross-country ski, ice fish and have fun all year long.

Given the realities of our financial situation, it would have to be a small, affordable cabin that would be easy to maintain. I spent many a night drawing up cabin plans and figuring construction budgets, trying to find the right mix of size and cost. The basement for the 16 by 20-foot cabin was dug in August 1998. The excavator ended up being the only contractor we hired. The rest of the cabin was built the old-fashioned way with do-it-yourself labor from a host of talented and not-so-talented family and friends. Like any real cabin, it has a wood stove for heat and an outhouse. We don't need to keep it heated or worry about pipes and sewer systems freezing in the winter. It should be finished sometime this century.

Coincidental with the start of construction was a trip to Ely, where our oldest son was attending Vermilion Community College. One of the activities offered for Parents Weekend was a tour of Sigurd F. Olson's cabin on Burntside Lake. The simple one-room Finnish log structure was the inspiration for his second book *Listening Point* and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The visit to Listening Point rekindled my interest in Sigurd's books and inspired me to try writing about our own cabin experiences. But how would I distinguish myself from the countless other Minnesotans writing about their cabins? I took a gamble and started my writing career with a creative nonfiction piece about our outhouse and how we use it to screen potential visitors.

I got lucky with my first story. "Outhouse Talk" was published in the Lake Country Journal Magazine of Brainerd. Since then, my writing horizons have expanded to include cooking, travel and even a little fiction. I've had over 40 articles published in a dozen magazines and literary journals. But cabin life continues to feature heavily in my writing.

As a writer, you can spend lots of time and money on writers retreats, conferences and Internet classes—all offering ideas on how to beat the curse of "writer's block." Whenever I have this problem, I just visit the cabin. Problem solved. ●

—Note: This article appeared in the Jan. 16, 2014 edition of the Minneapolis Star Tribune

Thoughts from a Tour Guide

By Phil Voxland

Each group that visits Listening Point gives me a new insight. Several days after I took a retired professor out to the Point, she wrote that seeing the sauna brought to her mind the great French cathedral at Chartres, both being an expression of craftsmanship in a divine setting. So what you or I see at the Point is never the same, and may be intriguingly different!

Lately, as we walk from the sauna and beach up towards the cabin, I step back and let the visitors follow the trail. Their eyes are often watching the path itself, but just upon reaching the wood shed, they look up and ahead. Often there is a hesitation, a pause and a sigh of recognition. "Ohhh ... there it is, there is the cabin."

Sure, and then they want to go inside right away. I smile and remind them that the place is "Listening Point," not so much "Listening Cabin," but we'll be back. If there are kids along, or if one of the folks is clearly moved by finally being at Sigurd Olson's place, I put the key in their hand and welcome them to open the door.

One group of five guys had been staying down near Eagle's Nest Lakes. They talked about having canoed in the Quetico and Boundary Waters. Later, I read in the guest book how in fact, for 50 years they have traveled and paddled together. That reminded me how important it is as a guide to ask "What brings you to this place?" ●

BWCAW, LISTENING POINT TRIPS

The Audubon Center of the North Woods is sponsoring two educational trips to Sigurd Olson's canoe country in 2015.

"Minnesota's Boundary Waters: Paddling Sigurd Olson's Canoe Country" is a week-long trip offered in both August and September 2015, where participants will hike, camp and paddle in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The trips are organized through Road Scholar, the educational adventure program created by Elderhostel.

Led by LPF President Doug Wood, these trips will feature a visit to Sigurd Olson's home, writing shack, and cabin at Listening Point. Participants will engage in hands-on learning experiences, and spend evenings around the campfire reading from Olson's books.

For more information, see audubon-center.org or www.roadscholar.org.

Quotes from the cabin's comment book:

"Truly a mesmerizing and contemplative place of peace. What an honor to see into the lives of Sig and Elizabeth."

—Tom & Alycia

"One more checked off the Bucket List!"

—Bill & Pat

"We, today, breathed the same air and sensed the same scents as did Sigurd Olson."

—J.A.C.

Listening Point Foundation Contribution Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

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E-mail _____

My contribution is in (*select one*) honor/memory of:

CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT

\$35 \$250

\$50 \$500

\$100 (other) _____

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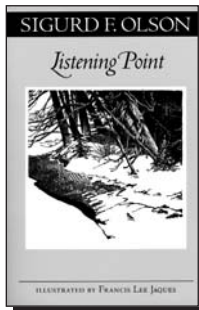
Listening Point Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 180
Ely, MN 55731

Listening Point Foundation is a 501(c)3 educational organization that welcomes charitable contributions that support its educational mission and preservation efforts. Gift types include annual support, memorials, in-kind donations and planned giving.

For more information on giving, please contact us at 218-365-7890.

Gift Shop

Share the spirit of Listening Point with friends and family with one of these gift items that celebrate Sigurd Olson, Listening Point, wilderness and more!



Sigurd Olson Classics
Attractive paperback versions of seven of Sigurd Olson's most loved books.

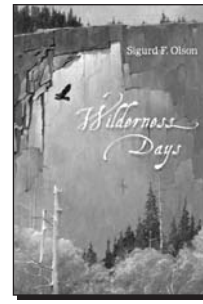
- *The Singing Wilderness*
- *Listening Point*
- *The Lonely Land*
- *Runes of the North*
- *Open Horizons*
- *Reflections from the North Country*
- *Of Time and Place*

..... \$15 each



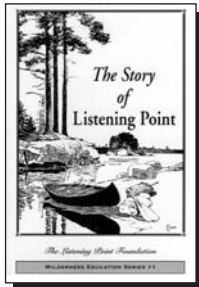
The Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson DVD
A digitally remastered version of the classic film "The Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson" includes more than two hours of conversations with Sig as he speaks about the craft of writing and life in the wilderness. You'll also hear Sig's wife Elizabeth and their son Sig Jr. speak candidly about Sigurd, his profession, and life in the north woods.

..... \$15



Wilderness Days
University of Minnesota Press has published a new paperback edition of *Wilderness Days*—a collection of Sig's writings that depicts the essence of the magnificent woodlands and waters of the legendary Quetico-Superior region that borders Minnesota and Ontario.

..... \$18



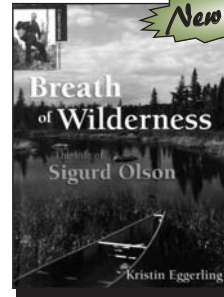
The Story of Listening Point
This 28-page booklet, written by Sig's son Robert K. Olson, tells the inside story of how Listening Point came to be and why, what it meant to Sigurd Olson, and what it continues to mean to wilderness lovers and loyalists. Features dozens of historical photos and images.

..... \$5



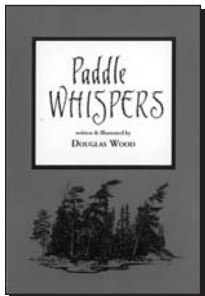
Sig Olson's Wilderness Moments
For Kids! Five selections of Sig Olson's writings, with "Points to Ponder" and "Activities" following each section. Excellent opportunity to introduce Sig to the younger generation. Includes blank pages at the end of the book for several of the activities—journaling, mapping, etc.

..... \$5



Breath of Wilderness
By Kristin Eggerling. A must have for your Olson library. The story covers Sigurd Olson's love of wild places and how that love transformed his life. It is a book written for middle school students, but can be enjoyed by all. 92pgs.

..... \$13



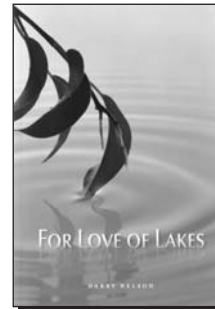
Paddle Whispers
An illustrated, nonfiction meditation by Doug Wood about the human soul encountering itself through the soul of the wilderness on a canoe trip through the rocks, woods and water of the North Country.

..... \$16



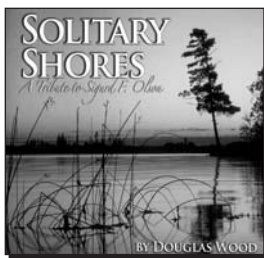
Sigurd Olson Poster
The image, taken by Bryan Strenlund, may well be one of the last photos of Sig before he died. The 11" by 17" poster includes Sig's last type written words. A must have for Sig fans.

..... \$15



For Love of Lakes (hard cover)
The book, by Darby Nelson, focuses on the lakes, ponds, and waters outside your very home and the intricacies of the ecosystems found there. It also documents our species' long relationship with lakes and addresses the stewardship issue, while providing an improved understanding of our most treasured natural resource.

..... \$25



Solitary Shores CD
First recorded in 1983, *Solitary Shores* was Douglas Wood's musical tribute to Sigurd Olson. All of the songs have a strong North Country flavor, and there is even a segment of Sig reading from one of his own essays.

..... \$18



LPF Hats
For your wearing pleasure! 100% cotton, embroidered with the Listening Point logo. Choose from three colors: cream, loden green, and khaki. Adjustable leather strap.

..... \$18



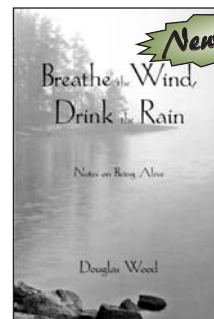
SFO Stationery
Package includes 50 sheets, 25 envelopes, and LPF pen. Stationery with the canoeist in mind. The image comes from actual early stationery used by Sig. Great for Christmas gifts.

..... \$18



2015 Calendar
Sigurd Olson writings, Jim Brandenburg photos, Listening Point image—a great combination! Framable images, conservation dates, incredible quotes all make for a unique calendar for 2015. Size 12" by 15". Great Christmas gift idea.

..... \$15



Breathe the Wind, Drink the Rain
Doug Wood's personal recipe for being truly alive—for arriving at the ground beneath your feet and feeling at home in the universe. Great to take on a canoe trip. Pen and ink drawings by Doug as well. 52 pgs.

..... \$10

See next page for the Gift Shop order form

Listening Point Foundation Gift Shop
order form

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- Sigurd Olson classics paperback books @ \$15.00 = _____
specify title(s): _____
- Wilderness Days @ \$18.00 = _____
- Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson DVD @ \$15.00 = _____
- Story of Listening Point booklet, by Robert Olson.. @ \$ 5.00 = _____
- Wilderness Moments booklet @ \$ 5.00 = _____
- Breath of Wilderness @ \$13.00 = _____
- Paddle Whispers @ \$16.00 = _____
- For Love of Lakes @ \$25.00 = _____
- Solitary Shores audio CD @ \$18.00 = _____
- Sigurd Olson poster @ \$15.00 = _____
- SFO Stationery @ \$18.00 = _____
- LPF Hat – cream, loden, khaki (choose one)..... @ \$18.00 = _____
- 2015 Calendar @ \$15.00 = _____
- Breathe the Wind, Drink the Rain @ \$10.00 = _____
- Shipping/Handling (\$3.00@ for calendars) ... @ \$ 3.00 = _____
- Shipping/Handling (\$2.00@ for other items).. @ \$ 2.00 = _____

ORDER TOTAL: _____

Please send order form and your check to Listening Point Foundation (LPF), to:

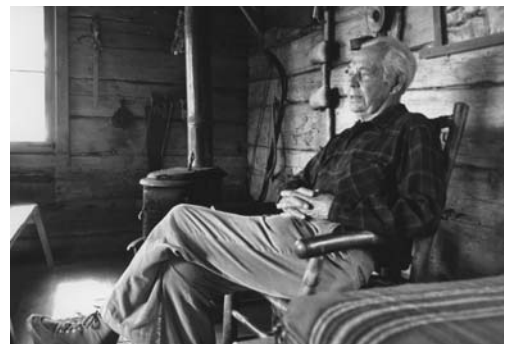
Listening Point Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 180
Ely, Minnesota 55731

All items may be ordered from our website via PayPal. Orders also may be placed by email to info@listeningpointfoundation.org. Invoices will be included with your shipped order.

Quote from Sig:

"If you can find your medium, no matter how humble, you can put up with anything because then life will be worthwhile and will have significance Write what you feel sincerely and not what you think you ought to say. It is what you feel that will interest others. Be true to yourself."

— Sig's Journal entry, dated Feb. 6, 1933



Sig's Wilderness Act Testimony (Continued from page 1)

wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

It took eight long years of work to pass the Wilderness Act through Congress, from its initial introduction in 1956 to final Congressional passage in 1964 and enactment by President Lyndon Johnson on September 3rd of that year. Sig testified in favor of the wilderness bill at the very first Congressional hearing in 1957, and again before the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee in 1963 as the legislation neared the end of its marathon journey through Congress. His testimony, reproduced in the accompanying article, has not been published anywhere since it first appeared in the Senate hearing record in 1963.

This 1963 testimony contains some classic Sigurd Olson prose. Typical of Sig, he did not delve into the details of the various provisions, but wrote instead of some of the intangible values of wilderness and the need to preserve them. "You can put a price tag on board feet of timber, electric power, minerals, or fossil fuels, but you cannot make graphs or compilations of

statistics of esthetic, spiritual, or recreational values," he told the Senate committee.

At the end of his statement, Sig quoted an old Greek proverb he cited frequently in many of his 1963-64 writings, "Life is a gift of nature, but a beautiful life is a gift of wisdom." Sig then concluded his testimony by writing, "I cannot imagine a beautiful life in America without open space, natural beauty, and wilderness, but it will take wisdom and courage to make this possible and vision to pass the gift on to those to come."

Those words ring true still today. ●

—Kevin Proescholdt is the conservation director for Wilderness Watch, a national nonprofit wilderness conservation organization at www.wildernesswatch.org. He also serves on the LPF's National Advisory Board. Kevin gave a presentation about Sigurd Olson and the national wilderness movement at the National 50th Anniversary Wilderness Conference held in Albuquerque from Oct. 15-19, 2014.

Sig Testifies (Continued from page 1)

people. Though some of us now live within the confines of great metropolitan complexes, within us all is a powerful need for the out of doors that has not been changed. Being able to satisfy that need periodically is a spiritual necessity now, and for generations to come it will be even more so. Wilderness provides that opportunity.

We of this generation have no right to deprive those who come after us the privilege of wilderness experience. The choice is ours, for never again will our people be faced with the decision. If we fail now to give protection to what wilderness remains or to establish new areas to meet the growing need, then we have not recognized our responsibility to the future. This is our last opportunity. If we fail to act, then wilderness as we have known it is doomed.

There are those who say, why a Wilderness Preservation System when we have Government agencies such as the U. S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service whose work is to take care of the land entrusted to them? These agencies, they say, are doing a fine job; cannot we trust them to continue? Why are we so concerned?

The answer to those questions is simple. While we have great admiration for the agencies which have established wilderness regions and so far have protected them, we know they are held only by administrative decree and regulations which could be changed by the stroke of a pen. Pressures upon all such areas will become so great in the years to come it may be impossible for any governmental agency, no matter how fine its record or how dedicated its staff, to resist the demands for industrial utilization.

Without a wilderness preservation system, in which agencies are given a strong national mandate to protect it, I am convinced it will be impossible to hold the line for the simple reason that intangible values cannot be weighted or measured by conventional standards. You can put a price tag on board feet of timber, electric power, minerals, or fossil fuels, but you cannot make graphs or compilations of statistics of esthetic, spiritual, or recreational values. While these have much to do with human happiness and richness of living and while existence without them is barren and colorless, it is difficult to substantiate their worth even though we realize that we as Americans will lose some of our character if all evidence of the old frontier is gone.

There is so little wild country left, not more than 2 percent of our total land mass. Surely, we can afford to save this much of the original America for the rejuvenation of the people when urban living makes them long for the open spaces. I urge the committee to report out S. 4 and to make it as strong and effective a wilderness bill as possible. Someone said long ago, "Life is a gift of nature, but a beautiful life is a gift of wisdom." I cannot imagine a beautiful life in America without open space, natural beauty, and wilderness, but it will take wisdom and courage to make this possible and vision to pass the gift on to those to come. ●

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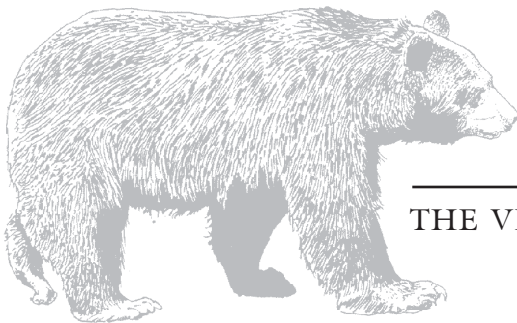
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