



Environmental Policy

Photos, Poetry, and Field Studies

Leveled Assessment ____/4

Name:

Section:

Score: ____/5

Directions: In groups of three you will be looking at three different people who were able to use their skills as non-politicians to create political change. You can either do all three together, or split up the work and teach your groupmates about the person you read about.

Ansel Adams – Photographer

When photographer Ansel Adams looked through his camera lens, he saw more than Yosemite's rocks, trees, and rivers. He saw art. Hues of wildness surfaced in this great American photographer's stunning black-and-white prints. And for most of his life, Yosemite National Park was Adams' chief source of inspiration.

Born in San Francisco in 1902, Adams was the grandson of a wealthy timber baron. Unfortunately, most of the family fortune was lost in the 1906 earthquake and the national banking panic the following year. An only child, Adams was raised by his older parents and live-in aunt. He lived a fairly normal childhood until the eighth grade when his father recognized that Ansel was having difficulty fitting in at school. A shy introvert with big ears and a deformed nose, young Ansel may have also suffered from a hyperactive disorder or dyslexia. Whatever the cause, the elder Adams determined that it would be more productive if his socially awkward son was tutored at home. He initiated a classical education plan for Ansel that included piano lessons and studying Greek.

While sick in bed with a cold one day at age 14, Ansel read a book that would eventually change his life. James Mason Hutchings' 496-page *In the Heart of the Sierras* caught Adams' imagination, and he soon managed to convince his parents to vacation in Yosemite National Park. By this time, he already had developed a love of nature, walking amid sand dunes outside his home near the picturesque Golden Gate. Equipped with a simple Kodak Brownie camera his parents gave him in 1916, the young Yosemite visitor tramped through the park's mountains, snapping the first images of what would become a lifetime of incredible artistic productivity.

Nature, and Yosemite in particular, served as a place of healing for Adams who survived the deadly Spanish influenza in 1919. That same year, he joined the Sierra Club and then spent six summers accompanying High Sierra tour groups as trip photographer. He'd place the Half Dome cable system up each season, beginning with the cables' first appearance in 1919, so hikers could ascend the straight-up granite slope. For several years, Adams was caretaker of the Sierra Club's LeConte Memorial Lodge (now known as the Yosemite Conservation Heritage Center) in Yosemite Valley. He was deeply influenced by the organization's environmental credo, and his first published photographs appeared in the Club's 1922 Bulletin.

In 1927, Adams received critical acclaim for his startling image of a Yosemite landmark. Shot in fading light with a red filter, "Monolith, the Face of Half Dome" yielded an image that was almost surreal. Before he tripped the shutter, Adams had visualized already what the developed image would look like: "a brooding form, with deep shadows and a distant sharp white peak against a dark sky." For the rest of his career, Adams would be associated with this masterpiece and the techniques he used to produce it. Despite this success as a photographer, Adams lived in two professional worlds, functioning for years as both a photographer and a classical pianist, which he had been schooled to become from a young age.

Adams married Virginia Best in 1928 after a long courtship. At the time, Virginia was an aspiring singer, and Ansel, the concert pianist shared her love of music. She also happened to be the daughter of landscape painter Harry Cassie Best. Best's Studio in Yosemite Valley was a convenient place for Adams to display his photography, and seven years after their marriage, Virginia inherited the business. The couple had two children, Michael and Anne, who grew up in the Valley. The children eventually also became involved in the family business, renamed it The Ansel Adams Gallery and passed it onto their children.

Adams worked throughout his life as a commercial photographer, taking assignments from the National Park Service and companies such as Kodak, Zeiss, IBM, AT&T, and Life and Fortune magazines. During the 1930s, the park's concessionaire, Yosemite Park and Curry Company, hired Adams to photograph skiing, ice skating and sledding events for publication in its winter tourism promotions. And, before the U.S. Navy temporarily converted The Ahwahnee hotel into a hospital in 1943, the YP&C Co. paid Adams to complete an extensive photographic inventory of the structure.

With other nationally known photographers like Edward Weston in an exclusive Group f/64 club, Adams defined photography as a pure art form rather than a derivative of other art forms. The great American artist's darkroom techniques-through dodging and burning-allowed him to see the image in his mind's eye as a final print. "That's the drama, the expertise of what he could accomplish that no one else was able to do," said Michael Adams, Ansel's son who is a retired physician of Carmel, California. His father, he added, would have embraced today's easily manipulated photo techniques: "I think that he would have loved digital."

As Adams matured, his black-and-white images became associated with polarized political issues. With the Sierra Club, he advocated in 1936 for the establishment of Kings Canyon as a national park. His images of the Kings and Kern rivers were used effectively in Washington D.C. during Congressional discussions that ultimately yielded the 1940 legislation founding Kings Canyon National Park. In 1943, Adams boldly photo-documented Manzanar, a Japanese-American internment camp at his own expense, refusing government funding.

Adams died in 1984 in Monterey, California. Shortly after his death, the Minarets Wilderness south of Yosemite National Park was renamed the Ansel Adams Wilderness in his honor. The following year an 11,760-foot peak on the edge of Yosemite was named Mount Ansel Adams. Perhaps the most fitting honor was given by his friend, President Jimmy Carter, in 1980 when Adams received the Presidential Medal of Freedom: "Drawn to the beauty of nature's monuments, he is regarded by environmentalists as a monument himself, and by photographers as a national institution. It is through his foresight and fortitude that so much of America has been saved for future Americans."

View timeline of Ansel Adams' life and Virginia Best Adams, both from PBS' American Experience documentary series.

Source

Alinder, Mary Street, 1996. Ansel Adams: A Biography. New York: Henry Holt & Company, Inc..

Adolph Murie – Biologist

Adolph Murie has been called "Denali's Wilderness Conscience." His life's work has profoundly shaped wildlife management policies and wilderness conservation in Denali National Park and Preserve (originally named Mount McKinley National Park).

Born in 1899 in Moorhead, Minnesota, Adolph first came to Alaska in 1922 to assist his older half-brother Olaus with a caribou study in the Brooks Range. In 1922 and 1923, the brothers attempted to capture caribou bulls in Mt. McKinley National Park as part of a project to enhance domestic reindeer by breeding them with the larger caribou. Adolph graduated from Concordia College in 1925 with a degree in biology, and the following three summers worked as a seasonal ranger in Glacier National Park. After completing his dissertation on the ecological relationships of deer mouse subspecies, he received a Ph. D. from the University of Michigan in 1929.

In 1932 Adolph married Louise Gillette. Adolph's half-brother Olaus married Louise's half-sister Margaret "Mardy" Thomas. Both couples focused their work on wildlife ecology and wilderness conservation.

Adolph was hired in 1934 as a wildlife biologist for the National Park Service (NPS). He studied a variety of species in several park units, including a study of coyote ecology in Yellowstone National Park in 1937.

The Wolf-Sheep Controversy

In the 1920s and 30s wildlife management policy within the NPS was evolving from a predator-control stance to a philosophy of preservation of intact ecosystems, an idea contrary to widely held beliefs. At McKinley Park the Dall sheep population experienced a significant decline in the early 1930s and wolf predation was blamed as the cause. In need of adequate information to support wildlife management decisions, the NPS assigned Adolph Murie to study the wolf-sheep relationship. Adolph arrived at McKinley Park in April 1939 and conducted in-depth field studies through October. He returned in April 1940 and for the next 15 months he focused not only on the wolves and sheep, but the greater ecosystem of interrelated species.

Adolph concluded from his two-year study that the sheep population decline was caused by severe late-winter weather and not wolf predation, and that predators played an important role in an intact ecosystem. This information enabled park managers to eliminate predator control in McKinley Park. He published the results of his study as a government bulletin, *The Wolves of Mount McKinley*, in 1944. A classic ecological study, the book presented the first in-depth study of wolves and their interrelations with other species.

Field Biologist

Adolph utilized basic field techniques in McKinley Park. He hiked throughout the park, spent hours observing wildlife behavior, and kept detailed field journals. He collected and analyzed scat to identify food sources, and collected skulls and bones to determine age, sex and health. He photographed wildlife, tracks and habitat.

Beginning the summer of 1940, Adolph brought his family with him to the park. They lived at cabins along the park road during summers and at park headquarters in winter until fall 1941. Adolph served as year-round park biologist from 1947 to late 1950. Along with other NPS assignments, he continued to monitor wildlife populations at McKinley Park through the 1950s. With a winter home for his family in Oregon, he served as the park's biologist from 1959 until his retirement in January 1965. Adolph and Louise spent six more summers at the park.

Adolph's wife Louise described his work in the park:

"Ade [as he was known to his friends] spent many hours with telescope and binoculars watching the interactions of the various species of wildlife. It was his habit, after the evening meal, to write in his journal details of each day in considerable detail. But at the same time he was interacting with the people who visited the park, for he met and talked with many of the visitors from all parts of the world, and discussed with them the values inherent in parks. He was always a champion of the national park idea, and expressed the thought that the lands therein should be preserved in their natural condition."

Conservationist and Wilderness Advocate

To inform and promote appreciation of wildlife and wilderness, Adolph wrote articles for popular conservation magazines and authored books about McKinley's mammals and birds. His wildlife movies were made into an interpretive film that he presented for park visitors. He recognized the importance of habitat preservation to support intact ecosystems and believed that erosion of wilderness negatively affected natural systems. He consulted on planning studies, advocated for park boundary extensions, and favored restricted human developments in the park.

Adolph opposed many of the 1950s development projects proposed for the park. He advocated for the preservation of habitat and wilderness spirit and opposed a Savage River hotel development, constructed trails, and roadside signs, considering them to be "unnecessary intrusions." His opposition to the road improvement plans marked a major transition in the park's history, elevating the park's wilderness character as a major value. The park road today reflects his advocacy.

Murie Legacy

As a scientist Adolph Murie crafted an ecological approach to wildlife management for the park, as a wilderness advocate he fashioned a defining wilderness philosophy, and as an author he effectively shared his observations and philosophy. He was awarded the Department of the Interior's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, in 1965. He died on August 16, 1974.

The Murie Science and Learning Center, a collaborative entity between the National Park Service and its scientific and educational partners, strives to promote, support and communicate scientific research in Alaska's national parks. The Center bears the Murie name as an acknowledgment of Adolph's work and the contributions of other members of the Murie family, who served as passionate advocates for the biological integrity of our national parklands.

John Muir – Poet

John Muir has inspired Yosemite's travelers to see under the surface through his poetic imagery: "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine into trees." Muir, who came to California seeking the solitude of nature, decided to stay—dabbling as a glaciologist, a wilderness activist, and a writer who published persuasive ecological articles with a quill made from a golden eagle feather found on Yosemite's Mount Hoffmann.

Born in Scotland in 1838, Muir immigrated to Wisconsin with his family when he was 11 years old. Life on the homestead did not inspire him, and Muir soon found employment in a factory. The change proved to be inspiring but in an entirely unexpected way. After he was nearly blinded by an industrial accident, Muir found himself driven to learn everything he could about a world unaltered by man or machine. He briefly studied natural sciences at the University of Wisconsin but, ultimately, chose to spend his lifetime enrolled in what he called the "University of Wilderness."

Muir first visited Yosemite in 1868. He was so impressed with his week's visit that he decided to return the following year, finding work as a ranch hand, as he settled in the area. The next year, he landed a shepherd job for \$30 per month that suited him fine. While Muir guided a flock of 2,000 sheep to the Tuolumne Meadows in the High Sierra, he studied the flora and fauna and sketched the mountain scenery. (His experiences and illustrations were later published in *My First Summer in the Sierra*.) After a stint as a shepherd, Muir found regular work at a newly constructed sawmill alongside the present-day Lower Yosemite Fall trail in the Valley. During the two years he worked at the mill owned by James Mason Hutchings, Muir started building his own Yosemite Creek cabin, if only so he could hear the sound of the water as he slept. Muir's newfound prominence as a Yosemite spokesman bothered Hutchings, who fancied himself the definitive authority on the subject. Tempers flared, and Muir quit in 1871.

In September 1871, two months after leaving the sawmill, Muir wrote his first article for publication on glaciers, published in the *New York Tribune*. His ability to cultivate connections with literary, scientific, and artistic celebrities rapidly enhanced Muir's reputation as a naturalist. Botanists Asa Gray and Albert Kellogg, artist William Kieth, poetess Ina Coolbrith, editors Charles Warren Stoddard and Henry George, writer Jeanne Carr, educators J.B. McChesney and John Swett, and photographer J.J. Reilly all became early confidants.

Throughout the 1870s, the popularity of Muir's newspaper publications grew steadily. The prolific writer became particularly concerned about natural landscape preservation. Published in the *Sacramento Record-Union* in 1876, "In God's First Temples: How Shall We Preserve Our Forests?" chided California legislators for standing by while the state's woodlands were recklessly depleted. During the 1880s, he focused his attention on the destruction of natural resources in areas surrounding the state-administered Yosemite Grant, set aside in 1864. Muir was alarmed at the extensive damage livestock animals caused to the delicate High Sierra ecosystems, especially the "hoofed locusts" he had so carefully guarded a few years earlier.

In 1889, Muir took Robert Underwood Johnson, editor of Century Magazine, to Tuolumne Meadows so he could see how sheep were damaging the land. Muir convinced Johnson that the area could only be saved if it was incorporated into a national park. Johnson’s publication of Muir’s exposés sparked a bill in the U.S. Congress that proposed creating a new federally administered park surrounding the old Yosemite Grant. Yosemite National Park became a reality in 1890.

While in the midst of his environmental efforts that turned political, Muir’s match-making friend, Jeanne Carr, insisted that the bachelor find a mate. Muir married Louisa Strentzel in 1880. Nine years his junior, “Louie” was the 32-year-old daughter of a notable Polish horticulturist and fruit ranch owner in Martinez, California. After his marriage, Muir’s visits to Yosemite became less frequent, but Muir returned with his wife to Yosemite in 1884. Louie’s fear of bears and her difficulty climbing at Muir’s pace, however, made her first trip to Yosemite her last.

The wedded Muir continued to pursue his scientific study with fervor, and just three months after his marriage, he traveled to Alaska as a correspondent for the San Francisco Bulletin and again the following year with the Bulletin team to look for the lost naval exploration ship USS Jeanette. Continuing adventures out of state, Muir achieved an historic ascent of Mount Rainier in Washington in 1888 and numerous journeys to Alaska.

Theodore Roosevelt, left, joins John Muir on Overhanging Rock.

The last 25 years of Muir’s life were consumed with constant travel, writing, and oversight of the Sierra Club—for which he served as president from its creation in 1892. He lobbied successfully for the creation of Yosemite Park in 1890 and then asked for additional protections when he toured President Theodore Roosevelt in the park in 1903. Muir’s persuasive words to Roosevelt and state authorities led to the return of Yosemite Grant to the federal government in 1906. His published writings were also instrumental in the creation of Grand Canyon and Sequoia national parks.

At the end of his life, Muir and the Sierra Club fought a bitter and ultimately unsuccessful crusade against construction of the O’Shaughnessy Dam in the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. This was reportedly the first major battle of the environmental movement. On Christmas Eve, 1914—just more than a year after Congress authorized the dam’s construction—Muir died. Even though he died in a Los Angeles hospital, the great wanderer had remained active and on the move until the last few months of his life.

Although Muir only truly lived in Yosemite for a few years, from 1868 to 1874, his short time in the Sierra changed him forever more. Muir has inspired us to protect natural areas not for their beauty alone but also for their ecological importance. In *The Yosemite*, published in 1912, he wrote: “But no temple made with hands can compare with Yosemite. Every rock in its wall seems to glow with life.”

Thought Questions

	John Muir	Adolph Murie	Ansel Adams
1.Explain the person's background (education, other jobs worked, past experiences that contribute to career path)			
2. Explain the type of work that they did.			

3. What was the effect of their work and how did their work lead to governmental changes? What type of changes?			