

INTRODUCTION

As he traveled east across north central Germany in mid April 1945 in the comfort of a sedan, Major Charles Kindleberger, an intelligence officer with the US Twelfth Army Group and later one of the most influential economists and economic historians of his time, marveled at the “beautiful view of a beautiful countryside that the autobahn affords.” True, there were signs of war everywhere: en route from Frankfurt to Dora Mittelbau, the elaborate underground factory near Nordhausen where the Nazi regime manufactured V-weapons using forced labor, Kindleberger took in scenes of fuel dumps and destroyed bridges, of “Germans moving in all directions, possessions piled high on carts,” of “roads strewn with foreigners . . . in every ditch . . . resting, thinking, waiting, worrying.” But there also was much attractive, orderly countryside that had escaped the ravages of war. “This is a lovely time of year at most places in the northern hemisphere,” he wrote in a letter home to his wife, “But the well-cultivated fields of German farmers who put prodigious amounts of work into the preparation of the land . . . the lack of any waste land, the trimness of cultivated forests free from underbrush and with spaced trees growing straight and tall, make the scenery viewed from the autobahn, skirting all cities, something quite magical and apart.”¹

As Kindleberger glided along the highway over the rolling hills of central Germany, he recalled the parkways that meandered through the hilly landscapes of the American Northeast. The images he took in of carefully tended countryside were reminiscent of places back home, and yet they seemed uniquely German to him, shaped by that people’s supposed penchant for hard work, thrift, and order. Viewed from the window of a car, the German countryside was lovely scenery suspended in time in an otherly realm, one that remained unmarked by the harsh realities of the present and untainted by the cruelties of the recent past. But the manicured fields and timber plantations that Kindleberger found “magical” in their visual effect were physical spaces that had been shaped continuously over centuries, influenced by changing visions of nature and by shifting political, social, and economic contexts.

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Kindleberger was not unique in using the physical appearance of landscapes to make judgments about the cultural values and temperament of the people who inhabited them. Influenced by the legacy of Romanticism and the movement to protect local or homeland landscapes (*Heimatschutzbewegung*) that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, German conservationists long had assumed that the strength and character of people were reflected in and dependent upon the beauty and health of the landscapes they occupied. At the end of the most destructive war in modern history, they, like Kindleberger, viewed their managed forests and ordered farms as politically neutral places offering sanctuary from the chaos and despair of the present. Unsullied by the recent past, but displaying the indelible mark of human uses in better, more distant times, nature seemed to be a source of “spiritual strength for clearing away the rubble in the cities and in souls” and a fount of hope for healing society and rebuilding a stable economy and polity.²

That was in 1945. What happened to nature, and to the practice of conservation, after Germany was divided and became even more industrialized, urban, and prosperous within a generation? This study seeks to answer this question by focusing on developments in conservation in West Germany after the collapse of National Socialism and before the emergence of the ecology movement and the Green Party. The chapters that follow show how a predominantly conservative, often nationalistic cause (and for some in the interwar years, a racially justified one) gradually became associated more clearly with the political left and the international movement to protect the global environment, though without losing its traditional base of support among social conservatives and without completely abandoning its critique of modern civilization. By situating conservation in the mainstream of West German political and cultural history, the study refutes the assumption that protecting nature (*Naturschutz*) was ineffective after 1945 because of too close an association with National Socialism. *Naturschutz* emerged from the war somewhat tainted, but no more so than other activities that had been unevenly coordinated by the Nazis.³ Admittedly, postwar conservationists never commanded a mass following. And they lost many battles during the so-called Miracle Years when economic growth and western European integration were commanding priorities of state and society. Yet conservationists were resilient. Forced by necessity to change, those involved in state-sponsored conservation institutionalized and professionalized their efforts, while several private groups adopted a more confrontational message and style and broadened their membership base. Such changes assured conservationists a strong position of transitioning, rather than vanishing, during the shift to left-leaning environmental protection (*Umweltschutz*) in the 1970s.

There is no book length account in English that focuses exclusively on the thought, goals, and day-to-day activities of conservationists during the critical

years between 1945 and 1975. A study that examines continuity and change in Germany's long tradition of protecting nature after the Nazis and before the Greens has been made more important with the recent publication of numerous books and edited collections on nature and environmental protection under National Socialism. These studies emphasize that the Nazi regime implemented some "green" reforms (sometimes in the service of racial ideology), but rarely was it done consistently. In addition, the regime did not co-opt preservationists fully or uniformly, especially because of the persistence of regional identities.⁴ Precisely because of these realities, conservationists resumed their work after the war with little interruption, as recent research on the post-1945 era by German scholars has shown.⁵ These studies, as well as others that address the postwar years in their long range view of nature and environmental protection, also make clear that the 1950s and 1960s did not lack people with an environmental awareness or an ecological consciousness according to today's understanding of those phrases. What conservationists lacked during the boom years was a political climate and mass following that would allow them to transform their awareness into policies that provided better protection for nature and people.⁶

Despite acknowledging increased activity to protect nature and the environment, some accounts of the postwar years imply that "old" conservation, with its undeniable elitism and social conservatism was not only distinct from, but also far less effective than, the "new" left-leaning, anti-nuclear, grassroots environmentalism that emerged in the 1970s.⁷ Without a doubt, the emphasis that activists of the 1970s placed on participatory democracy and deep social reform was distinct and set the modern environmental movement apart from the conservation tradition. But viewing activists of the late 1960s and 1970s as the norm against which conservationists of the 1950s and 1960s are measured leads to the predictable conclusion that these latter people—most of them, anyway—failed to measure up most of the time. In addition, highlighting the rebellious rhetoric and sensational protests associated with modern environmentalism overshadows more subtle shifts in language, thought, and daily activity that occurred within the conservation tradition prior to the 1970s.

Another tendency in the writing of conservation history involves adopting the story line of conservationists themselves, depicting their efforts to protect nature as an heroic, moral struggle by a marginalized minority against formidable, unprincipled foes—typically industrial capitalism or technology.⁸ Although conservationists were a minority, they were not as marginalized as they claimed. But if they lacked support (and they often did), it was partly their own fault. Convinced that they knew how to defend nature better than most people, they resisted forming alliances with groups that did not share their conservative world view.⁹ Yet as historian Michael Bess has argued in his study of postwar France, conflicts over the use of nature in development projects typically ended in compromises in which defenders of nature and proponents of technology had partial gains and losses.

“[E]ither through political compromise or through the sheer inertia of decision-making processes in a mass democracy,” he writes, “an outcome emerged that borrowed elements from both visions. . . .” Over many years, the two seemingly opposing perspectives—the pro-nature and the pro-technology—intermingled, contributing to “the *partial* greening of the mainstream, in which neither side emerged wholly satisfied nor utterly dismayed, but in which a whole new complex of discourses and institutions nonetheless came into being.” Such an assessment is relevant also in the West German context. Bess’s findings for postwar France invite historians of Germany to examine the Miracle Years with an eye toward discovering how conservationists and their real and perceived opponents participated in creating what Bess calls “the light-green society,” i.e., a society that aspires to be “traditional *and* modern, green *and* mass-consumerist” simultaneously.¹⁰

The challenge of reconciling these seemingly opposing goals was not entirely new. Yet the need to harmonize them appeared increasingly urgent in the postwar era. Beginning in the 1950s, industrialized nations around the world experienced an accelerated increase in gross domestic product, energy consumption, land use, trash accumulation, and pollution of water, soil, and air, a complex of problems that European environmental historians have dubbed the “1950s Syndrome.” The convergence of these developments marked the beginning of the shift from an industrial to a mass consumer society, with significant changes in lifestyle and consumption that exacerbated environmental deterioration and caused irreversible harm in some cases.¹¹ Earlier periods in history had experienced similar upheavals, for example after 1870 and 1920, but the pace of change was more rapid after 1945, and the invasiveness of development projects greater.¹²

Demographics also deepened their impact. Between the late 1940s and the early 1970s, the population of West Germany climbed from 49 million to over 60 million. With an average of 247 people per square kilometer in 1970, West Germany ranked seventh among the world’s most densely populated nations. By 1970, one-third of the country’s inhabitants lived in cities of over 100,000 and roughly 90 percent of the population earned a living in industry or the service sector. Only 8.5 percent of West Germans made a living from agriculture, down from 23 percent two decades earlier. Commerce and industry contributed most to the Federal Republic’s powerful economic position behind only the United States and Japan.¹³ But there was a price to pay for this prosperity and economic influence.

Already in the early 1960s, West German conservationists warned that 260 square kilometers of countryside were lost annually to support the expansion of industry, housing, transportation, and the military. More of the country was adversely affected by the “garbage of civilization” in the form of noise, dust, and harmful pollutants. And there was no indication that the pace of these negative changes would slow.¹⁴ As West Germany became more densely populated, urbanized, industrialized, and polluted, people involved in preservation broadened the range of their activities, getting more involved in land

use and spatial planning (*Raumordnung*) in the 1960s before finding their work subsumed under, and transformed by, the government's program to protect the human environment (*Umweltschutz*) in the early 1970s. Using the shift in public discourse from *Naturschutz* to *Umweltschutz* as a broad framework, this study identifies continuities and incremental changes in conservationists' views and treatment of nature as they sought to modernize their movement in the challenging postwar context.

In describing the activities of those involved in protecting nature this study faces something of a challenge because the German terms are more precise than those in English and because the meanings given to even the most basic concepts fluctuated over time and depended on the context in which they were used. In general, the study avoids using "environmental protection" until the term becomes a part of public discourse around 1970. The text assumes that the term "conservation" is appropriate only when activities include preservation *and* stewardship of land and natural resources. Applying this latter term is problematic because there is no German word that directly translates as "conservation," or resource management, as it was defined by Anglo-Americans. Those involved in protecting and caring for nature in West Germany initially employed the cumbersome pairing, "nature preservation" (*Naturschutz*) and "landscape care" (*Landschaftspflege*), as the German equivalent. However awkward the phrasing, it captured the coming together of two approaches toward tending nature in Germany, one emphasizing the preservation of species and small spaces in the interest of historic preservation and scientific research, the other focusing on shaping rural landscapes in their entirety to accommodate economic modernization. With no wilderness to speak of, conservationists in Germany and elsewhere in Europe had long focused on protecting nature in the form of "cultural landscapes," i.e., aesthetically pleasing parts of the countryside that seemed to exhibit the harmonious interplay of natural forces and centuries of traditional human uses.¹⁵

In the first decades of the twentieth century, some German preservationists had advocated landscape care as a way to reform traditional nature protection, broadening its scope beyond the preservation of individual natural objects, species, and small reserves to include the protection and planned use of entire landscapes, including their urban, industrial features. Germans and other Europeans sought to protect what many environmental historians today would call "hybrid landscapes," a phrase that refers to areas displaying varying combinations of the natural and the human engineered.¹⁶ In industrial nations during the twentieth century, the natural and the engineered intersected more frequently, and at an accelerated pace after the 1950s, resulting in landscapes that seemed increasingly artificial. Thus, West German conservationists faced a significant challenge during the Miracle Years in trying to preserve or restore varying degrees of naturalness to landscapes that ranged from predominantly rural to primarily urban and industrial.

The pairing of the terms *Naturschutz* and *Landschaftspflege* more intentionally after World War II reflected the continued influence of landscape architects, who occupied an important place in early twentieth century preservation and whose small profession rose to prominence under National Socialism.¹⁷ Yet the conjoining of these familiar concepts also expressed the attempt to develop a more flexible response to the challenge of protecting nature and natural resources when the times required their temporary exploitation. After 1945, resource conservation came to be associated with what Germans referred to as *Naturschutz* and *Landschaftspflege*, because of critical shortages of food, fuel, and raw materials that accompanied the country's economic and political collapse, but also because of the role that North America played in addressing the global scarcity of resources in the aftermath of war.

In view of these developments, the study applies the label "conservationist" to those people most actively involved in debates over nature's protection and use in the postwar era. It does so, however, without losing sight of the diversity of occupations (especially forestry, landscape architecture, engineering, and civil service, including pedagogy) and fields of study (most commonly biology, botany, horticulture, zoology, and later, ecology) these people represented. It uses the designation also while remaining sensitive to their sometimes conflicting priorities (such as species preservation, resource conservation, recreation, and land use planning) and to their different levels of commitment to the cause (avocation versus career).

This discussion of terminology is not simply quibbling over concepts. Influenced by the "linguistic turn" in history several years ago, environmental historians acknowledge that the language available to people at a given time to talk about nature does not merely reflect material reality. Nature, the "real thing," cannot be separated from the meanings people have assigned to it over time. Words used in reference to nature communicate mental images of the shape that nature is supposed to take (e.g., a "healthy landscape," a "green environment," or a protected "fragile biotope") and express perceptions of nature's reality based on the current state of knowledge ("a living river" in 1950s' parlance became "a river ecosystem" a decade later, for example). Furthermore, the terms employed in relation to nature's treatment communicate what is being done or what people think ought to be done to shape it according to agreed upon standards (such as "preservation," which implies non-use or "landscape care," which suggests guided use). But when accepted terms no longer capture changing material realities, there is a shift in discourse, one that not only reflects those changes, but also simultaneously facilitates the development of new ways of thinking and acting.¹⁸ When West German conservationists talked about protecting "primeval landscapes of the homeland," about improving the "health and productivity of landscapes where people lived, worked, and relaxed," about protecting humans' "endangered living space," about "rationally managing ecosystems of the biosphere," and finally, about securing a "healthy

environment,” they communicated the shift away from an aesthetic and provincial strategy in caring for nature toward an approach that was presumably more scientific, objective, and universal. This process of modernization was neither even nor without conflict, but it was underway before the emergence of the modern environmental movement.

Although scholars have scrutinized the concept “nature” and the meanings associated with “landscape”¹⁹ and “ecology,”²⁰ they have been less critical of the term “environment.” But as historian Douglas Weiner has observed, “Because ‘the environment’ is a term that has a universal ring to it and pretends to embrace the general good, it serves as an excellent mask for particular interests.”²¹ Moreover, as another scholar has written, the environment (*Umwelt*) is “a highly anthropocentric term that encourages the notion that nature is strictly ‘ours’—i.e., ‘our environment.’ Furthermore, since *environment* literally means *surroundings*, it is obviously a rather bland and inadequate term to use in reference to nature.”²²

In 1970, West German conservationists came to some of the same conclusions, but they could not prevent the adoption of “environmental protection,” a slogan that captured the new concern to protect human beings in their increasingly imperiled surroundings. As worsening pollution gave tangibility to the surroundings that people heretofore had little noticed, the idea of “protecting the environment” (more so than “protecting nature”) seemed urgently necessary. And to the inhabitants of urban areas that were perceived to be unhealthy—and highly engineered—the notion of protecting the environment seemed directly relevant and personal in a way that protecting nature probably never could or would be. But what was the role of nature—as an idea and the thing in and of itself—within the newly invented environment? This study concludes that the invention of the environment in West Germany and elsewhere expressed the widespread realization that humans had become the primary architects of their surroundings. As such, they were responsible for keeping the environment healthy and “natural” to varying degrees. Although there was not one shared ideal of what nature ought to look like, there was broad consensus that it had become something finite and in need of protection.²³

As the West German case illustrates, at its core, protecting the natural world involves a contest for power among groups and institutions who want their subjective views of nature and their ideals about the relationship that humans ought to have with it to prevail. But in democratic societies like West Germany, people must make compromises in deciding what objects, species, spaces, and uses of nature to protect. This study shows that these ongoing compromises contributed to the gradual and partial greening of the mainstream of society even before the emergence of modern environmentalism. It illustrates, too, how these compromises reflected not only thoughts and ideas about nature, but laws and institutions. Thus, this study seeks to navigate between the “envisioned” and

the material, between conservationists' thoughts and words on the one hand, and their actions as determined by legal and administrative arrangements, on the other. As Joachim Radkau has stressed in an appeal for more attention to institutions in environmental history, "it is important to distinguish between the history of the imagination, on the one hand, and the history of the real, effective relations between man and nature, on the other." David Blackbourn, too, has cautioned that "in the era after the 'linguistic turn' it is important to defend the legitimacy of a materialist history" while continuing to take into account the "mental geographies and constructs that humans place on the natural world."²⁴

The mental geographies that shaped conservationists' actions after 1945 were marked more by constancy than by change. Those responsible for conservation resumed their work after the war with a high degree of continuity in terms of laws, personnel, and ideology. The Reich Nature Protection Law of 1935 remained in effect and the administrative arrangement it provided for survived in modified form until the 1970s. Under the Federal Republic, however, the states resumed their traditional hold over conservation, reversing the centralization that had occurred under National Socialism. Despite opposition from some, postwar refederalization sometimes worked to the advantage of conservationists. In West Germany, and traditionally in Central Europe, parties wanting to use natural resources must secure approval through local licensing hearings in which those affected have the opportunity to raise objections, including conservation officials. But when a distant authority makes decisions about use, often with limited knowledge of local conditions, locals have fewer means to shape the outcome.²⁵

Continuity, more so than change, was also evident in the profile of conservationists. Many of the men (there were few women) who shaped postwar conservation into the 1960s came from the generation born around 1900, in the latter years of the Wilhelmine Empire, and had been responsible for nature's care since the 1920s and 1930s. They tended to be solidly middle class and conservative in their politics. Many of them, but by no means all, were guided by an aesthetic of nature that had been shaped by the homeland preservation movement and by their shared experiences in the back-to-nature youth movement of the 1910s and 1920s. Their ideal of nature most often took the form of carefully tended agrarian landscapes dating from before 1850 and displaying a harmonious blending of meadows, fields and hedgerows, orchards and patches of forest, and tidy villages made quaint by regional architecture. Walking regularly in the solitude of nature, they believed, fostered introspection and aided in cultivating self-reliant individuals capable of combating the alienation associated with modernity and urban mass society. So, too, would a lifestyle of temperance and moderation. Into the 1960s, leading conservationists, Social Democrats among them, embraced this set of assumptions, promoting them as a way to strengthen individual moral character, and by extension, foster patriotic citizens loyal to the state—now a democratic one. In general, however, conservationists tended to be

wary of mass democracy, preferring to work behind the scenes to lobby officials and political leaders. They continued to sound elitist in assuming that “rootless” urbanites living in “denatured” cities needed to spend time in the presumably purer realm of nature to regain their sense of well-being. And they never tired of echoing their predecessors in demanding better instruction in the natural sciences to cultivate among the majority of people an appreciation for nature and an understanding of how they should conduct themselves in the outdoors.²⁶

Continuity also was apparent in the lingering popularity among conservationists to protect nature-as-*Heimat*, to use David Blackbourn’s apt phrasing. Although some historians have asserted that homeland preservation lacked influence after the war because of its anti-modern outlook and its supposed corruption by National Socialism, this is not supported by the evidence. During the first postwar decade in West Germany, and for an even longer period in East Germany, conservationists expressed some of their goals in terms of *Heimatschutz*, embracing its inclusiveness, its emphasis on moderation, and its qualified acceptance of modernity.²⁷ As one historian has written, *Heimat* emerged from the “Nazi Reich as a victim, not a perpetrator” and “embod[ie]d the political and social community that could be salvaged from the Nazi ruins.”²⁸ Like “women of the rubble,” who for some symbolized German victimhood and reconstruction, nature of the homeland was viewed as a victim of Nazi and Allied exploitation as well as the source of natural resources essential for rebuilding the nation.²⁹ Whether depicted as idyllic rural settings in popular *Heimat* films of the 1950s, defined as a welcoming home for expellees and returning POWs, reclaimed as the city of origin of wartime evacuees awaiting return, or envisioned as a harmonious blend of fertile landscapes and ordered economic development in the writings of conservationists, “the homeland” represented something good in Germany’s past and offered hope for its future.³⁰ In a time when overt nationalism was taboo, and when few West Germans felt an attachment to their new political boundaries that were presumed to be temporary, the language of *Heimat* provided a familiar and acceptable way to express loyalty to the national community as well as affection for one’s locality or region. For conservationists, protecting nature-as-local-homeland also was a practical goal because the base of support for *Naturschutz* historically had been at the provincial level.

In no way, however, did postwar conservationists want their activities to be viewed merely as an extension of homeland preservation with its broad cultural agenda that only sometimes overlapped with nature’s care. Over the course of the 1950s, protecting nature-as-*Heimat* faded in importance as a goal, replaced by the more scientific-sounding concern to protect the health of landscapes—and by extension, the health of people and the economy. Such a shift reflected the prioritization of scientific and economic considerations in political discourse, as well as the Federal Republic’s integration into Western Europe, a development that made the nativist-sounding aims of *Heimatschutz* less convincing.

Despite striking continuities with early twentieth century preservation, post-war conservationists had little choice but to modify their views and practices in direct response to larger political and economic events and social and environmental conditions. Chapter periodizations in this book help to capture shifts in conservationists' goals and practices as they asserted the value of their work first for economic recovery and democratic renewal, then for public health and spatial planning, and finally, for cleaning up the environment. The study begins with a background chapter that outlines the mixed legacy conservationists inherited in 1945, one that bore the imprint of three different political systems, the Second Empire (1871–1918), the Weimar Republic (1919–1933), and the Nazi Dictatorship (1933–1945). The core of the study is divided into three chronological sections, which include an overarching chapter that examines dominant trends in conservation, and a narrowly focused case study that illustrates these tendencies in greater depth. (Though all three case studies focus on Catholic regions, they can be viewed as representative of general trends.) Each section covers roughly a ten year period that corresponds to political and economic developments shaping West German society as a whole. This periodization is not meant to imply a one-to-one causal relationship between cultural changes and political events or economic cycles. Trends in culture often do not correspond with political or economic ones, though developments in all of these areas affect each other mutually, if unevenly.

The first section of the book examines conservation during the occupation years between 1945 and 1955, when West Germany gained full sovereignty and joined NATO. Chapter 2 examines the reconstruction of state-sponsored and private nature protection, as both resumed their activities with limited interruption. It describes how conservationists continued to view their work in nationalistic and nativist terms, yet also as acts of patriotism that supported the restoration of a comforting homeland, a strong economy, and a stable polity. However conservative conservationists' rhetoric and conduct, the emergence of several new local, regional, and national alliances strengthened the base of support for *Naturschutz* and contributed to the revival of civic life in the conservative political climate of the 1950s. Despite efforts to broaden the scope of conservation to confront the intensified exploitation of water, soil, and forests, the most tangible successes in these years involved traditional preservation at the regional and local levels.

This is illustrated in chapter 3, a case study of the successful effort to protect the Wutach River and gorge near Freiburg im Breisgau from being dammed and drained by a utility company intent on expanding its operations to meet rising demand for electricity. At a time when many West Germans said “no thanks” to politics, conservationists united thousands of supporters in an alliance to protect nature-as-local-*Heimat*, relying on restored democratic institutions to force the company to beat a small retreat. Yet in this and many other conflicts, both sides were forced to reach a “partially green” compromise, to borrow historian Michael Bess's phrasing.

The second section of the book focuses on the economic boom years between 1956 and 1966, when conservationists took steps to modernize and professionalize their efforts in order to guide the country's rapid economic growth in directions less harmful to nature and people. Chapter 4 examines conservationists' concern about the irreversible loss of healthy landscapes (i.e., areas scenic, fertile, and pollution free) at an alarming rate as urban sprawl and pollution blurred the distinction between city and country, and as the ideal of the small farm faded in the reality of industrialized agriculture. Concerned that the country's entire "living space" was at risk, conservationists participated in establishing dozens of nature parks and sought a partnership role in spatial planning (*Raumordnung*), a promising policy tool of the 1960s. Although they did not exert as much influence on territorial planning as they desired, their involvement in decisions over land use often resulted in compromises that benefited nature to some degree.

This is evident in chapter 5, the second case study on canalizing the Mosel River, an engineering project that facilitated Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's foreign policy objective to integrate the Federal Republic into Western Europe. Unlike West Germans embroiled in the regional Wutach conflict, citizens involved in the national debate over the Mosel canal had limited means to shape the decision because it was the chancellor's to make. Although their nativist-sounding appeals to protect the Mosel—a "jewel of the German *Heimat*"—had little impact on federal officials, their warnings about protecting the regional water supply did. Once Adenauer agreed to transform the Mosel into an international shipping lane, conservationists in the profession of landscape planning hoped to guide engineers in restoring a more natural appearance and healthier condition to the mechanized river, but their vision was only partially fulfilled.

The final section of the study examines the turbulent years between 1967 and 1975, a period that began with student unrest and ended after a global energy crisis. Chapter 6 discusses the scientification of conservation (evident in the new concern to manage "ecological systems of the biosphere"), and describes the creation of "the environment" as a legitimate sphere for political action through the environmental program introduced by Chancellor Willy Brandt's social-liberal (SPD/FDP) coalition government. With the invention of "the environment" as a political issue and a tangible object of reform between 1970 and 1971, diverse groups—from officials and scientists to revitalized conservation organizations and new citizens' initiatives—claimed the right to participate in shaping it according to their values and ideas about society and nature. According to a vocal minority of pioneering conservationists, because so many pressures were at work making the environment "artificial," they needed to ensure that parts of it were restored to a presumably more natural state.

The working out of this argument is illustrated in chapter 7, the third case study on establishing West Germany's first national park in the Bavarian Forest, a remote area located along the Iron Curtain. Initially approved of in the

context of regional planning, the national park eventually became a space where preservation and economic development acquired near equal status. After more than a decade of ecological design that restored a supposedly more natural condition to the landscape, a new aesthetic of nature became operable. In the national park, officials eventually adopted a policy of limited interference, protecting the ecological processes at work in order to “let nature be nature,” even if the results were not economically productive or aesthetically pleasing. The decision to let nature go “wild” in a remote corner of this densely populated nation stemmed from an aesthetic of nature that was nurtured by affluence and made acceptable by the perceived loss of nature and the natural.³¹

The study emphasizes that conservationists in the first three decades of the Federal Republic were not marginalized or entirely ineffective. Although they lost many battles and made repeated compromises, they diversified, modernized, and institutionalized their efforts in the challenging postwar context. By participating in the democratic process, they were forced to take a long tradition of protecting nature in more democratic and socially oriented directions, sometimes reluctantly. Yet in doing so, they assured themselves a role in actively shaping the contours of the land in West Germany, whether by establishing nature parks or the country’s first national park. With their steady, often conservative, presence within the mainstream of society, they ensured that at least some of the increasingly mechanized landscapes of the Miracle Years retained, or were restored to, varying degrees of naturalness.

Notes

1. Major C. P. Kindleberger to Sarah Kindleberger, 19 April 1945, letter #170, in Charles P. Kindleberger, *The German Economy, 1945–1947: Charles P. Kindleberger’s Letters from the Field* (Westport, CT: Meckler, 1989), 200–201. On the state’s role in transforming “chaotic” forests into productive timber plantations lacking ecological diversity see James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 11–22.
2. Wilhelm Lienenkämper, “Gedanken zur Tätigkeit der Naturschutzbeauftragten,” *Verhandlungen Deutscher Beauftragter für Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege* (1949): 35 (hereafter *Verhandlungen*). Because not all of the proceedings of conservation commissioners’ annual meeting were published in the same year of the conference, citations will refer to the year of the meeting, not the year of publication. Beginning with the 1968 conference (published in 1970), the proceedings were entitled *Jahrbuch für Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege (JfNL)*. Until then they will be referred to as *Verhandlungen*.
3. For arguments that nature and homeland preservation was discredited see Stefan Körner, “Kontinuum und Bruch: Die Transformation des naturschützerischen Aufgabenverständnisses nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg,” in *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Joachim Radkau and Frank Uekötter (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2003), 422; Arne Andersen,

- “Heimatschutz. Die bürgerliche Naturschutzbewegung,” in *Besiegte Natur: Geschichte der Umwelt im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Franz-Josef Brüggemeier and Thomas Rommelspacher (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1989), 156–57; Rolf Peter Sieferle, *Fortschrittsfeinde? Opposition gegen Technik und Industrie von der Romantik bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1984), 227. For a view challenging the assumption that conservation was discredited after 1945 see Burkhardt Riechers, “Nature Protection during National Socialism,” *Historical Social Research* 29, no. 3 (1996): 52.
4. Frank Uekötter, *The Green and the Brown. A History of Conservation in Nazi Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Franz-Josef Brüggemeier, Mark Cioc, and Thomas Zeller, eds., *How Green Were the Nazis?: Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005); and Radkau and Uekötter, eds., *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*. On the unevenness of co-opting preservationists in the Rhineland see Thomas Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature. Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885–1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).
 5. See especially Jens Ivo Engels, *Naturpolitik in der Bundesrepublik. Ideenwelt und politische Verhaltensstile in Naturschutz und Umweltbewegung 1950–1980* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006). Willi Oberkrome’s “Deutsche Heimat.” *Nationale Konzeption und regionale Praxis von Naturschutz, Landschaftsgestaltung und Kulturpolitik in Westfalen-Lippe und Thüringen (1900–1960)* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004), is one of the few studies that focuses on both Germanys. Essays on continuity and change during the postwar years include those in the volume edited by Franz-Josef Brüggemeier and Jens Ivo Engels, *Natur- und Umweltschutz nach 1945. Konzepte, Konflikte, Kompetenzen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005); and several included in the volume edited by Hans-Werner Frohn and Friedemann Schmoll, *Natur und Staat. Staatlicher Naturschutz in Deutschland 1906–2006* (Bonn: Bundesamt für Naturschutz, 2006). See also Sandra Chaney, “For Nation and Prosperity, Health and a Green Environment: Protecting Nature in West Germany, 1945–70,” in *Nature in German History*, ed. Christof Mauch (New York: Berghahn, 2004), 93–118; Jens Ivo Engels, “‘Hohe Zeit’ und ‘dicker Strich’: Vergangenheitsdeutung und -bewahrung im westdeutschen Naturschutz nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg,” in Radkau and Uekötter, *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 363–404; Körner, “Kontinuum und Bruch,” in Radkau and Uekötter, *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 405–34; Thomas Rohkrämer, “Contemporary Environmentalism and its Links with the German Past,” in *The Culture of German Environmentalism: Anxieties, Visions, Realities*, ed. Axel Goodbody (New York: Berghahn, 2002), 47–62; Thomas Rommelspacher, “Zwischen Heimatschutz und Umweltprotest. Konflikte um Natur, Umwelt und Technik in der BRD 1945–1965,” in *Soziologie als Krisenwissenschaft*, ed. Hans Uske, Hermann Völlings, Jochen Zimmer, and Christof Stracke (Münster: Lit, 1998), 74–95. For an historiographical overview of the postwar years see Frank Uekötter, “Umweltbewegung zwischen dem Ende der nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft und der ‘ökologischen Wende’: Ein Literaturbericht,” *Historical Social Research* 28 (2003): 270–89.
 6. Monika Bergmeier, *Umweltgeschichte der Boomjahre. Das Beispiel Bayern* (Münster: Waxmann, 2002); Kai F. Hünemörder, *Die Frühgeschichte der globalen Umweltkrise und die Formierung der deutschen Umweltpolitik (1950–1973)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004); Frank Uekötter, *Naturschutz im Aufbruch. Eine Geschichte des Naturschutzes in Nordrhein-Westfalen 1945–1980* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2004). Several books that examine nature and environmental issues over the long term devote attention to pollution control, conservation, ecological thought, and environmental policy in the postwar period. See David Blackburn, *The Conquest of Nature. Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany* (New York: Norton, 2006); Franz-Josef Brüggemeier and Thomas Rommelspacher, *Blauer Himmel über der Ruhr. Geschichte der Umwelt im Ruhrgebiet 1840–1990* (Essen: Klartext-Verlag, 1992); Brüggemeier, *Tschernobyl*, 26. April 1986. *Die ökologische Herausforderung* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998); Mark Cioc, *The Rhine. An Eco-Biography, 1815–2000* (Seattle: University of Washington Press,

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7. Rommelspacher, “Zwischen Heimatschutz und Umweltprotest”; Karl Ditt, “Die Anfänge der Umweltpolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland während der 1960er und frühen 1970er Jahre,” in *Demokratisierung und gesellschaftlicher Aufbruch. Die sechziger Jahre als Wendezeit der Bundesrepublik*, ed. Matthias Frese, Julia Paulus, and Karl Tepe (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2003), 305–48.
 8. For a critique of this tendency see Frank Uekötter, “The Old Conservation History—and the New: An Argument for Fresh Perspectives on an Established Topic,” *Historical Social Research* 29, no. 3 (2004): 172; Michael Bess, *The Light-Green Society. Ecology and Technological Modernity in France, 1960–2000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 4.
 9. Engels, *Naturpolitik*, chap. 1.
 10. Bess, *Light-Green Society*, 4.
 11. Christian Pfister, “‘Das 1950er Syndrom’: Zusammenfassung und Synthese,” in *Das 1950er Syndrom. Der Weg in die Konsumgesellschaft*, ed. Pfister (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1995), 23. See also the following publications by Arne Andersen: *Der Traum vom guten Leben. Alltags- und Konsumgeschichte vom Wirtschaftswunder bis heute* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1997); “Mentalitätenwechsel und ökologische Konsequenzen des Konsumismus. Die Durchsetzung der Konsumgesellschaft in den fünfziger Jahren,” in *Europäische Konsumgeschichte: Zur Gesellschafts- und Kulturgeschichte des Konsums (18. bis 20. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Hannes Siegrist, Hartmut Kaelble, and Jürgen Kocka (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1997), 763–91; “Das 50er-Jahre-Syndrom. Umweltfragen in der Demokratisierung des Technikkonsums,” *Technikgeschichte* 65, no. 4 (1998): 329–44. For a view skeptical of the “1950s Syndrome” see Joachim Radkau, *Natur und Macht. Eine Weltgeschichte der Umwelt* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2000).
 12. John R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun. An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World* (New York: Norton, 2000), 4–5; Bess, *The Light-Green Society*, 16; Blackburn, *Conquest*, 327.
 13. Federal Republic of Germany, *Report of the Federal Republic of Germany on the Human Environment Prepared for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment June 1972, Stockholm, Sweden* (Lüdenscheid: Druckhaus Maack KG, 1972), 118, 120, 124; Volker Berghahn, *Modern Germany: Society, Economy and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 226, 253; Hermann Glaser, *Kleine Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945–1989* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1991; Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1991), 175.
 14. Konrad Buchwald, “Landschaftspflege und Naturschutz in der industriellen Gesellschaft,” in *Naturschutz—eine politische Aufgabe?*, ed. Georg Fahrback (Stuttgart: Fink, 1965), 70.
 15. Mark Cioc, “The Impact of the Coal Age on the German Environment: A Review of the Historical Literature,” *Environment and History* 4, no. 1 (1998): 105–24, here 106; Körner, “Kontinuum und Bruch,” in Radkau and Uekötter, *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 418.

16. See, for example, William Cronon's introduction and essay, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed. Cronon (New York: Norton, 1995); Richard White, "From Wilderness to Hybrid Landscapes: The Cultural Turn in Environmental History," *The Historian* 66, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 557–64.
17. On landscape architects and their influence on protecting and shaping nature in the twentieth century see Gert Gröning und Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Die Liebe zur Landschaft*, vol. 1, *Natur in Bewegung. Zur Bedeutung natur- und freiraumorientierter Bewegungen der ersten Hälfte der 20. Jahrhunderts für die Entwicklung der Freiraumplanung* (Munich: Minerva, 1986); Gröning and Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Die Liebe zur Landschaft*, vol. 3, *Der Drang nach Osten. Zur Entwicklung der Landespflege im Nationalsozialismus in den 'eingegliederten Ostgebieten' während des Zweiten Weltkriegs* (Munich: Minerva, 1987); Thomas Zeller, *Straße, Bahn, Panorama. Verkehrswege und Landschaftsveränderung in Deutschland von 1930 bis 1990* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002); Stefan Körner, *Theorie und Methodologie der Landschaftsplanung, Landschaftsarchitektur und sozialwissenschaftlichen Freiraumplanung vom Nationalsozialismus bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin: Technische Universität Berlin, 2002).
18. Literature on the social construction of nature is vast. See Elizabeth Ann R. Bird, "The Social Construction of Nature: Theoretical Approaches to the History of Environmental Problems," *Environmental Review* (Winter 1987): 255–64; Neil Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Ian G. Simmons, *Interpreting Nature. Cultural Constructions of the Environment* (London: Routledge, 1993); Cronon, "Trouble with Wilderness," and other contributors' essays in Cronon, *Uncommon Ground*; Michale E. Soule and Gary Lease, eds., *Reinventing Nature?: Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1995); White, "From Wilderness to Hybrid Landscapes"; Douglas Weiner, "A Death-defying Attempt to Articulate a Coherent Definition of Environmental History," *Environmental History* 10, no. 3 (July 2005): 404–20. For a radical position that proposes eliminating the idea of "nature," see Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). Discussions relevant in the German context include Götz Großklaud and Ernst Oldemeyer, eds., *Natur als Gegenwelt. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Natur* (Karlsruhe: Loeper, 1983); Gernot Böhme, *Natürlich Natur. Über Natur im Zeitalter ihrer technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992); Sandra Schulze Hannöver and Martin Becker, "Natur im Sinn," in *Natur im Sinn. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Naturschutzes*, ed. Stiftung Naturschutzgeschichte (Essen: Klartext-Verlag, 2001), 9–30; Uta Eser, *Der Naturschutz und das Fremde. Ökologische und normative Grundlagen der Umweltethik* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1999).
19. Among many studies of the meanings assigned to "landscape" see Gerhard Hard, "'Landschaft'—Folgerungen aus einigen Ergebnissen einer semantischen Analyse," *Landschaft + Stadt* 4, no. 2 (1972): 77–89; Anne Whiston Spirn, *The Language of Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, eds., *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Knopf, 1995); Norbert Fischer, "Der neue Blick auf die Landschaft: Die Geschichte der Landschaft im Schnittpunkt von Sozial-, Geistes- und Umweltgeschichte," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 36 (1996): 434–42; W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
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- In the German context see Thomas Potthast, *Die Evolution und der Naturschutz. Zum Verhältnis von Evolutionsbiologie, Ökologie und Naturethik* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1999); Potthast, "Wissenschaftliche Ökologie und Naturschutz: Szenen einer Annäherung," in Radkau and Uekötter, *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 225–34; Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke, "Naturschutz und Ökologie im Nationalsozialismus," *Die Alte Stadt*, 10 (1983): 1–17; Jonathan Olsen, *Nature and Nationalism: Right-Wing Ecology and the Politics of Identity in Contemporary Germany* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999); Ludwig Trepl, "Ökologie—eine grüne Leitwissenschaft?" *Kursbuch*, no. 74 (December 1983): 6–27; Trepl, *Geschichte der Ökologie. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main: Atheneum, 1987). In a more general context refer to Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Sierra Club Books, 1977; reprint, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Worster, "The Ecology of Order and Chaos," in *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination*, ed. Worster (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 156–70.
21. Weiner, "Definition of Environmental History," 409.
 22. Evernden, *Social Creation of Nature*, 136, n. 2.
 23. Bess, *Light-Green Society*, 5.
 24. Joachim Radkau, "Germany as a Focus of European 'Particularities' in Environmental History," in *Germany's Nature. Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History*, ed. Thomas Lekan and Thomas Zeller (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 18; David Blackburn, "'Conquests From Barbarism': Taming Nature in Frederick the Great's Prussia," in Mauch, *Nature in German History*, 26.
 25. Radkau, "Germany as a Focus of European 'Particularities,'" in Lekan and Zeller, *Germany's Nature*, 18–21.
 26. Eser, *Der Naturschutz und das Fremde*, 126; Engels, *Naturpolitik*, chap. 1; Engels, "Vergangenheitsdeutung im westdeutschen Naturschutz," in Radkau and Uekötter, *Naturschutz und Nationalsozialismus*, 370–71; Lekan, *Imagining*, 219.
 27. On *Heimatschutz* after World War II compare Arne Andersen, "Heimatschutz. Die bürgerliche Naturschutzbewegung," in *Besiegte Natur*, 156–57; and Sieferle, *Fortschrittsfeinde?*, 227, who contend it was discredited, with Oberkrome, "*Deutsche Heimat*"; and Uekötter, *Green and the Brown*, 195, 205–6, who demonstrate its powerful lure. On its continued use in East Germany see Sandra Chaney, "Protecting Nature in a Divided Nation: Conservation in the Two Germanys, 1945–1972," in Lekan and Zeller, *Germany's Nature*, 220–43; Oberkrome, "*Deutsche Heimat*," 289–389; Jan Palmowski, "Building an East German Nation: The Construction of a Socialist *Heimat*, 1945–1961," *Central European History* 37, no. 3 (September 2004): 365–99.
 28. Quote from Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: the German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 229, 242–43.
 29. Elizabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (April 1996): 354–95.
 30. On postwar uses of *Heimat* in West Germany see Applegate, *Nation of Provincials*, chap. 8; Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 128–34; Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Gregory F. Schroeder, "Ties of Urban *Heimat*: West German Cities and Their Wartime Evacuees in the 1950s," *German Studies Review* 27, no. 2 (May 2004): 307–24.
 31. Schulze Hannover and Becker, "Natur im Sinn," 29.