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"'Welcome to the Atomic Park': American Nuclear Landscapes and the 'Unnaturally Natural'"

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Wills, John. "'Welcome to the Atomic Park': American Nuclear Landscapes and the 'Unnaturally Natural.'" *Environment and History* 7, no. 4 (Nov., 2001): 449–72. doi:10.3197/096734001129342559 . Atomic landscapes in the American West are typically understood as despoiled and irradiated territories. Nevada Test Site, with its grim medley of twisted military structures, bombed-out craters and radioactive desert, is an emblem of the nuclear age. By contrast, Yosemite National Park is a very different icon to hail from Western climes. Yosemite is legendary for its wild nature and monumental scenery. The two landscapes, Nevada Test Site and Yosemite National Park, have, on the surface, very little in common. However, in recent years, a number of nuclear and post-nuclear landscapes have been praised for attracting rare species of flora and fauna. A few nuclear sites have even become nature reserves. While aware that so-called atomic parks are hardly likely to become the Yellowstones and Yosemites of the late twenty-first century, this article explores a few of the unexpected links between two forms of landscape for so long considered extreme opposites. All rights reserved. © 2001 The White Horse Press

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