Cant of Reconquest and the Struggle for Restoring Sustainability of the Southern Paiutes

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Acronyms

CGTO The Consolidated Group of Tribes and Organizations
NAGPRA The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NPS US National Park System
NTS The Nevada Test Site
NTTR The Nevada Test and Training Range
TEK Traditional Ecological Knowledge
YMP The Yucca Mountain Project

Introduction

Sustainable management of indigenous heritage resources and places in the USA should depend on comanagement by traditionally associated people indigenous stakeholders, whether they are able to demonstrate a direct cultural connection to those “resources” or whether their claim is generic as federally recognized tribes concerned with the aboriginal past of the country. This paper contends that, as with the case of Southeast Asia and Asia, where local practices toward heritage...
management are appropriate (Karlstrom 2013, 2015) and have been officially recognized as such in the Nara (Japan) Document on Authenticity (UNESCO 1994), there are places in the USA where native peoples have developed coadapted conservation practices designed to sustain these heritage resources. Yet despite the increasingly popular (within the professional and academic domains) recognition of the management value of traditional peoples, there has been a strong backlash against indigenous management of indigenous heritage among land managers and museum specialists.

This article focuses on the federally recognized Southern Paiute people who are returning to traditional lands now managed by military reservations and national parks in the US Southwest. The issue addressed is highly contentious for it involves US national politics, the US National Park Service, the US military, and – of course – dominant US national ideology and a conservative reading of US manifest destiny.

Systematic ethnographic research was conducted by the authors addressing native objects, archeological sites, and the landscape itself. The latter is by far the more complicated issue in this paper for that which the “settler society” sees and manages – as nature has deep cultural significance for the Southern Paiute – a landscape that is religious, historical, and cultural. It is a landscape with which the Southern Paiute interacted for generations and from which they were expelled in the 1800s by agents of the US government.

This analysis presents five cases where the US Congress set aside portions of traditional Southern Paiute lands and considers how subsequent federal land management agencies have responded to contemporary Southern Paiute heritage concerns. The analysis contrasts three National Parks located north of the Colorado River and two military bases in South Nevada1 (see Fig. 1). All cases involve heritage reconnections of the Southern Paiute people, new comanagement decisions, and heated debates over both the reconnections and the role of heritage museums.

The analysis is organized diachronically into the process steps of (1) coadaptation, (2) separation, (3) reconnection, and (4) comanagement as explained below. The debate surrounding traditional people reconnecting with traditional lands and ultimately sharing in the sustainable management of these cultural heritage resources focuses on how they traditionally coadapted with their lands (Stoffle et al. 2003) and the process by which they were separated (Jennings 1976).

Coadaptation and Sustainability2

In this analysis we assume that humans begin learning about nature as soon as they arrive in an ecologically new place. Such knowledge is often termed local knowledge, and it may be useful in terms of proper environmental behavior within a

1The National Parks discussed in this paper are Grand Canyon, Zion, and Pipe Spring National Park, and the military reservations that are discussed here are Nevada Test and Training Range and Nevada Test Site located in southern Nevada.

2In the context of this paper, sustainability is understood sociologically, and therefore no explicit reference is made to post-Brundtland definitions such as definitions promoting the idea of the four pillars of sustainability.
generation (Olsson and Folke 2001). To move from simple observations to deeper ecological understandings of food webs and trophic levels takes many generations. Stoffle et al. (2003) describe a coadaptation model of learning which argues that within five generations living in a new place, people will acquire deep ecological understandings and relationships with nature and begin the formation of what is called sacred ecology (Berkes 2012).

Traditional people use their knowledge of ecosystems and consciously make intermediate human changes that have positive benefits (e.g., Turner et al. 2003), moving seeds to new habitats (Nabhan 1989), digging tubers (Wadsnider and Chung 2003), changing behavior of herding animals (Anderson 2005), pruning wild nut trees (Fowler 2000), and designing agricultural fields to stimulate animals and plant populations as well as provide sustainable farming (Atran et al. 2002). Connell (1978) found that intermediate natural disturbances in ecosystems can cause positive impacts on biodiversity and bio-complexity.

When people learn about their ecosystems and adjust their adaptive strategies to protect them from natural and social perturbations, they can be said to have developed a resilient way of life (Berkes et al. 2003; Holling 1973) through the implementation of social and ecological redundancies, which have been described as environmental multiplicity (Stoffle and Minnis 2007). At this stage of coadaptation, the people can be said to have developed a sustainable way of life (Stoffle and Minnis 2008), and that way of life may be regarded as a portion of their intangible
heritage. In order for these people such as the Paiute to pass this part of their intangible heritage from generation to generation, it is vital that they practice sustainable environmental management of their respective lands. Thus, cultural sustainability of the Paiute as a community and environmental sustainability of their respective lands are intertwined.

**Separation Stage**

Heritage needs to be understood as a social construction and thus itself an artifact of time, place, and people. Heritage, as formal preservation in the USA, was very much driven by powerful economic forces (like railroad companies and politicians) that desired to set aside large tracks of land that could then be commoditized for corporation profit (Sellars 1997). Even when the lives of American Indian people were in fact significantly intertwined with a topographically interesting place, the local Indian peoples were rapidly excluded from the area and its interpretation. Traditional people in North America have been separated from most of their aboriginal places because of the expansion of European settlers. After their removal from traditional lands, a nationwide interpretative fiction was developed that maintained the formally traditional area had neither been fully used by nor became culturally central to Indian peoples. It was a European rhetoric of rightful ownership, according to which the native population neither used the land in the best way nor appreciated it, whereas the settlers would farm and clear the forest, thus making a civilized landscape. It was a dishonest “cant” (in the common use of the word) that was used to maintain the separation. For instance, in the USA, there arose the “myth of the mound builders” which denied Indians a cultural affiliation to the great earthwork sites. Jennings (1976) speaks of a rhetoric of separation as the *cant of conquest* (Bettinger and Blaumhoff 1982). Like Jennings, we use the term *cant* in a non-pejorative sense to refer to rhetoric occurring at the cutting edge of a major social change.

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3There are no completely acceptable terms of reference to all the cultural groups in North America before 1492. The authors have chosen the term American Indians over Native Americans in keeping with Russell Means, one of the founders of the American Indian Movement, “. . . I prefer the term American Indian because I know its origins. . . . As an added distinction the American Indian is the only ethnic group in the United States with the American before our ethnicity . . . We were enslaved as American Indians, we were colonized as American Indians, and we will gain our freedom as American Indians, and then we will call ourselves any damn thing we choose”.

“I am an American Indian, Not a Native American!” statement by Russell Means.

4The burial mounds found on the North American continent fascinated the Euro-American settlers. Not wanting to grant the Native Americans recognition for these earthworks, the settlers invented the “myth of mound builders” that denies that Native Americans had built these burial mounds and instead promotes the idea that there had previously been a “lost race of mound builders,” a race of superior beings that had built the mounds then disappeared (see Hirst 2017 in bibliography)
Reconnection Stage

Ironically, in the USA, many traditional peoples are now permitted (even encouraged) to reconnect with their aboriginal places for the purpose of identifying heritage resources (Ahmad 2006) and recommending sustainable management based on their traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and ethics of cultural conservation (Lewis 1989). Yet traditional knowledge domains have also been diminished and modified. In a manifestation of the concept Authorized Heritage Discourse that was coined by Laurajane Smith (2006), new land and resource managers – notably the US National Park System (NPS) and the US military, which together have vast landholdings – have acquired a sense of entitlement based on national ownership and superiority based on a presumption of controlling the best science for management. When native peoples actually return to their homelands and identify and seek to manage their heritage resources, the situation is often fraught with tension and conflict. These new heritage disputes are fought with dialogues of place, culture, and history, which are the foundations of the contemporary cant of reconquest.

This new literature arose regarding the process of reconnecting people with traditional lands and involving them in sustainable co-management. Reconnection proposals have stimulated both hostile and supportive rhetoric. Some argue for reconnection using the term decolonization (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999) and often couch these arguments in terms of Marxian theories and internal colonialism (Churchill 2003; Battiste 2000). Others argue against reconnection claiming that the traditional people either lost land management knowledge or that they never had useful knowledge of the environment (Kretch 1999). Some arguments defined them as original despoilers of nature (Martin and Klein 1984), while others viewed them as super managers inspired by the Creator (Cajete 1999). A science-based debate can be found in between these extremes (Lewis 1989). This debate is evident in the discussion of the use of fire as an indigenous land management tool. After Anderson wrote that Indian patch burning was instrumental in shaping the ecology of the California forests (Blackburn and Anderson 1993, pp. 151–174), a group of geographers rebutted saying that Indian people had little impact on the ecology of the forests (Vale 2001).

American Indian people have been accused, in this cant of reconquest, of being poorly adapted to their environment, and thus poor managers. Such accusations tend to be extensions of Martin’s megafauna extinction theory, which maintained that Indians caused the death of most of the large animals (33 genera) in North America when the Indians arrived from Asia (Martin and Wright 1967; Martin 1973; Martin and Klein 1984). Recent archeological evidence documents that American Indian people were in North America long before (up to 5000 years) most of the megafauna extinctions occurred. Therefore, their perceived arrival did not correspond with megafauna extinctions. Even during the later Clovis period, which does overlap with the megafauna extinctions, the notion of a diet narrowly defined by megafauna is contested. Grayson and Meltzer (2002) studied fauna remains in a number of Clovis sites and found that only 14 of 76 sites document any subsistence use of
extinct megafauna. Still, the megafauna extinction theory persists (Boulanger and Lyman 2014) and often is used to argue against American Indian reconnections with heritage resources.

In 2007, Congress considered a legislation (H.R. 3994) that would turn over 57 national parks and wildlife refuges to tribal governments. This proposed legislation caused a massive backlash from the environmental community who argued it was a bad decision because Indian people had destroyed their traditional environment. Newsweek magazine said that “The reason American Indians had no horses before Europeans arrived was that their ancestors ate them all—along with numerous other large mammals” (Adler 2007; Selin 2001). The megafauna extinction theory, however, provided no evidence that humans killed many horses, much less were involved in horse extinction.

Comanagement and Restoring Sustainability

Not only are there ethical reasons for reconnecting traditional peoples, this analysis also argues that greater sustainability of heritage resources can be achieved by involving them in management decisions. While it is beyond the scope of this analysis to prove this across the range of potentially impacted heritage resources, the authors would like to stress that, in their experience, American Indian people are good at sustainable heritage management because of their traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of the natural resources learned over thousands of years. In addition, Indian people perceive and respond to natural and cultural resources as both alive, having humanlike rights, and inexorably integrated (Stoffle et al. 2016). Their communal concern for environmental sustainability is closely linked to their own cultural continuity: Without the continued existence of traditional resources and the right to comanage them, the American Indian people cannot exercise their Creation-based responsibility for properly using and protecting these heritage resources (Rode 2015), which in turn directly effects their own cultural survival and sustainability. Thus, in a positive sense, the granting of comanagement not only restores the ecological sustainability of heritage resources but also the cultural sustainability of the Paiute.

Southern Paiute People Going Through Stages

Southern Paiute people believe that they were created in the Spring Mountains, Nevada (Stoffle and Zedeño 2001). Here since Creation, Southern Paiute people learned about complex weather and climate shifts, different plant growing patterns at elevations ranging from 3000 to 10,000 feet, seasonal animal movements, and the wide variations in water availability. They learned to protect and work with
beavers to sustain the soil and water in the steep-gradient streams. They designed and optimized irrigated farming systems and conducted delta farming along the Colorado River.

Creating resilient and sustainable human use patterns in a land, where 1 year the main crop of pine nuts is bountiful and next year there are none, requires layers of social-political hierarchy to produce a system for reallocating resources (Van Vlack 2015). This hierarchy of High Chiefs negotiated the movement of local groups in and out of each other’s resource areas as needed. High Chiefs coordinated local, regional, and world-balancing ceremonies conducted for the benefit of all humans. Volcanic features, massive sandstone cliffs, mineral deposits, and Colorado River rapids became central places in a complex heritage landscape (Stoffle et al. 1997) where Paiutes believe the land talks and serves as a partner keeping the world in balance (Stoffle et al. 2000, 2016).

Traditional lands north of the Grand Canyon were first encroached upon in 1776 by the Escalante and Dominguez expedition. When they arrived on the middle Virgin River, they found Paiute agriculturists who they called Pueblos - which was the Spanish term for settled agriculturists. The people called themselves the Parussits, a Paiute name that referred to the Parussi River (Virgin River), which they used to irrigate their farms (Bolton 1951, p. 205).

The 1849 discovery of gold in California resulted in massive immigration across Paiute lands and resulted in environmental damage and disease. In the early 1850s, Mormon Church members physically and permanently removed Paiutes from most traditional irrigated agricultural villages. Mormon Church tithing herds were kept north of the Grand Canyon. There tens of thousands of tithing animals devastated the environment within a decade. By the late 1800s, Paiute people retreated south to Kanab Creek, which flows into the Colorado River, using the area as a region of refuge (Aguirre Beltran 1973). These isolated canyons became the last portion of traditional territory held sovereign by Paiutes.

Early heritage status in the USA was accorded to natural places like hot springs, canyons, and mountains. Stevens (1997) uses the term Yellowstone Model to describe national parks established with the notion of wilderness, i.e., a place without people. These designations were made as arguments for the removal of Indian people who were living in or using park resources.

As Southern Paiute people begin to reconnect with their traditional lands, they are often stopped by a single archeology theory, the Numic Spread Theory (Madsen and Rhode 1994). This theory maintains that Southern Paiutes (and other Numic-speaking peoples) were simple hunters and gatherers practicing a preagriculture tradition who recently arrived (about 600 BP) in the Great Basin and western Colorado Plateau. Managers have maintained that heritage resources dated earlier than this time should neither be interpreted nor managed by Numic people. These arguments are part of the reemerged “cant of reconquest” which happens at the cutting edge of the reconnecting discourse and comprises positive, as well as negative, rhetoric concerning the “reconquest” of traditional lands by indigenous communities.
National Park Cases: Grand Canyon, Zion, and Pipe Spring

Paiute people were officially removed from most traditional lands located north and west of the Colorado River by a series of federal, state, and private commerce actions, which were designed to either protect the area’s natural resources or to use them for commercial purposes. These actions eventually removed Paiute people from 98.9% of their traditional lands (see Fig. 2). In 1893, much of the area became Grand Canyon Forest Reserve; in 1906, it became the Grand Canyon Game Preserve; in 1908, it became Grand Canyon National Monument; and finally in 1919, it became Grand Canyon National Park. These federal actions were designed to preserve natural resources; however, they also resulted in the physical and intellectual exclusion of Paiute people. Heritage experts of the National Parks System (NPS) interpreted the pueblo-style cliff dwellings in the park as being made by people who had long ago left, ignoring the Paiute claim that they were the farmers who had built the stone dwellings and lived here since time immemorial.

Animals and their habitats located north of the Colorado River were modified and restricted when President Roosevelt established Grand Canyon National Game Preserve to serve elite hunters and tourists. From 1906 until 1923, the government employed hunters to kill thousands of predatory animals in order to stimulate the deer herds. These predatory animals were important components of Paiute ceremony, subsistence, and ecology. At the same time, stringent enforcement of hunting licenses, seasons, and bag limits almost eliminated traditional Paiute deer hunting, thus dealing a serious blow to the Paiute economy and subsistence (Knack 1993). Even though time has passed and progressive legislation has been implemented, Paiute people still cannot hunt in Grand Canyon National Park.

In southern Utah, Zion National Park was established. The centerpieces of the park were large deep canyons located on the two branches of the Virgin River (Parusso in Paiute language). In 1909, a presidential proclamation set aside Mukuntuweap National Monument (using the Paiute name for this canyon). The National Park System (NPS) itself was established in 1916, and just 2 years later a presidential proclamation created Zion National Monument, which included the former Mukuntuweap National Monument. The Zion name was selected to honor Mormon settlers who took the canyon away from the Paiutes. The new monument was interpreted as nationally important because it provided a safe refuge in the event of Indian attacks on Mormon settlements. The argument that the Paiutes did not live in or use Zion was further presented to the public when the park prominently located a large bronze plaque that stated “the Paiutes never came into Zion Canyon because they were afraid of spirits living there.”

To the east of Zion, the Federal Government transformed more Paiute lands. A small Paiute reservation was established in 1907 north of the Grand Canyon. The new Kaibab Paiute Indian Reservation reflected federal recognition that the Paiutes were the traditional owners of the land and they needed a place of their own. At the time, Paiute people were still living in the area of the new reservation. An economically failing cattle ranch and stone fort, which had been built over one of the Paiute
springs, were sold to the NPS with the understanding that the new monument would be operated by the local Mormon families (Knack 1993). These families would also determine the interpretative stories it would tell. Until recently, Pipe Spring National Monument described the Paiutes as wandering hunters and gatherers who arrived recently instead of living there as traditional farmers — a status that would have legally entitled them to retain full aboriginal water rights.

So, various Southern Paiute groups who traditionally occupied lands north of the Colorado River were forced out and restricted to small reservations — the Kaibab Paiutes, the five bands of the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, and the Moapa Paiutes. They were also intellectually distanced from their traditional heritage areas and resources as NPS units, located within Grand Canyon National Park, Zion National Park, and even Pipe Spring National Monument located on the Kaibab Paiute reservation. The NPS interpretative displays and museums in all of these parks presented complex archeological ruins as having been made by long-gone Indians. The interpretation either failed to mention Paiutes as residents of the land at all or used the Numic spread theory to characterize them as recent arrivals who neither farmed nor built houses.
Heritage recommendations from the Paiute studies, collected during six research trips (conducted by Stoffle from 1992 to 1995) down the Colorado River from Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell, led to management and monitoring recommendations that were largely adopted by the water managers (the Bureau of Reclamation, for Glen Canyon Dam) and the adjoining Grand Canyon National Park land managers (Stoffle et al. 1997). Sacred sites (also known as traditional cultural properties) like Devil’s Anvil, a large red-paint cave, and a spiritual canyon have been closed or restricted from public access. The Southern Paiute tribes involved in the studies were provided funds for continued monitoring of chosen sites along the river. An elaborate database is now used for archiving the decade of subsequent tribal heritage monitoring (Austin et al. 2007; Austin and Drye 2011).

Ethnographic studies conducted with Paiute peoples at Zion National Park, Pipe Spring National Monument (Stoffle et al. 1996), and Grand Canyon National Park (Stoffle et al. 1995a, b) have led to changes in heritage interpretations at each of these parks. Zion National Park removed the brass plaque that said Paiutes never visited the canyon because they were afraid of spirits in the canyon. Museums at Zion National Park and at Pipe Spring National Monument have begun to display heritage text provided by Southern Paiute people. Zion National Park now permits Paiute elders to gather plants in the park, and Pipe Springs National Monument is officially comanaged with the Kaibab Paiute Tribe. The Numic Spread Theory with non-farming hunting and gathering Paiute arriving after 1300 AD, however, still dominates the archeology interpretations at all three parks. The interpretative displays in Grand Canyon National Park still fail to represent most Paiute views of their heritage, although they are now recognized as having lived recently in the park and they are permitted to tell their story during Arizona Heritage Awareness Month. The incorporation of tribal traditional ecological knowledge comanagement advice into Glen Canyon Dam water release monitoring has been slow to occur over the past 15 years (Austin et al. 2007).

Military Cases: Nevada Test and Training Range and Nevada Test Site

The Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR) occupies nearly three million acres of southern Nevada. These lands were withdrawn from the public domain in the early 1940s to serve as a bombing and gunnery range. This military reservation consumed many of the Indian agricultural areas, traditionally recognized as some of the most productive mountain gathering and hunting areas, with all of the spiritual volcanic areas. Toward the end of the World War II, the Nevada Test Site (NTS) was withdrawn from the NTTR lands for testing atomic bombs. In this analysis, both areas are called military even though the atomic testing lands are officially controlled by the Department of Energy through the National Nuclear Security Administration.

Once these two facilities were established, all civilians, including Indian people, were officially removed and prohibited to return. Unlike national parks, which are
established with a mandate to protect resources while providing reasonable access to the public, the NTTR and NTS lands were simply fenced and guarded keeping everyone out.

The American Indian heritage studies on the NTS began in the mid-1980s with a cultural affiliation analysis of the Yucca Mountain Project (YMP), a small area on the NTS (Stoffle 1987; Stoffle and Evans 1988). Sixteen tribes were identified as culturally affiliated with these lands; consultation with them began in 1986 and has since continued. The American Indian Program on NTTR began in 1996 and includes all of the original culturally affiliated tribes.

The consulting tribal governments each sent two members to officially represent tribal heritage concerns, creating a consulting body of 32. After a few years of resolving mutual conflicts, this consulting group decided to speak with one voice regarding natural and cultural resources and land managing activities. The group known as the Consolidated Group of Tribes and Organizations (CGTO) has remained undivided despite stressful issues and differences of opinion.

Ethnographic studies on both NTTR and the NTS have identified and evaluated archeology sites (Stoffle et al. 1988b, 1990, 2009), ethnobotany (Stoffle et al. 1988a), and ethnohistory (Stoffle et al. 1987). Despite early resistance from federal archeologists, facility managers disagreed with the Numic Spread Theory, and, consequently, consulting tribes were permitted to identify and make recommendations for all heritage resources regardless of age on both facilities. Only those archeologists who accepted this agency decision were retained. At their annual meetings, the CGTO made numerous heritage recommendations, which were generally adopted by both the NTS and NTTR. Increasingly the CGTO assumed significant control over the content and function of both American Indian Programs.

Tribal interactions were reflected in information centers and heritage museums to address the public information needs of the NTS and NTTR. Both locations set aside display space for Paiute voices. These displays were produced through formal consultation with an Indian advisory committee. In the late 1990s, Yucca Mountain Project Visitor’s Center opened, integrating tribal views that were largely limited to iconic displays of attractive baskets and artifacts. Subsequently, the NTS Atomic Testing Museum was developed in 2005, and the CGTO was asked to become a part of the initial museum display planning team. An entire segment of the museum was devoted to Indian voices that involved iconic artifacts and a series of strong this land was (is) ours stipulations, featuring a timeline beginning with Paiute Creation to present. No Numic Spread Theory is mentioned here.

Ethnographic studies began with narrow site and resource identifications but later expanded to cultural landscape analysis. Increasingly, complex data gathering instruments were developed in partnership with tribal governments permitting elaborated cultural landscape understandings. Later, more comprehensive ethnographic studies, largely conducted on the military reservations, were better financed for multiple years in duration. Study quality was greatly improved by ongoing consultations, which permitted iterative studies that were guided by Indian people. The CGTO consultation model gave tribes more leverage than if they had issued independent and potentially conflicting tribally specific recommendations.
Three Indian perspective books have been supported by funds from NTTR and NTS. The first was a summary of the early YMP studies (Stoffle et al. 1990), the second a 10-year retrospective of the studies on the NTS (Stoffle et al. 2001), and the final one (Zedeno et al. 2006) was guided by a committee of the CGTO. Comanagement or co-stewardship is very difficult for a federal agency charged with land management and national security activities. Still, heritage resources have been protected, and Indian heritage perspectives have been accepted. In response to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Indian bodies, funerary objects, items of cultural patrimony, and other related artifacts have been returned to the Paiute on both federal military reservations and reburied in secret locations where ceremonies have occurred to restore spiritual and ecological balance.

**Discussion**

Rhetorical arguments for and against traditional people reconnecting with their homelands are occurring worldwide, including in the USA. Because reconnection can lead to comanagement and even resumption of ownership, many people are vested in the outcomes and are willing to participate in the dialogue. These arguments occur at the cutting edge of the reconnection process and thus are viewed here as the *cant of reconquest*.

Cases presented here document common steps in the process of disconnection followed by a process of reconnecting traditional people to their homelands. Both kinds of federal agencies have (1) rules that restrict or regulate the use of natural and cultural resources, (2) armed guards to assure that the resources on these lands are protected, (3) professionals who are scientifically trained in the management of these resources, and (4) heritage museums or heritage materials to inform the public. Heritage resources have generally been protected in each reserve, but the military approach to protection greatly exceeds that of the NPS. Grand Canyon National Park largely follows the Yellowstone Model, while Zion National Park and Pipe Spring National Monument have more fully embraced Paiute people and incorporated them into heritage museums and ethnic interpretations. The two military facilities have been more accepting of long-term annual consultation with the tribes and much more responsive to Indian recommendations.

Still the pattern of different federal agency and facility responses to reconnecting traditional people remains an enigma. Some will argue that it is difficult for the NPS to get beyond the Yellowstone Model, and that is why major national parks continue to reject Paiute cultural connections. Even though Indian people are now engaged in consultation at Yellowstone National Park itself (Nabokof and Loendorf 2004), the Numic Spread Theory is still used to exclude Paiutes from participating in most NPS heritage conversations along the Colorado River. The official NPS web site for Zion National Park reaffirms that the Paiutes came into the Zion region after 1300 AD replacing the Pueblo farmers and technically reestablishing the Archaic Period because Paiutes did not farm (NPS Zion 2016).
Perhaps, what is more difficult for many land managers to get beyond are the social constructions that have kept traditional people out of federally withdrawn areas. The negatively employed *cunt of reconquest* rhetoric, such as the Numic Spread Theory, continues to be dogma in universities, the published science literature, and in agencies who use these scientists to guide management.

From her experiences as a Paiute tribal member and a senior federal land manager, Angelita Bulletts (Stoffle et al. 2016) observed, however, that progressively there is a new breed of federal land managers who are listening to Native American people. These managers are seeking ways to reunite traditional people with their aboriginal lands. Land managers today are looking at many contrasting knowledge bases. Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) has continued to exist because tribal people choose to exist in parallel worlds and refused to abandon traditional understandings of the natural world. Federal land managers are collaborating with tribal governments to reengage tribal youth through traditional camps (involving elders and youth), which are designed to teach about traditional landscapes and sustainable resource use and to lay a foundation for developing common goals with the federal land managers.

In her authoritative synthesis of these issues, Zedeño (2014, pp. 255–256) concludes that Indian tribes may never recover lost lands, but they now at least have the right to tell their own story and to determine whether and how their past should be investigated and shared with the public.

The authority to manage and interpret the heritage of indigenous stakeholders in the USA is disputed by many land managers and museum specialists. Consequently, arguments that were used to maintain the separation of the traditional peoples from their cultural lands, and objects now held in public museums, should be scrutinized in light of new data and cultural perspectives. All old separation arguments that are enshrined in interpretative displays, documents, and policies which are currently used against indigenous reconnections should be balanced with new ideas. While the situation has greatly improved from a native perspective, comanagement and co-interpretation do not exist for most public lands and millions of artifacts housed in museums.

The challenge of restoring cultural sustainability for the Paiute communities, by granting them reconnections with their lands and involvement in sustainable management, is still enormous. This restoration can only become a reality if the “cunt of reconquest” in its positive and reconnecting sense outweighs the negative rhetoric of separation.

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