

Can Humans Coexist with Wilderness?

Article: William Cronon, "[The Trouble with Wilderness, or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature](#)," *Environmental History* 1.1 (1996) DOI: 10.2307/3985059.

Class Discussion/Analytical Questions

- 1) Describe Cronon's concepts of sublime wilderness and wilderness as frontier in his attempt to portray wilderness as a contemporary social construct.
- 2) Explain why Cronon believes that society's wilderness vision is so troubling.
- 3) Why does Cronon question wilderness environmentalism? Explain how ideas about wilderness have changed over time in constructing your answer.
- 4) How do humans fit into Cronon's wilderness ideal?

Activity:

Critiquing Cronon

Break the class into small groups and have them critique Cronon's article while creating a plan on how to recreate a wilderness vision in which humans can coexist. The following question could serve as their writing prompt:

Given that wilderness protection is only one aspect of environmentalism and that humans are reasonably unwilling to destroy themselves in hopes of helping nature, how can humans coexist with nature? Be sure to address the article in constructing your answer.

Each group should write a short essay in answering the prompt. This can also be made into individual projects or assignments.