

# Heirs to a Most Glorious Heritage

THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK

Photography By: Daniel M. Seurer



# Heirs to a Most Glorious Heritage: Theodore Roosevelt National Park





Our nation's natural environment and cultural heritage sites are under attack to a degree not seen in decades. Executive orders are dramatically shrinking protected lands throughout the United States, opening them up to resource extraction that will irrevocably mar the landscape, and destroy culturally sensitive sites.

We only need to look at what is happening around Theodore Roosevelt National Park in western North Dakota as an example. Oil and gas drilling facilities line the boundary of the park, and many of these facilities are clearly visible from what were once unspoiled vistas. Future developments in the area threaten to destroy this view shed even further.

It is sadly ironic that this development is occurring around a park whose name sake is a president who was a staunch proponent of our National Parks and wilderness areas. President Theodore Roosevelt's quotes accompanying these photographs, many over a century old, outline why these resources needed protection then, and for the fight to protect them to continue today. Many of these quotes come as a result of his ranching days within the boundaries of the park from the late 19th century.

Daniel M. Seurer. February 2018

# The Images

These photographs were created over two beautiful spring days in March 2017. The air was warm, yet the winter's snow clung to existence in the shadowy hidden crevices.

I was taken by surprise at the beauty of this National Park. I knew it very little, but by the end of my visit, I was marveling at the 'badland' and the wildlife that lives here. More importantly my appreciation for the park, and the efforts to create and sustain our Parks and Wilderness areas, was deepened by reading the many works of President Theodore Roosevelt.

My sincere hope is that these photographs will delight you, and inspire you to visit this National Park, and appreciate the efforts of those who created, and are fighting for, the preservation of them.



"WE HAVE FALLEN HEIRS TO THE MOST GLORIOUS HERITAGE A  
PEOPLE EVER RECEIVED, AND EACH ONE MUST DO HIS PART IF  
WE WISH TO SHOW THAT THE NATION IS WORTHY OF ITS  
GOOD FORTUNE."

--President Theodore Roosevelt







"This broken country extends back from the river for many miles and has been called always be (sic)  
Indian, French voyager and American trappers alike, the Bad Lands."









"The Bad Lands grade all the way from those that are almost rolling in character to those that are so fantastically broken in form and so bizarre in color as to seem hardly properly to belong to this earth."





"I heartily enjoy this life, with its perfect freedom, for I am very fond of hunting, and there are few sensations I prefer to that of galloping over these rolling limitless prairies, with rifle in hand, or winding my way among the barren, fantastic and grimly picturesque deserts of the so-called Bad Lands..."









"The extermination of the buffalo has been a veritable tragedy of the animal world."

(Fortunately Theodore Roosevelt turned out to be wrong on this account)





"In a great many--indeed, in most--localities there are wild horses to be found, which, although invariably of domestic descent, being either themselves runaways from some ranch or Indian outfit, or else claiming such for their sires and dams, yet are quite as wild as the antelope on whose domain they have intruded."





"Of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us."





Type to enter text" The river flows in long sigmoid curves through an alluvial valley of no great width. The amount of this alluvial land enclosed by a single bend is called a bottom, which may be either covered with cotton-wood trees or else be simply a great grass meadow. From the edges of the valley the land rises abruptly in steep high buttes whose crests are sharp and jagged."









"Nothing could be more lonely and nothing more beautiful than the view at nightfall across the prairies to these huge hill masses, when the lengthening shadows had at last merged into one and the faint after-glow of the red sunset filled the west."













"We are prone to speak of the resources of this country as inexhaustible; this is not so."





"We have become great because of the lavish use of our resources. But the time has come to inquire seriously what will happen when our forests are gone, when the coal, the iron, the oil, and the gas are exhausted, when the soils have still further impoverished and washed into the streams, polluting the rivers, denuding the fields and obstructing navigation."





“It is also vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species of mammal or bird. Here in the United States we turn our rivers and streams into sewers and dumping-grounds, we pollute the air, we destroy forests, and exterminate fishes, birds and mammals -- not to speak of vulgarizing charming landscapes with hideous advertisements.”





Photographs made Spring 2017, Theodore Roosevelt National Monument.

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