

Jedediah S. Rogers. *Roads in the Wilderness: Conflict in Canyon Country.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013. 250 pp. \$24.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-60781-313-2.



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The canyon country of southern Utah enjoys international renown for Zion, Bryce, Capitol Reef, Arches, and Canyonlands, its five spectacular national parks. Legions of tourists visit these federally designated places of scenic beauty annually, but for Jedediah S. Rogers it is the “in-between places” and the roads that run through them that make the region significant; to Rogers, roads are for southern Utah both “first cause ... [and] at the heart of modern debates over wilderness and land use” (p. 6). In investigating Utah’s roads, Rogers brings to light the two opposing positions employed in debates over people’s role in the open spaces of canyon country—wild and pristine versus ripe for development—and their implications for the future of wild places in southern Utah. Rogers’s *Roads in the Wilderness: Conflict in Canyon Country* explores the controversial role that roads have played in the perception and construction of Utah’s landscape. Rogers argues that we need to investigate the cultural perceptions of roads in order to understand why and how they came to be on the landscape, as well as

the conflicting ideologies surrounding these seemingly innocuous routes of travel. As Rogers writes, “roads carry meaning beyond their utilitarian function as objects that intimately disclose the human relationship not only to land and nature but also other people” (p. 191).

Following a brief prologue in which Rogers lays out the historical approaches to canyon country, the book proceeds to a series of eight case studies followed by a chapter of analysis. Rogers draws through the studies the tension between wilderness and development inherent in debates over land use in southern Utah from the late nineteenth century to the present day. The eight chapters each follow a different debate, beginning with the historical precedence for these two ideologies in the 1879 Hole-in-the-Rock expedition and Clyde Kluckhohn’s 1928 adventure to the Kaiparowits Plateau. The division over public land management plays out over the subsequent chapters, from Edward Abbey’s vehement hatred of a highway through Comb Ridge to the controversy over paving the Burr Trail to issues of mo-

torized access in the aftermath of Grand Staircase-Escalante's designation as a national monument. African American Bill Canyon, outside of Moab, Utah, raised issues of the presence of roads and wilderness eligibility; a proposed superhighway between Moab and Vernal challenged land use designations; and, most recently, local residents rode off-road vehicles (ORVs) through Arch Canyon in an attempt to preempt wilderness designation. Rogers concludes that the future of Utah land use rests in how the state, and those who visit, recreate, do business there, and define roads and thereby the relationship between humans and the natural world. While "roads suggest a stark choice between wildness and civilization," we must see beyond this dichotomy to a hybrid environment in which both roads and untrammeled areas are equally integral in order to create Wallace Stegner's "society to match the scenery" (p. 176).

Rogers's careful research and engaging storytelling make clear to the reader the necessity of understanding the history of Utah's roads in order to chart a path for the present and future. Without comprehension of Abbey's influential malice toward paved, easy-to-travel roads, current events in places like Recapture Canyon, where this past May more than two hundred ORV users drove into the closed canyon in protest of restrictions placed on motorized travel near sensitive archaeological ruins would be unintelligible and, more important, we would be left without a path forward for both sides of the debate. The book's format unnecessarily separates the details (case studies) from the larger picture (final chapter of analysis); the book could have flowed more smoothly, and its argument been more readily apparent, had these two strands been more closely connected. Overall Rogers's work is a valuable examination of "the in-between places"; it is these places, often overlooked and frequently unassuming, in which we live and make meaning from our relationship to the natural world.

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