



## Emerging Issues

# What Makes Wildlife Wild? How Identity May Shape the Public Trust versus Wildlife Privatization Debate

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**ABSTRACT** Wildlife conservation policy discussions in the United States and Canada often revolve around historical accounts of the success of wildlife management grounded in the public trust doctrine. We suggest that the usefulness of these discussions is partially limited by failure to consider the importance of wildlife “identity” rooted in freedom (i.e., how humans socially construct the “wildness” dimension of wild animals). To demonstrate the interrelations between identity and freedom, we explain that the class of subjects people care most about—partners, children, and people in general—typically should not be privately owned (i.e., chattel) because freedom (as opposed to slavery) is generally accepted as central to human identity, and its abrogation therefore degrades human identity. The degree to which this ethical argument applies to privatization of wildlife depends upon the relationship between freedom and the identity of wildlife as perceived by society. Thus, we suggest policy decisions regarding privatization of wildlife will be more accurately deliberated if society and wildlife professionals more completely considered the degree to which freedom is essential to a wild species’ identity and the degree to which that identity is inviolable. © 2016 The Wildlife Society.

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Western governments have long relied on what often is called the “public trust doctrine” (PTD) as authority for protecting and managing certain classes of natural resources for public benefit (Sax 1970, Horner 2000, Kahneman 2011). Considerable legal scholarship and debate regarding the importance and role of the PTD coincided with the environmental movement of the 1960s and early 1970s. Although the primary emphasis of the PTD has been aquatic ecosystems and related organisms, it also is important to terrestrial wildlife conservation efforts in North America, where Geist (1988, 1995) considered its application a resounding success. In recent decades, however, the ascendancy of neoliberal economic logic (Harvey 2005; Peterson et al. 2010a, b) as applied to wildlife conservation shifted the debate. Under neoliberal policies, wild animal species became important economic assets for private landowners in some contexts, while the same or different species became economic liabilities in other contexts. Neoliberalism reflects neoclassical economic ideals whereby

people are assumed to act as rational, self-interested benefit maximizers and interact with each other primarily through markets (Harvey 2005). Neoliberalism differs from classical liberalism in that it goes beyond assuming the market will ensure optimal distribution of resources, to demanding state interference and control to protect the sanctity of the free market. Several scholars highlight flaws with this model. First, people seldom behave as economically rational actors (Kahneman 2011). Further, in conservation contexts, neoliberalism requires converting everything into alienable property (commodification), and establishing a strong state to secure that property and entitlements to it (commercialization; Peterson et al. 2010a, b).

Contemporary critics of the PTD, such as Huffman (1989, 2007), maintain that public control of wildlife and other natural resources is detrimental to biodiversity conservation because of potential tragedies of the commons scenarios (Hardin 1968). Huffman (1989, 2007) also argues that the doctrine primarily supports public rather than private ownership of natural resources (or easements to such resources) and thus should be interpreted as a special case of property law rather than a distinct area of legal scholarship. Not surprisingly, the ascendancy of neoliberalism has supported efforts to reframe wild animal species previously

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held by state governments in trust for the public as privately held commodities to be traded in the marketplace (Anonymous 1988, Benson 1992, Freese and Trauger 2000).

The relative merits of wildlife privatization versus governments holding wildlife in trust for the people under the PTD as the preferred basis for effective wildlife conservation policy have been argued from economic (Geist 1988, 1994; Kreuter and Workman 1997), historical, legal (Sax 1970, Horner 2000, Redmond 2009, Sagarin and Turnipseed 2012), and political perspectives (Geist 1995, Davis 2001, Geist et al. 2001), but the ethical dimensions of this debate have been neglected (Nelson et al. 2011). Our objective is to begin addressing this deficit by exploring the role of freedom—including related behavioral traits humans find important, such as wildness—as a critical component of how society individually or collectively identifies wildlife (hereafter, wildlife identity), and the concomitant ethical implications for the PTD and wildlife privatization. We emphasize the situation in the United States and Canada because much of the current controversy surrounding wildlife commodification and the public trust revolves around whether the North American model of wildlife conservation (Geist 1988, 1995; Geist et al. 2001), which traditionally was grounded in the PTD, provides an appropriate framework for conservation efforts elsewhere, such as Europe, Australia, and the developing world. We begin by briefly summarizing the origins of the PTD, how it has been applied to wildlife conservation efforts historically, and the rationales behind recent efforts to privatize wildlife. We then discuss ethical considerations linked to identity, which we find critical when deciding whether wildlife privatization is appropriate. Lastly, we discuss the implications of our argument for those tasked with developing and implementing wildlife conservation policy as well as for other stakeholders concerned with wildlife conservation.

## THE PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE, WILDLIFE, AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

### Wildlife and the Public Trust

Governments worldwide have claimed authority over such entities as air, water, landscapes, wildlife, and the ocean and its shores for public benefit since at least the Roman *Institutes of Justinian* (~533 A.D.; Sax 1970, Caspersen 1996, Horner 2000). This legal tradition, as embodied in English common law, was reiterated in the fledgling United States in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which declared that navigable waters of the Mississippi River “shall be common highways and forever free . . . to the citizens of the United States” (1 Stat. 50, Art. 4). In *Martin v. Waddell* (41 U.S. 367 [1842]), the U.S. Supreme Court held that the State of New Jersey not only held rivers and bays in trust for the public good, but also the lands under these waters and the fisheries (i.e., wildlife) therein. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the importance of state governments controlling lands under public waters in *Illinois Central Railroad Company v. Illinois* (146 U.S. 387 [1892]) in what became the lodestar of U.S.

public trust law (Sax 1970). Also during this period, the U.S. Supreme Court held in a chain of cases culminating in *Geer v. Connecticut* (161 U.S. 519 [1896]:529) that the states held wildlife “as a trust for the benefit of the people” (the cases leading to *Geer v. Connecticut* were *Martin v. Waddell* [41 U.S. 367 (1842)], *Smith v. Maryland* [59 U.S. 71 (1855)], *McCready v. Virginia* [94 U.S. 391 (1876)], and *Manchester v. Massachusetts* [139 U.S. 240 (1890)]); Goble and Freyfogle 2002). By 1900, the PTD was firmly established in U.S. case law and it was explicitly extended to many natural resources, including both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife.

In Canada, public lands, wildlife, and other publically held entities are considered assets of the Crown, which in modern times is construed as being held in trust for the people (Batcheller et al. 2010). However, as Henquinet and Dobson (2006:368) asserted, the PTD in Canada “is an austere announcement of the public right to navigate and fish in navigable waters. It is a dormant doctrine to say the least. There are very few cases that deal with public trust issues and almost none of which actually articulate a public trust doctrine.” In their legal reviews, Hunt (1981) and Elwell and Dyck (2002) reached similar conclusions. Perhaps because of the dormant nature of the PTD in Canadian jurisprudence, greater than half of the provinces and territories have incorporated language identifying wildlife as publically held entities in their environmental statutes (Batcheller et al. 2010). That provincial law and policies have explicitly specified this relationship indicates intent to treat wildlife as public trust resources regardless of the rudimentary nature of the PTD at the national level.

The PTD applied to wildlife includes 4 essential elements: 1) the object of the trust that cannot be owned by individuals (wildlife), 2) the trustee responsible for acting in the trust’s best interest (the state), 3) the beneficiary who holds title to the trust (the public), and 4) the settlor who creates the trust (scholars and advocates of the PTD typically leave the character of the settlor open, suggesting entities such as God, Mother Nature, or Natural Law as creator of the trust; Caspersen 1996, Horner 2000). In the late 1800s and early 1900s, governments in the United States and Canada began protecting and restoring North America’s devastated wildlife populations under the auspices of the PTD (Geist et al. 2001). As established by *Geer v. Connecticut*, the PTD gave the states, as trustees, the legal basis to enact statutes that in turn gave regulatory agencies authority to promulgate regulations that eliminated most market hunting, controlled other wildlife harvest, and allowed the states to acquire wildlife management areas, conduct wildlife research, and implement various other procedures required for protecting and restoring species considered valuable by the public—the beneficiaries of the trust. Successful wildlife management based in part on PTD principles led to dramatic recoveries of several North American game species including white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), elk (*Cervus canadensis*), pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*), wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), and wood duck (*Aix sponsa*). Similarly, the PTD was used by the states

as authority for efforts to conserve nongame wildlife and restore populations of species at risk of extinction.

### **The Challenge from Wildlife Privatization**

Sax (1970) argued that, from a legal perspective, the PTD was the single most powerful tool for addressing natural resource management available under U.S. law. This groundbreaking review began an ongoing debate among environmental law scholars regarding the breadth and applicability of the PTD (Ruhl and Salzman 2006). At the same time, emerging markets for wildlife (e.g., sale of privately owned wild ungulates by game ranchers, sale of access to private lands for hunting or birdwatching) converted some wild animal species into economically valuable assets for landowners (Teer and Forrest 1968, Burger and Teer 1981, Geist 1988). In other cases, the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA; 16 U.S.C. §§ 1531–1544) sometimes resulted in wild species becoming economic liabilities for landowners as a result of regulatory limitations on property use (Mittermeier et al. 2003). For example, without the ESA, there would have been few economic concerns regarding a host of rather benign wild species, such as the spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), Houston toad (*Anaxyrus houstonensis*), or Florida Key deer (*O. virginianus clavium*), whose existence constrains human development projects by virtue of their listing under the ESA (Freudenburg et al. 1998; Peterson et al. 2002, 2004, 2006). As wildlife accrued significant positive and negative economic values for landowners and other publics, the PTD became increasingly controversial as grounding for wildlife conservation policy and practice (Geist 1988, 1995; Geist et al. 2001) and efforts to reframe wild animal species as privately held commodities to be traded in the marketplace began in earnest (Anonymous 1988, Benson 1992, Freese and Trauger 2000).

Arguments supporting privatization of wildlife employed the same neoliberal economic logic as did arguments for privatizing other natural resources. That is, wildlife populations will be destroyed in tragedies of the commons scenarios unless 1) cumbersome and expensive command and control governance is used, or 2) resources are privatized and turned over to the efficient and inexpensive invisible hand of the market (Aune 2001, Mansfield 2004, Robertson 2004, Harvey 2005). Essentially, supporters of wildlife privatization assume that as landowners manage for populations and habitats of economically valuable species, these changes will provide trickle-down benefits for all other wild species of interest sharing the landscape.

### **AN IDENTITY-BASED ARGUMENT AGAINST WILDLIFE PRIVATIZATION**

Moral philosophy suggests a certain class of subjects defies the conventional neoliberal wisdom that people have no incentive to care for anything other than commodities they personally own or control (Kant 1909 [1788], Donagan 1981, Aune 2001). This special class includes the subjects humans tend to care about most, including partners, children, and people in general. Leopold (1949) noted in

*The Land Ethic* that although people were privatized, commodified as slaves, and treated as ordinary property in the days of Odysseus, social evolution had largely erased the practice. Although metaphysical references to slavery may describe an array of human conditions where freedom is restricted, here we use the term in the literal sense to refer to the state of a person who is chattel of another. For greater depth regarding this interpretation of slavery, how it relates to freedom, and its degrading influence on both master and slave, see Lincoln's (1953 [1859]) letter to Henry L. Pierce and others (online Supporting Information). Evidence of slavery thus defined can be found on nearly all continents (Turley 2000); it was not that long ago when large groups of children, women, and certain ethnic groups were the property of other persons, companies, or governments in North America and lands controlled by many western European nations. Indeed, the practice of slavery persists today in many parts of the world and has been reinvigorated in some regions (Bales 2004).

Although sound economic reasoning may motivate some masters to treat slaves humanely, this does not translate into widespread contemporary support for slavery as an institution. Similarly, empirical arguments about appropriate conditions for slaveholding exist, but play a secondary role to ethical arguments regarding the morality of slavery. Likewise, whereas supporters of women's rights and child labor laws claimed that fair treatment in the labor market would reduce violence against women and children, the more powerful arguments were ethical (Storrs 2000, Miller 2008).

Although numerous ethical arguments have been levied against privatization and commodification of people (i.e., slavery), perhaps the most relevant to the debate surrounding the merits of using public trust management versus privatization as the basis for wildlife conservation relate to "identity," or the process of recognizing subjects as unique and individual. These arguments posit "freedom" as an essential element of human identity that should not be abrogated under any circumstance (Lincoln 1953 [1859], Smith 1995). Because slavery denies one's identity, it cannot be tolerated at any price (Appiah and Bunzl 2007). Slavery still would be intolerable, for instance, even if it were expected to alleviate war, disease, and poverty.

These arguments are essentially the same as those used to justify freeing the slave in Hegel's (1977 [1807]) master-slave dialectic (Brennan 2007). Hegel (1977 [1807]) began *Phenomenology of Spirit* by describing 2 newly formed humans happening upon each other for the first time. A fight ensues largely because encountering another sentient being like themselves threatens each individual's self-identity. The person who wins the fight decides to enslave rather than kill the other consciousness because s/he now realizes one cannot exist as a person without being recognized as such by others. Over time, the master becomes dependent on the slave for recognition, whereas the slave becomes more independent because s/he is forced to develop skills to support both slave and master. The master then faces a dilemma: s/he desires recognition as a person by the slave, but this recognition is of low value by virtue of the slave's inferior position. In the last

stage, the master frees the slave and the two become cooperative equals because only by being independent and equal can the former master and former slave secure their personal identities.

Brennan (2007) argued that Hegel's master–slave dialectic explains humanity's relationship with nature over time. Brennan (2007) described early peoples' relationship with nature as typically one of animistic equality, where nature was not perceived as fundamentally different from humanity. At some point, arising with the growth of agriculture and strengthened by the growth of industry, society began to perceive nature as something to be conquered, and aggressively set out to do so, creating a master–slave relationship. Over time, many in the developed world found mastery of nature dissatisfying for various reasons and desired to “free the slave,” which enables development of a caring and cooperative relationship with nature during a postmastery social stage.

This dialectic suggests that the degree to which ethical arguments grounded in freedom and identity applies to wildlife privatization can be partially assessed by examining the following questions: 1) is freedom an important component of wildlife's identity; and 2) is wildlife's identity inviolable? If the answer to both questions is “yes,” wildlife privatization is not ethically acceptable regardless of price. Instead, as Brennan (2007) argued, wildlife should be freed, and a more caring and cooperative relationship with the natural world developed in a postdomination era. From this ethical perspective, neoliberal economic arguments for wildlife privatization only become relevant if society's answer to one or both of the above questions is “no.”

## **PUBLIC TRUST AND WILDLIFE PRIVATIZATION AS AN ETHICAL DILEMMA**

Our focus on identity should not be construed as an argument for intrinsic value, or the value that a thing has in itself, or for its own sake (Rolston 1982, 1994). Instead, identity develops via relationships, rather than in isolation (Ricoeur 1992). Moreover, given the lack of any wilderness completely isolated from human impacts, we do not advocate a fundamentalist approach to wildlife's identity as forming in isolation from human influences. For these reasons, neither holding wildlife publically under the PTD nor private ownership of wildlife is likely to be absolute. Ultimately, the beneficiaries of the trust will decide the circumstances where wildlife should retain their freedom and related wildness under public trust management and other circumstances where they deem privatization and commodification more appropriate.

There are myriad important relationships that exist between various segments of human society and wild species or groups of wild species that influence whether these beneficiaries deem wildlife privatization suitable. In the United States, for example, we expect that privatization of bald eagles (U.S. national bird and national emblem; *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) would be perceived by society as much more problematic than privatization of dwarf wedge

mussels (*Alasmidonta heterodon*) because freedom is more closely associated with the identity of an eagle than a mussel. Similarly, freedom is likely to be perceived as critically important to the identity of species closely related to humans, such as common chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*), bonobos (*P. paniscus*), and other great apes. The perceived centrality of freedom to species that are similar to humans contributed to the discontinuation of medical research on chimpanzees in all nations except Gabon and United States, and is part of the ethical argument the U.S. National Institutes of Health used for phasing out medical research on chimpanzees (National Institute of Health Council of Councils 2013), while continuing to allow use of small mammals and relatively charismatic species such as dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*) for such purposes.

Several wildlife biologists have written essays critical of wildlife privatization, wildlife farming and ranching, fee-based hunting, or selling land access rights for hunting or wildlife viewing (e.g., Geist 1985, 1988, 1995; Peterson 2004; Brown and Cooper 2006). We propose that much of the impetus for these perspectives is relational and grounded in the connection between freedom and identity for both the wild species being discussed and the authors. We suggest that for the segment of human society that frequently interacts with free-roaming wildlife—such as birdwatchers, fishers, hunters, other types of nature aficionados, and wildlife biologists—wildlife's identity is closely interrelated with these individuals' personal identities (Ricoeur 1992, Clayton and Opatow 2003). The moment wildlife become domesticated livestock (Peterson 2004, Brown and Cooper 2006), these wildlife-associated people lose a portion of their personal identity as well. Leopold (1991 [1932]:169), for example, described shooting pen-reared ring-necked pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) as “a good show,” but hunting wild northern bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*) or greater prairie-chickens (*Tympanuchus cupido*) as a “grand opera.” Thus, we suggest these individuals have the same interest in fighting wildlife privatization and commodification as immigrant groups have in fighting forced cultural assimilation (Bhatia and Ram 2009, Craciun 2013, Wimmer and Soehl 2014). Just as many immigrants perceive forced assimilation into the broader culture as destroying their personal identity, wildlife biologists, and others closely connected to free-roaming wildlife, may perceive wildlife privatization and commodification as destructive to their personal identity because both forced cultural assimilation and wildlife privatization and commodification deny members of these respective groups the freedom to construct their own identity.

The degree to which privatization symbolically and materially robs wild species of their identity, as socially constructed by humans, will depend upon what privatization entails. Currently, the continuum of private ownership ranges from essentially free-living white-tailed deer in high-fenced pastures larger than 5,000 ha to scenarios where bottle-fed white-tailed deer fawns are reared in playpens built for human infants, then fed in troughs, subjected to controlled breeding (including artificial insemination), sold at auction, and otherwise treated as domestic livestock

(Peterson 2004, Brown and Cooper 2006). We expect the first scenario would be more palatable than the second for many people because of the marked differential in the curtailment of freedom and perceived wildness represented by these extremes (Peterson et al. 2010*b*, Chitwood et al. 2015).

In the United States, and the Western world generally, property owners only have rights given to them by the society in which they live, making property a political rather than a moral right (Smith 1995, Peterson and Liu 2008). For example, planning and zoning ordinances constrain how landowners can use their property, the sorts of structures they can build on their land, and, in some cases, whether trees can be planted or removed. Governments also can confiscate private property for public purposes (e.g., private lands for public roadways or shopping centers that generate high tax revenue) using eminent domain as-long-as the landowners are paid fair market value for these regulatory takings (Peterson et al. 2013*b*). Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court (based on several cases) announced 2 “categorical takings tests” to clarify and supplement their ruling in *Penn Central Transportation Co. v. New York City* (1978). These tests are that regulations constitute takings of private property and require compensation only 1) if they interfere with the property owner’s core right to exclude other people from their property, or 2) otherwise authorize a permanent physical occupation of their property by others (Salzman and Thompson 2010). A few years later, the Supreme Court, in *Lucas v. South Carolina Coastal Council* (1992), held that a regulation constitutes a taking if it deprives a landowner of all economically viable property use. It is difficult to conceive of situations where the ESA, section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972, or other environmental statutes and related regulations are likely to eliminate all economic use of a tract of land, result in a permanent public occupation, or preclude a landowner from excluding trespassers. Not surprisingly then, landowners rarely are compensated for the quite real limitations on property use caused by these environmental statutes and related regulations. In sum, the “bundle of rights” associated with private property, including privatized wildlife, can be constituted in various ways through the political process and the courts (Varner 1994); the sticks in the bundle ultimately will dictate, at least in part, the impact of privatization and commodification on wildlife’s identity.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Recently, several publications by wildlife conservationists voiced concerns regarding the future of public trust management of wildlife in North America and offered potential solutions to these problems. For example, although there are ethical, cultural, and social values associated with hunting (Peterson 2004, Peterson et al. 2010*b*), state wildlife agencies will be more effective if they move beyond an almost exclusive dependence upon hunters for funding and political support (Jacobson et al. 2010). A group of wildlife professionals assembled by The Wildlife Society were

sufficiently concerned about the future of public trust wildlife management that they recommended state and provincial governments use their authority to specifically include principles of the PTD in their constitutions or statutes so public trust management of wildlife does not rely completely on case law (Batcheller et al. 2010). Other concerns included the need to increase the inclusiveness, openness, fairness, transparency, and accountability of public trust management (Peterson et al. 2011, Smith 2011, Decker et al. 2014, Feldpausch-Parker et al. 2016*a*), and the need for state wildlife agency professionals to focus on their role as trust managers, while differentiating this role from that of elected and appointed governmental officials who act as trustees under the PTD (Smith 2011, Decker et al. 2014). We expect that certain aspects of these concerns about the future of public trust management of wildlife relate to the commonly held assumption that neoliberal economics should continue to drive wildlife conservation (Peterson et al. 2010*a*, Büscher et al. 2012).

In our experience, members of The Wildlife Society and wildlife professionals generally consider wildlife to be property (i.e., chattel) owned in some manner by the public. However, contrary to neoliberal economic dogma (Anonymous 1988, Aune 2001, Harvey 2005, Büscher et al. 2012), it is not necessary to define wildlife as property of any sort. Although legal scholars with expertise in the PTD generally describe public lands as owned by the public, they use terms such as public access, interest, good, purpose, use, and benefit when writing about trust entities such as air, rivers, lakes, and oceans (Sax 1970, Turnipseed et al. 2009, Sagarin and Turnipseed 2012). We assert that one of the relatively unexplored advantages of using the PTD as grounding for wildlife conservation is that it could help wildlife professionals move beyond the contrived dichotomy that wildlife are either publically or privately owned chattel, which ensures the ascendancy of neoliberal economics. Instead, under the PTD, wildlife are held in trust by states for the beneficiaries of the trust—the public, where debate regarding what benefits and uses are in the public interest can and should occur among trust beneficiaries (Jacobson et al. 2010, Decker et al. 2014). From this perspective, debate may revolve around whether wildlife should be owned, rather than around who should own them.

Despite what some Marxist critics might argue (Aune 1994), making human slavery illegal does more than rearrange masters and slaves; it completely replaces the master–slave relationship with a new relationship between relatively equal individuals. Similarly, when we contemplate removing wildlife from public trust management and making them private property, we are considering a much more fundamental change in the relationship between, and identity of, both wildlife and humans than when we consider transferring wildlife from public to private ownership. We expect this increased protection from commodification would be perceived positively by numerous publics who closely relate with free-roaming wildlife, including bird-watchers, fishers, hunters, other nature lovers, and wildlife biologists.

Systematically including wildlife identity during debates regarding replacing public trust management with wildlife privatization and commodification may slow wildlife privatization by highlighting how the process impacts the identity people associate with wildlife. The degree to which ethical arguments grounded in freedom as an essential component of wildlife's identity apply to wildlife privatization can be assessed by determining how important freedom and related wildness is to the identity of a given species, and whether that identity is inviolable. As stakeholders deliberate these considerations, we expect decisions about wildlife privatization will depend on 1) relationships between human societies and the wild species under consideration, 2) the degree to which privatization robs wild species of their freedom and thus identity, and 3) political contexts and power structures.

Public debate as well as careful empirical research are essential for making sound wildlife-conservation decisions (Peterson et al. 2005, 2013a), including those relevant to shifting from the historical emphasis on public trust management to privatization as the basis for wildlife conservation. When privatization of wildlife is judged ethically acceptable by society, claims about its efficacy for conservation goals should be held to the same rigorous standards as any other empirical claim made by conservationists.

Although there is nothing inherently wrong with preaching either the merits of public trust management or wildlife privatization as a belief system to promote conservation, a more open dialog among disputants will facilitate reasoned argumentation rather than faith-based claims (Peterson et al. 2007, Nelson et al. 2011). We do not seek to squelch arguments for wildlife privatization. Instead, we encourage a multitude of arguments addressing ethical claims as well as new research that addresses empirical claims associated with relationships among public trust management, wildlife privatization, wildlife commodification, and conservation. Research by wildlife conservationists could contribute to the quality of such discussions by giving careful attention to the language used when debating specific wildlife conservation issues (e.g., Parker and Feldpausch-Parker 2013), further exploring identity in wildlife-related contexts (e.g., Chitwood et al. 2011), learning how various ethnic groups perceive wildlife ownership (e.g., Peterson et al. 2011), examining the ideological foundations of North American approaches to conservation (e.g., Feldpausch-Parker et al. 2016b), and exploring how wildlife identity may shape illegal hunting (e.g., von Essen and Allen 2016). Such research should enable conservationists to more effectively contribute to debates about wildlife privatization.

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Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's web-site.

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