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The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, and Nature Conservation

David Harmon, Francis P. McManamon, Dwight T. Pitcaithley

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Enacted in 1906, the Antiquities Act is one of the most important pieces of conservation legislation in American history and has had a far-reaching influence on the preservation of our nation's cultural and natural heritage. Thanks to the foresight of thirteen presidents, parks as diverse as Acadia, Grand Canyon, and Olympic National Park, along with historic and archaeological sites such as Thomas Edison's Laboratory and the Gila Cliff Dwellings, have been preserved for posterity. A century after its passage, this book presents a definitive assessment of the Antiquities Act and its legacy, addressing the importance and breadth of the act—as well as the controversy it has engendered. Authored by professionals intimately involved with safeguarding the nation's archaeological, historic, and natural heritage, it describes the applications of the act and assesses its place in our country's future. With a scope as far-reaching as the resources the act embraces, this book offers an unparalleled opportunity for today's stewards to reflect on the act's historic accomplishments, to remind fellow professionals and the general public of its continuing importance, and to look ahead to its continuing implementation in the twenty-first century. The Antiquities Act invites all who love America's natural and cultural treasures not only to learn about the act's rich legacy but also to envision its next hundred years.

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