

**“Too Infernally Scientific”: John Wesley Powell and News Framing of
Climate Policy in the Nineteenth-Century Press**

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This mixed-methods study contextualizes twenty-first century reporting on environment through John Wesley Powell’s 1890 plan to reshape land use policy in the American West. Using qualitative historical analysis combined with quantitative content analysis, it investigates the frames used in covering debate over Powell’s proposal between January and August 1890. This analysis includes 798 articles from 281 newspapers across the United States. In addition to providing a thorough analysis of news coverage surrounding Powell’s proposal—which alone fills a conspicuous gap in researchers’ understanding of the history of climate coverage in the United States—this study finds coverage overwhelmingly focused on a political conflict frame that deemphasized the substance both of Powell’s proposal and the alternatives offered by his opponents. Furthermore, this research illustrates to historians the usefulness of applying contemporary frames to historical questions and highlights the partisan sectional identity dominant in the American West in the 1890s.