

Destry Jarvis & Jon Jarvis Oral History Interview UA 5.391

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2026 May 11

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Keywords

College of William and Mary--Alumni and alumnae

College of William and Mary--History--20th century

National parks and reserves--United States

National parks and reserves--Law and legislation

Wildlife conservation--United States

United States--Politics and Government

Climate

Global warming

Description of Subordinate Components

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Scope and Contents

Daniel Sunshine conducted this interview with brothers Thomas Destry Jarvis (W&M Class of 1969) and Jonathan B. Jarvis (W&M Class of 1975), focusing on their extensive careers in conservation and their leadership within the National Park Service. They reflected on the importance of William & Mary biology professors Mitchell Byrd, Stewart Ware, Charlotte Mangum, and Garrett Brooks as mentors in the emergent field of environmental science. Destry Jarvis recalled his military service in Vietnam, his experience in conservation advocacy and lobbying, and his tenure as Assistant Director of the National Park Service under President Bill Clinton. Jonathan Jarvis described his lifelong career with the NPS, serving in wilderness parks across the western United States and Alaska, before becoming Director of the National Park Service under Barack Obama.

Together, the brothers discussed the increasing politicization of the NPS, challenges posed by resistance to climate science and inclusive historical interpretation, and tensions among the competing missions of the Department of Interior. They concluded that the National Park Service should be spun out as an independent agency, modeled after the Smithsonian, an argument advanced in their book *National Parks Forever: Fifty Years of Fighting and a Case for Independence* (2022).

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Transcript**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/668209**Unit Date** 2026 May 11