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WORDS ON WILDERNESS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WILDERNESS STUDIES AND INFORMATION CENTER

Room 207 Forestry Building, U of MT, Missoula, Montana 59812 (406) 243-5361

Editors: Susan VanRooy and Mary Anne Andrei



Lolo Peak—photo by Jim Coefield

The Wild Rockies National Lands Act A New Approach To Ecosystems Protection

by Mike Bader

Local Approach vs. National Approach

When federal public lands debates are allowed to be played out at the local level, the wilderness and wildlife resource lose virtually every time, particularly in the resource-dependent western states. At this parochial level, 20 sawmill jobs (which are doomed anyway by mechanization and "cut out, get out" corporate philosophy), are thought to be more important than the condition of the land in perpetuity. As is the case with the coastal old growth forests of the Pacific Northwest, a national constituency must be developed and involved, or we can say goodbye to the forest. How much old growth would be left if old-growth decisions were left to someone like Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-OR)? Not much.

The local approach has been shown to fail the land in the recently introduced Lolo-Kootenai National Forest Management Act. The bill is based on "accords" negotiated secretly by a few conservation groups, union sawmill workers, and mega-corporations like Champion International and ASARCO. According to the Montana Wildlands Coalition, one of the principals in the accords, "...the accords are

supported not only by conservationists and timber workers, but by two corporate giants, Champion International (logging) and ASARCO (mining)." With this flavor, it is not surprising that 98 percent of the suitable timber on the two forests is released for even more roadbuilding and clearcutting. A basic ground rule governing the negotiations were that all suitable timber in roadless areas must be released for logging. No consideration was given to preservation of old growth forests and wildlife habitat. Furthermore, concessions were made after the accords were signed that released even more wilderness lands for intensive industrial development. Unfortunately, the accords people were not so generous with other conservationists, and have not considered adding more wilderness protection to their accords.

A great danger in the local, forest-by-forest approach is that when defining the public in such narrow terms, corporations like ASARCO and Champion automatically become the biggest players in the process. These giants have a battery of lobbyists and PAC money to make sure they get everything they want. In the backrooms of Washington,

D.C., they'll take even more.

The local approach cuts the American public out of the process. National forests are federal public lands which belong equally to all Americans regardless of where they live. Under the local approach, the American public is not only not asked what they think, but they are never even notified that legislation is pending, and that huge tracts of their public wildlands are about to be opened up to irreversible impacts, permanently destroying the wilderness values of the land.

Moreover, forest-by-forest, and state-by-state approaches ignore the fact that wildlands, wildlife, and wild rivers do not respect artificial political boundaries, but follow topographical and ecological delineations. For example, Idaho and Montana, the last two states which have yet to pass statewide wilderness bills, share 27 different roadless areas. Under the statewide process, it is easily conceivable that one state would designate their half of a roadless area as Wilderness, while the other state releases their half for development. An artificial political boundary usually makes a lousy wilderness boundary: half of a mountain protected, the other side not.

The Wild Rockies Bioregional Approach

Conservationists have outlined the Wild Rockies Bioregion as an area of special international concern. The region contains portions of five states and two Canadian provinces. More than 17 million acres of unprotected roadless lands remain on U.S. Forest Service lands alone in Montana, Idaho, northwest Wyoming, northeast Oregon, and eastern Washington. These unprotected public wilderness lands comprise over 26,000 square miles and represent an area larger than the states of Massachusetts, Maryland, Connecticut, Delaware, and Rhode Island combined! Vast areas of unprotected pristine lands are located in British Columbia and Alberta.

While national forces conspire to minimize wilderness designations in the Rockies, conservationists feel it is only fair and rational that national forces be mobilized to maximize designations. It's time to capitalize on national public attitudes and values. All wilderness bills should have a strong ecological basis and a national approach towards protection.

The Structure of the Bill and What It Does

The Wild Rockies National Lands Act was put together by grassroots conservation organizations and individuals rather than politicians and corporate leaders, and is designed for one purpose: the protection of our natural forest ecosystems in the Wild Rockies. Wildlands systems are recognized by the way they actually are on the land--the way rivers flow and wildlife moves, with a deemphasis on political and administrative boundaries.

Several designations are included in this citizens proposal. The wilderness designations in the bill are identified by major wildland ecosystems and other roadless areas are designated as biological connectors which support wildlife and provide security zones, thus ensuring genetic interchange between major ecosystems and maintenance of biological diversity. National park and preserve study areas are included, as well as new Wild and Scenic River designations, and Wild and Scenic

study rivers.

A new pilot system of National Wildland Restoration and Recovery Lands is established, and with it, a new arm of the Forest Service to be known as the Wildland Recovery Corps (WRC, pronounced "work"). Patterned after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the '30's, but without the boondoggles, this land recovery corps will focus on areas damaged by unwise development practices. Its chief work will include restoring native vegetative cover and species diversity, stabilizing slopes and soils to prevent erosion, recoutouring of slopes to original contours, removal of barriers to natural fish spawning runs, planting of trees, removal of unneeded roads, and restoration of lands to their natural condition that existed prior to development. Not only can missing ecosystem components be restored, but new employment can be created to replace dwindling timber industry jobs. The same D-9 cat operators who put in the roads can be hired to take them out. Local universities can provide training and peoplepower. Its organic funding can be supplied by taking \$100 million from the annual Forest Service road budget and putting it into WRC.

We've paid for all the roads and clearcuts and we can never get the money back. But we can get the land back, and its time we did.

Canadian lands are not included in the bill. Designation of those lands must be made through the Parliament and efforts are underway to accomplish this.

The Wild Rockies Act seeks a veto-proof approach. As was the case with the Reagan veto, a state with a small congressional delegation can be rolled over. But with a bipartisan approach sponsored by members of Congress from many different states, such as the Tongass National Forest reform legislation, a veto becomes politically unfeasible. Moreover, a multi-state, bipartisan approach lifts the pressure off of individual state delegations in another way. Under the current system, small delegations (Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming have delegations of 4, 4, and 3, respectively) can be subjected to intense pressure from industrial lobbyists and wooed with substantial PAC contributions. When an issue is nationalized, the lobbyists can no longer concentrate on a select few individuals, but must attempt to sway the entire Congress, a much more formidable task. While the same is true for conservationists, national opinion polls have consistently shown the American public is very supportive of more wilderness protection on public lands.

It's time to put an end to the delegation process, which allows members of Congress who kowtow to industrial special interests and PAC money to make the sole decisions on how much of America's wilderness and wildlife heritage will remain unspoiled. Just as decisions on the future of Alaskan wildlands and the current debate over the ancient forests have been "nationalized", so must the Wild Rockies debate become nationalized. Anything less would shortchange the American public and relegate wilderness to a few tiny museum pieces scattered across the land, devoid of most of their native wildlife. A better vision can prevail.

continued

How You Can Help: Contributions and information requests can be sent to: Alliance for the Wild Rockies, P.O. Box 8731, Missoula, MT 59807 (tax-deductible). Wild Rockies Action Fund, P.O. Box 8395, Missoula, MT 59807 (not tax-deductible).

WILD ROCKIES ACT AT A GLANCE:

Wilderness Designations: 13 million acres
Wild & Scenic River Designations: 917 miles
Wild & Scenic River Study: 186 miles
National Park & Preserve Study Areas: 1.75 million acres
Wildland Recovery and Restoration Areas: 190,000 acres
Badger-Two Medicine Wilderness Study: 123,000 acres



The Home Planet Celebration and A Wild Rockies Bicycle Tour: An Idea For Building Community Within the Bioregion

-by Sue Bradford

The Home Planet Celebration is based on the idea of combining entertainment and education in a celebration of life and the earth, and of living *with* the earth instead of against it. By staging events that feature drama, music, poetry, songs, films, etc., there is an opportunity to create an enjoyable educational experience while focussing on wildlife, nature, and taking care of our planet.

The first events of The Celebration were held in the summer of 1990, sponsored by the Institute of the Rockies, the Missoula Blues and Jazz Society, the Missoula Downtown Association and the Mountain Voice Foundation. For five weeks people gathered on Thursday evenings in Caras Park for shows featuring local artists and wildlife films. A good time was had by all. It was an idea put into motion--and although it didn't fatten anyone's money belt by much, it was worth a lot in terms of experience, things learned and new ideas generated for the future. One of these ideas is for combining the Home Planet concept with a Wild Rockies Bicycle Tour.

This involves a drawing together of people from all over the bioregion for a two or three day festival. Picture an open field with a stage and the Mission Mountains in the background. Teepees and small campsites dot the periphery of a large circle in front of the stage. Smaller circles within are the site of teach-ins and discussions of subjects like bioregionalism, organic gardening, urban gardening, Native American storytelling, green cities, wilderness, restoration ecology, native food plants and affordable solar energy, as well as impromptu entertainment.

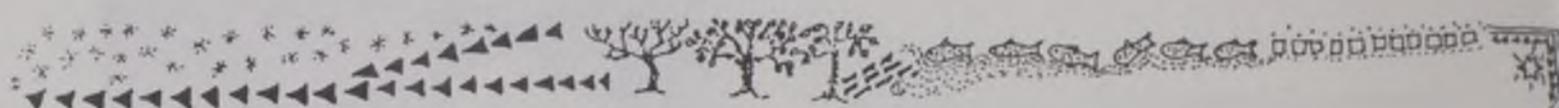
Local musicians and performers along with "big names" would draw a variety of people. Small campsites would help reduce our overall impact on the land (flood plains are a good idea) and provide an opportunity for people from the same

communities to camp together and discuss their local situations. Traveling on bicycles would also reduce impacts while bringing in a greater variety of people, drawing attention and spreading the word by passing through towns along the way. Cyclists could come from every corner of the bioregion, possibly staging small events in the towns they pass through, and meeting somewhere near the center of population. By limiting publicity to the Wild Rockies, we could focus attention on the bioregion and the fact that we have common ground in being members of the same biological community. People could learn its boundaries and what it means. In essence, the Celebration would be a first bioregional gathering and a first step towards building a sense of community and responsibility to one another within our bioregion.

Idealistic? Yes. Possible? Yes. Think about it. Ideas can be radical... revolutionary, even. Here in the Wild Rockies there are lots of good ideas floating around. Ideas like bioregionalism, sustainable living, solar power and self reliance. Ideas that could change the way we live and drastically improve our relationship with the rest of the natural world. The problem is getting these ideas out beyond our local conservation community into other communities and places where more people can put them to work. One way to begin to solve this problem might be a Wild Rockies Bicycle Tour. What do you think?

Any responses, questions, or ideas are welcome and may be sent to Sue Bradford c/o Institute of the Rockies, Box 9383, Missoula, MT. 59807.

Sue Bradford is a graduate student in Environmental Studies at the University of Montana.

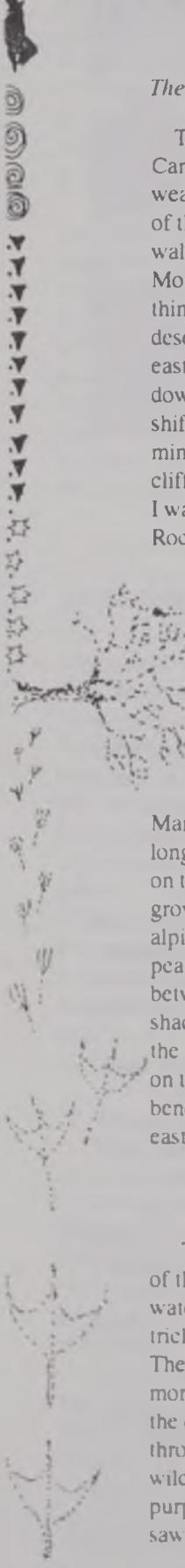


Wilderness Journal

The following journal entries are from the fall 1990 Wilderness and Civilization trek in the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Tonight we camped at the trailhead in Blackleaf Canyon; the hike starts early tomorrow morning. The weather has warmed up considerably, and the lightness of the sun is incredible on the steep, reflective canyon walls. Blackleaf Canyon stands out in the Rocky Mountain Front like no other canyon I've seen--mostly thinly vegetated rock. It looks almost like a Bad Land desert with its steep cliffs and peaks cut exactly east-west by a meandering stream. The sun set slowly, down the canyon, as the cold, still night set in. The shifting shades of dusk changed the canyon view every minute, as the shadows moved like slow flames up the cliffs, eventually engulfing the peaks in darkness. Soon I was asleep, anticipating the coming hike, a nine day Rocky Mountain expedition.

--Steve Arnold



My light sleep kept me ready for that first light of dawn to startle me to attention. The light came before I knew it, inviting me to sit up in my bed and feel the wind still whipping up from the canyon below to my ridge-top camp. I noticed the orange alpine glow on Old

Man of the Hills and Walling Reef to the northwest. A long arrow of orange had appeared from north to south on the far eastern horizon. The orange line began to grow higher on the horizon. I now noticed that the alpine glow had steadily moved down from the highest peaks to the lowest peaks, and across the saddles between them. The orange line grew, adding shade after shade of orange, yellow, and red. Purple now replaced the pink on the cloud bottoms. Gradually the colors on the horizon became a rainbow of line and cloud, bending and turning as the sun crept slowly from the east to begin the new day.

--Greg Sullivan

This morning I woke up quite early. I crawled out of the tent and walked over to the creek to fill my waterbottle. As I squatted by the edge of the thin, clear trickling water, I took a moment to inhale the beauty. The sun bathed the western ridge in a fiery, early morning light. The wind was warm as it blew through the canyon, bending the high grass and whistling through the gnarled, wind tortured pines. The wildflowers added color to the scene with red, yellow, purple, and bright green. I looked between my feet and saw soft moist moss that lives by the support of this

small alpine stream. Beauty overwhelmed me; I could only feel happiness being in such a place. It felt good to be alive. It felt good to be in the mountains. It felt good.

--Rab Cummings

I think for the first time ever there was no obligation or purpose to what I was doing. As I looked around the mountains, I thought about all of the animals out there and I didn't make a distinction between them and me. I thought of the animals as my neighbors. After our short break on the Divide we continued hiking along the ridge. Our group separated for a while, only to meet again later. During this time I climbed two peaks without my pack. Climbing seemed so easy. I didn't feel I had to get to the top. I could do whatever I wanted, and it wouldn't matter. I didn't know the names of the mountains around me or even the names of the trees on them, but I was glad I didn't. I felt very carefree during these hours of the trip.

-- Leslie Goodwin

After a short nap atop the Divide I began the descent into Big River Meadows. Rustling in the grass and a variety of tracks and scats reminded me I was not alone as the incredibly vast and beautiful meadow spread itself out before me. But rather than feeling like an intruder in this hallowed place, I was instead a kindred spirit floating among those whose presence I felt. The air was dry and becoming cooler. I sucked it in anxiously and felt lighter with each step. It seemed to carry life force, wildness that tingled in my veins.

--Tracy Lomax

Near the bottom of the mountain there was grass and a lot of dead trees that I had to duck or step over. I thought about how little I was on this huge mountain. I was hiking one step at a time because my legs felt weak and tired. As I hiked, I looked up at the mountain and began dividing it into sections. First I would cross the grass and trees, then small rocks and shrubs, and after that the big rocks that would take me to the peak.

--Brooks Goodwin



Roots to Earth and Sky

By Susan VanRooy

The integration of Native American philosophy in a modern day world view can be valuable in raising Western ecological consciousness. A better understanding of the traditional Native American perspective may help raise that consciousness which is possibly the only real hope of preserving or improving the health of the planet.

While the modern environmental movement is strong in America and elsewhere, too often goals for protection are sacrificed to compromise and bureaucratic power. The sacrifice conflicts with the Native American way of relating to the earth and to each other that respects and sustains all living things of the earth. In Western society, it appears that the many ideas incorporated in Deep Ecology and Feminist philosophy relate closest to the beliefs and traditions of North American Indian people.

Native American tribes share the same fundamental relationship with mother/grandmother earth which requires a balance of giving and taking and results in a mutually beneficial association. Because of this, early Indian people were able to adapt their needs to the ability of the land to sustain them, while European immigrants in contrast set out to tame, conquer and change natural communities to serve their purposes. Because of the Indian's inherent way of seeing earth as a living, conscious being, the mother of all living beings, it is for them as inconceivable to act in a subversive manner against her as it is to hack ones own mother to pieces.

Traditional Native Americans are unable to separate themselves from the land. They are the land, deeply rooted in the lands they've inhabited. Non-Indians in America are still newcomers. In the words of Luther Standing Bear, "The roots of the tree of his life have not yet grasped the rock and soil...Man must be born and reborn to belong. Their bodies must be formed of the dust of their fore father's bones."

This essential connection to the land is still evident today in battles over tribal and sacred lands all over the country. In 1978, during the congressional hearing on the Tellico Dam project, Jimmie Durham, a western Cherokee, expressed his people's feelings for the land that was their ancestral home, "In the language of my people...there is a word for land: Eloheh. This same word also means history, culture and religion. We cannot separate our place on earth from our lives on the earth, nor from our vision, nor our meaning as a people."

In a similar way, Native Americans realized a necessary kinship to the plant and animal beings who represented a vital link between humans and the Great Mystery. Here again, a mutual obligation was understood and a sound ecological consciousness, born of that sense of kinship with all beings, endured.

Another important concept in Indian philosophy is the acknowledgement of balance and reciprocity in all interactions with the animal world. This has evolved into a healthy moral

code for spiritual awareness between humans and non humans. Some healing ceremonies, for example, were not designed to physically cure a person directly, but rather provide the physical and spiritual framework conducive to the healing process.

In the Indian's way of thinking, even the most common, ordinary things are sacred because of their place, and connection, to the universe. John Fire Lame Deer pointed out the difference between western and Native American thought on this subject when he said, "We Indians live in a world of symbols and images where the spiritual and the common place are one. To you symbols are just words, spoken or written in a book. To us they are a part of nature, part of ourselves--the earth, the sun, the wind and rain, stones, trees, animals, even the little insects like ants and grasshoppers. We try to understand them, not with the head but with the heart, and we need no more than a hint to give us the meaning."

I would like to include a word of caution however, to all those interested in Native American cultural and religious beliefs. It is important to study Indian ways with sincerity and respect for the sake of the Indian people as well as for our own sake; we must avoid any exploitation of these people in our efforts to reshape environmental consciousness worldwide.

Mother, Sweet Grandmother

I have legs and feet--your child

I have fins and gills--your child

I have wings and beak--your child

I have seeds and roots--your child

I am rock and bone, feather and fur,

leaf and root, flesh and blood--your child

Don't a child always love...

Mother, Sweet Grandmother.

Father, Great Grandfather

I have heart and mind--your child

I have spirit and soul--your child

I have prayer and song--your child

I have wonder and love--your child

Earth maker, Spirit healer,

Song of old, Pipe and Drum--your child

Must not a child respect...

Father, Great Grandfather.

Mother Earth, Father Sky,

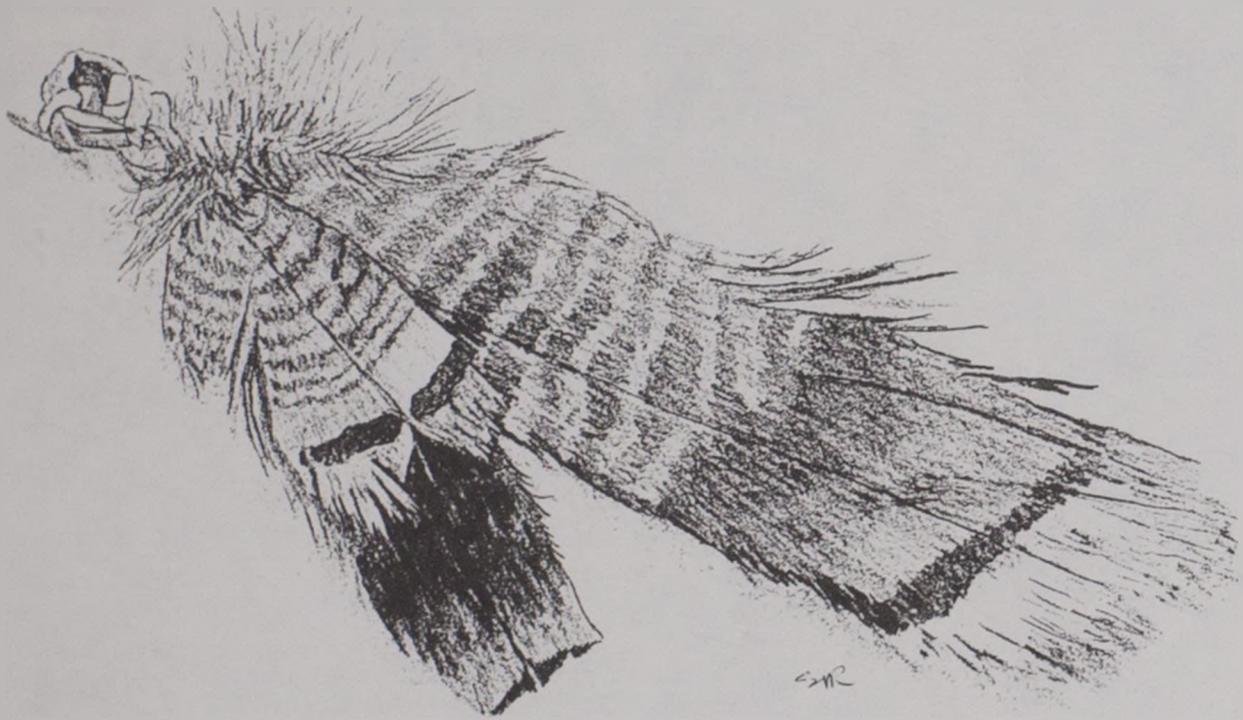
Brothers walk, Sisters fly--all your child

Wind and thunder, fire and rain,

Sun and mountain, river and star--your child

All things are sacred

Creator, Sweet Medicine Maker.



Wilderness

by Scott Bosse

September 28, 1989, West Fork of the Teton River

Wilderness is the earth's inertia free to seek its chosen path in space and time. She is the open sky complete with sun and rain, light and dark of storm and night, stars and wind, rolling thunder and sheer tranquility. She is the harmony of the community of flora and fauna and all that lies peripheral. She weaves the web of bedrock-soil-huckleberry-grizzly bear-detritus, sun-phytoplankton-caddis-cutthroat-eagle. Wilderness is the earth the way the Great Spirit intended it to be, with ruthless jagged mountains that cut the sky, dense stands of ancient sitka forests that blanket the scoured bedrock of the Inland Passage, open meadows of graze born from wildfire, opalescent blue-green rivers splashing unendingly down dark, moss-covered flumes, fields of sweetgrass waving in the West wind like swells on the open sea, sage plains and fiery canyons that stretch into sunburnt desolation.

Wilderness is the ultimate arousal of the senses. She is the soul-emptying sounds of the coyote's lonely yip, the long howl of the wolf flowing dreamlike through space and echoing off the moon, the screech of the red-tailed hawk as it catches a thermal and spots a cottontail below. She is the sight of brilliant yellow aspen leaves shimmering in the breezy creek beds like gold doubloons on the ocean floor, the feel of a warm, crystalline, granite mountain against a tanned, naked body. She is the smell of dirt, the earth herself, the wonderful scent that smells like just having made love. She is the invigorating smell of an emerald forest in the frosty morn, the subtle whiff of fresh lion scat laying twisted on the trail, the breath of crisp nothingness in the September cirrus sky---the constant smells that transcend time, the great Deja vu factory.

In the wilderness there is meaning in everything. Life is not wasted. The left over carcass of the elk nourishes the hawks, the eagles, the coyotes, and the raccoons, after it has fed the hungry wolf. From the bare bones and bedrock of the earth new soil is formed, soil that will some day sprout grasses so that another elk may live. Life and death are equally sacred, equally joyous. In the wilderness, balance and stability exist within a closed system. Energy flows through the pathways of the pyramid with eternal delight.

Wilderness is the lone refuge where one can hear absolutely nothing but the pulse and the murmur of the earth's blood as it moves through her systems. She is the force behind the tide of the oceans, the hallucinogenic ebb and flow of all atoms in the universe. She is the pristine spirit of Mother Earth before she reluctantly surrenders her virginity to the foolish desires of mortal men --innocent as an edelweiss born of snowmelt and seed, pure as a bottomless, icy spring.

Wilderness is far beyond the bounds of beauty as we perceive it. She is the strength from the power that comes from within. She is incredibly sensuous, passionate like a goddess, painfully lovely, a perfect unbroken circle. She is the call of the wild that dwells in the dark side of the soul.

I cannot understand, for the life of God, why we continue to kill her.

Scott was a participant in the Wilderness and Civilization Program in the Fall of 1989

Attention!

Alumni of the Wilderness and
Civilization program

Words on Wilderness is interested in hearing from you. We understand the Wilderness and Civilization program has had positive and lasting effects on its students; many have chosen careers specifically wilderness oriented. We hope you would be willing to share your career decisions, past accomplishments, current concerns and future goals with today's students, as well as your peers.

If you are interested we would like to include this information in our new Alumni section of *Words on Wilderness*.

Please respond by writing to the Wilderness Institute.

WANTED

WRITERS

ARTISTS

RESEARCHERS



The W.S.I.C. student newsletter is seeking contributions of graphics, poems, short stories, investigative articles, graduate research, historical/cultural writings, diverse opinions and suggestions- almost anything pertaining to wilderness issues, resource policy and environmental concerns.

For more information please contact either Susan or Mary Anne at the Wilderness Institute, 243-5361

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