

WILD EARTH

Deep Time

The Journal of the
Wildlands Project

SUMMER 2002

\$6.95 US / \$8.50 Canada



*American cheetah:
Yesterday... and tomorrow?*

Contents

WILDLANDS PROJECT



reconnect restore rewild

WE ARE AMBITIOUS. We live for the day when grizzlies in Chihuahua have an unbroken connection to grizzlies in Alaska; when wolf populations are restored from Mexico to the Yukon to Maine; when vast forests and flowing prairies again thrive and support their full range of native plants and animals; when humans dwell on the land with respect, humility, and affection.

Toward this end, the Wildlands Project is working to restore and protect the natural heritage of North America. Through advocacy, education, scientific consultation, and cooperation with many partners, we are designing and helping create systems of interconnected wilderness areas that can sustain the diversity of life.

Wild Earth—the quarterly publication of the Wildlands Project—inspires effective action for wild Nature by communicating the latest thinking in conservation science, philosophy, policy, and activism, and serves as a forum for diverse views within the conservation movement.

WILD EARTH

Publisher Dave Foreman

Editor Tom Butler

Managing Editor Jennifer Esser

Assistant Editor Joshua Brown

Art Director Kevin Cross

Science Editor Reed Noss

Poetry Editors Gary Lawless, Sheila McGrory-Klyza

Wild Earth (ISSN 1055-1166) is published quarterly by the Wildlands Project, a nonprofit educational, scientific, and charitable corporation. • Periodicals postage paid at Richmond, VT and additional offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Wild Earth*, P.O. Box 455, Richmond, VT 05477. • ©2002 by the Wildlands Project. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without permission.

Wildlands Project
P.O. Box 455
Richmond, VT 05477
802-434-4077
802-434-5980 (fax)
info@wildlandsproject.org
www.wildlandsproject.org

2

Around the Campfire

with Dave Foreman

Paul Shepard: Whistle Blower for Nature

6

A Wilderness View

Tom Butler

Deep Time

31, 53, 67

Poetry

72

Reviews

Fire: A Brief History

Return of the Wild

75

Announcements

76

Artists This Issue

80

Wildlands Project Perspective

Leanne Klyza Linck

INSIDE BACK COVER

Species Spotlight

Arctodus simus

- DEEP TIME** 8 Finding Our Bearings *John McPhee*
12 Evolution's Second Chance *David Burney, David Steadman, Paul Martin*
16 Goodbye Eternal Frontier *Connie Barlow*
23 Reuniting Pangaea *Yvonne Baskin*
27 Reclamation *Jeff Bickart*
32 Wilderness Is Where My Genome Lives *Paul Shepard*
- LAND ETHICS** 38 Ecopsychology Since 1992 *Theodore Roszak*
- BIODIVERSITY** 44 Native Snails: Indicators of Ecosystem Health *Terrence Frest*
- LANDSCAPE STORIES** 51 Wilderness as Witness (Cape Perpetua) *Kathleen Dean Moore*
- CONSERVATION HISTORY** 54 A Struggle for Wildness: The Story of Maine's
Allagash Wilderness Waterway *Dean Bennett*
57 SIDEBAR My Wilderness: East to Katahdin *William O. Douglas*
- CONSERVATION STRATEGY** 63 Honoring a Wilderness Vision: A Proposal for Pennsylvania's
Allegheny National Forest *Newkirk Johnson*
- WILD EARTH FORUM** 68 *Federal Recreation Fees*
The Lesser of Evils *Andy Kerr*
National Forests or Amusement Parks? *Bethanie Walder*



ON THE COVER

watercolor with colored pencil by Douglas Moore, ©2002

The American cheetah (Acinonyx trumani) roamed the prairies until 13,000 years ago. The fastest living North American mammal, pronghorns (Antilocapra americana) may reach 60 miles per hour running from the ghosts of cheetahs past. Some evidence suggests that the cheetahs now living in Africa (Acinonyx jubatus) descended from a New World ancestor that moved across the Bering landbridge roughly 3 million years ago. Cheetahs appear to be the only genus of living cats that is North American in origin. Could they, someday, come home?



Paul Shepard: Whistle Blower for Nature

ONE NIGHT IN AFRICA, we came upon a leopard just after she had killed an impala. We watched as she carried her prey up 25 feet to the crook of a tree. Her muzzle was pink from warm blood. She was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen; I was in the most wonderful moment of my life. Paul Shepard would have understood. The leopard was not a figment of my imagination; ahh, but the leopard fueled my thoughts. And does to this day.

For 30 years, I have been in the thick of the conservation movement. Through those decades I have been inspired by the genius of Paul Shepard, who is to my mind the most important thinker of our time. I stumbled onto him at the beginning of my con-

servation life in 1971 by reading his anthology with Daniel McKinley, *The Subversive Science: Essays Toward an Ecology of Man*. Paul Shepard's introduction caught my fancy: "The rejection of animality is a rejection of nature as a whole."¹ Aha, thought I, another who understands we are animals! Over the next decade as his books—*The Tender Carnivore and the Sacred Game*, *Thinking Animals*, and *Nature and Madness*—came out, I gobbled them up like sizzling elk steaks.

Paul Shepard's lifelong quest was to answer the thoroughly practical and urgent question, "Why do men persist in destroying their habitat?"² He went deeper than anyone before in seeking an answer: "An uncanny something seems

to block the corrective will, not simply private cupidity or political inertia."³ His answer was that agriculture, pastoralism, and civilization had progressively cut us off from Nature, which led to the failed maturity of individuals and then to the madness of society. He wrote that "we have, in the course of a few thousand years, alienated ourselves from our only home, planet Earth, our only time, the Pleistocene, and our only companions, our fellow creatures."⁴ This answer is deeply radical—in that it goes against the self-love of civilization, the arrogance of humanism, and the idea of progress. Its truth gleams like a cat's tooth.

Shepard's books are demanding. They aren't nature fluff. Ultimately,

This essay is adapted with permission from Dave Foreman's introduction to a new edition of *Man in the Landscape* by Paul Shepard that will be published in fall 2002. The book is the latest in a series of Shepard's works reissued by the University of Georgia Press (800-266-5842).

however, Shepard is challenging to read because most people—nature lovers included—can't handle the truth. Shepard continued the Darwinian Revolution by creating the discipline of human ecology—looking at human beings and their relationship with the land from an ecological point of view. In doing so, he blew away the Myth of Human Exceptionalism—that humans are not really biological—and offended our humanistic hubris.

Let's consider my theory of why Paul Shepard was able to see so clearly that our emperor (agriculture-based civilization) wore no clothes. What helped make Paul Shepard the fearless slayer of comforting myths? To be sure, his stabbing intellect and rigorous scholarship were central to that quest, but I believe that three factors in Shepard's early experience helped prepare him to recognize and articulate that our species is fundamentally part of the Pleistocene—to blow the whistle on agriculture and civilization.

First, unlike many academics who have wrestled with the Human/Nature problem, Shepard was an outdoorsman and conservationist before he went to graduate school. In the years immediately following World War II, Shepard did his undergraduate work in wildlife conservation at the University of Missouri—where Aldo Leopold's *Game Management* was the text. Before going to graduate school at Yale in 1950, he worked for the Missouri Conservation Federation for a year. He was a hunter and a fisherman, an egg collector and a butterfly netter. During graduate school and as a young professor, he was conservation chairman of the National Council of Garden Clubs (a major conservation player in those days) and worked as a seasonal natural-

ist for the National Park Service in Glacier, Crater Lake, and Olympic National Parks.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, the modern conservation movement was forged in the fire of successful campaigns against the proposed Echo Park Dam in Dinosaur National Monument and for passage of the Wilderness Act. Tools that conservationists today take for granted—national organizing, publicity, and mass letter-writing campaigns to gain attention from Congress and other policy-makers—were invented during those heady days. Shepard represented the Garden Clubs on the Natural Resources Council of America—a Washington, D.C.-based coalition of national conservation groups.

This grounding in the real world of trout and bears and the other real world of congressional hearings, campaign organizing, and conservation policy development gave Shepard's later work an integrity and authenticity unmatched by most academics. The



Nature about which Shepard wrote was real in his experience. "Nature is real and love of nature is part of its reality," he wrote in the introduction to *Man in the Landscape*. The human destruction of habitat was real in his experience, too. He knew what he was writing about. He was not writing about abstractions.

Second, Shepard had mentors and associates in academia and conservation who were first rank. At Yale, he studied with Paul Sears, one of America's greatest botanists and ecologists. In 1935, at the height of the Dust Bowl, Sears wrote *Deserts on the March*, still a conservation classic.⁵ In *Deserts*, Sears looked at the past wasting of the land by civilizations around the world and throughout history, then turned his wise eye to our own country, where he warned that we might well be digging our grave because of poor land-use practices. Credit Sears for goosing along real soil and water conservation. More deeply, though, in considering our impact on the land, Sears questioned civilization's myth of progress. When Shepard writes in the introduction to *Man in the Landscape* that "catastrophic deforestation and erosion of Mediterranean and Near Eastern soils into the sea...are essential to understanding Western world views," he shows Sears's influence. Sears seems to have long remained a mentor and sup-

Paul Shepard's lifelong quest was to answer the thoroughly practical and urgent question, "Why do men persist in destroying their habitat?" He went deeper than anyone before in seeking an answer.

porter of Shepard. For example, in 1978, Sears wrote of Shepard's *Thinking Animals*, "Weaving experience, wide reading, and reflection together [Shepard] produces an intricate design whose clear message is that man apart from the rest of the animal world is less than human."⁶

