



*Excerpts from*  
*Wildness*, Gavin Van Horn and John Hausdoerffer

Gavin Van Horn, “Into The Wildness”

Whether its is a place, a nonhuman animal or plant, or a state of mind, *wild* indicates autonomy and agency, a will be be, a unique expression of life.

Curt Meine, “The Edge of Anomaly”

If the Driftless Area is not “pristine, nor thoroughly humanized, neither is it like the rest of the agro-industrial American Midwest. It is not wholly engineered to serve as a mere medium for corn and soybeans bound for the global market. It has not been made efficient to the point of diminishing returns. The goat prairies, woodlands, bottomland forests, riparian wetlands, rivers, streams, and springs keep the landscape diversified. Smaller-scale dairy and livestock operations, with actual grazing animals, remain relatively viable so that a large portion of the land is covered in permanent pasture. The corrugated topography does not lend itself to ever-expanding economies of scale. Even the big-box stores have hard time squeezing into the narrow valleys.

Robin Wall Kimmerer, “Listening To The Forest”

Jeff Grignon explained that the idea of wild, untamed land did not exist in their (Menominee Nation, of Wisconsin) world but came along with the surge of newcomers, who pressed up against the Menominee homelands, misunderstanding their nature. The Algonquin languages, to which Menominee belongs, contain the pronoun Pekuac, meaning “growing on its own,” which indicates the freedom of that being to live where it will rather than the site of its landscape. He says that for him, “When you can feel the aliveness of everything around using all the senses, you are experiencing wilderness.”

Laura Alice Watt, “Losing Wildness For The Sake Of Wilderness”

Those who are fundamentalist about wilderness, demanding a purist definition of these landscapes, are driving humans and nature farther apart; what we need is a return to a more pragmatic vision of wilderness, one that recognizes that not all human actions diminish wildness, so as to make room for the relative wild once more.

Gavin Van Horn, “Healing the Urban Wild”

Quoting Gary Snyder:

“When an ecosystem is full functioning, all the members are present at the assembly. To speak of wilderness is to speak of wholeness. Human beings came out of that wholeness, and to consider the possibility of reactivating membership in the Assembly of All Beings is in no way regressive.”